



---

**RESEARCH PAPER**

## An Islamic Feminist Analysis of Elif Shafak's Honor: Empowering Muslim Women's Perspectives

<sup>1</sup>Bushra Zahid, <sup>2</sup>Muhammad Ajmal and <sup>3</sup>Saira Maqbool\*

1. M. Phil Scholar, Department of Linguistics and Literature, Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology D.I. Khan, KP, Pakistan
2. Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, The Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan

---

\*Corresponding Author: saira.maqbool@aiou.edu.pk

---

### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to analyze Honor (2013) by Elif Shafak from an Islamic feminist perspective in order to investigate the women rights in Islam. Men treat women as an inferior sex everywhere they go, including in England and Turkey. Both the village in Turkey and the country of England share the same social mindset. Places have little impact in altering such mindsets. Women suffer as a result of being ruled by a society that is dominated by men. Turkish author Shafak has both a Turkish hamlet and England in her novel. This novel explores the so-called male ego in which a son kills his mother to preserve the honor of his family. Honor killings are thought to have been a problem for the Muslim world ever since the development of Islam. Margot Badran's (1994) Islamic feminist theory has been chosen by the researcher to illustrate the inequalities of women's rights in the text. Islamic feminism studies the treatment of women in Islam which aims at the equality of all Muslims, regardless of gender, in both public and private life

**KEYWORDS** Gender Equality, Honour, Islamic Feminism, Margot Badran, Quran

---

### Introduction

The core text and methodology of Islamic feminism is the Qur'an which is used to promote gender equality in both the public and private domains. There have been numerous misunderstandings so far as the status of Islamic women, their rights, and their obligations are concerned. Under the influence of such misunderstandings, which have become the part of our societal standards, women are continued to be exploited. Since 19th century, both men and women have asked the legal authorities for clarification on how Sharia (Islamic Laws) affects issues affecting women such as: education, seclusion, polygyn and concubinage.

Muslim women scholars like Amina Wadud (1993) and Asma Barlas (2006) have criticized polygyn and cited *Surah An-Nisa* as the source of the Islamic notion of polygyn in an effort to change these social attitudes. They are of the view that this Qur'anic verse is intended to not to use polygyn as a means of oppressing women rather to ensure that women should be provided care. From Bangladesh, Adjeng (1992) began promoting judicial reform and the opening of schools for girls. Yasmeen (2012) too advocates Islamic Feminism and explicates that Muslim feminists' goal is to advance gender equality in a secular society rather than correcting Islam as a religion. For this purpose, the researcher chooses Elif Shafak's novel *Honor* (2013) which deals with the killing of mother by her son for his pseudo-honor.

Elif Shafak is interested in woman's rights and feminism which are highlighted in her novel *Honor* where she manages mistreated women involving the possibility of manliness in a male chauvinistic society. A half-Turkish, half-Kurdish working class family moves to London in this verifiable fiction story set between the 1940s and the 1970s, where they undergo cultural shock due to various perspectives of city on life, love and gender. The theoretical foundation of Islamic feminism is chosen for this dissertation to examine women's representation. Islamic feminism concerns with the position of women in Islam which emphasizes the complete equality of all Muslims in public and private life, regardless of gender. Also, it supports women's rights, gender equality, and civil liberties in the context of Islamic law.

*Honor (2013)* is a novel about the battle, endurance and freedom of two girls, *Pembe* and *Jamila* whose mom is in extraordinary agony since she is unable to give birth to a boy. In the context of Islam, people are considered lucky and fortunate for having daughters. Shafak reflects people's thinking in *Honor (2013)* that it is quite disappointing to see that some parents are happy when the newborn is a boy and express their displeasure when it is a girl which is strictly prohibited in Islam and is evidenced from the Qur'an which censures the way of behaving of parents who reject their girls and states that people are equivalent according to God.

In this novel, she not only highlights the marginalized status of women, but also advocates the plight of women under the rule of men in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This novel is a very important account of women's suffrage and their cry in the context of the development of media, education and globalized culture where women can no longer depend on their local cultural and traditional ways and they need an immediate new community (where they are not as a subject of scapegoat). The purpose of the present study is to foreground the practice of Islamic feminism to resolve social conflicts.

By characterizing feminism as foreign, Western, corrupt, and anti-Islamic, authorities in Muslim nations found it easier to dismiss feminist issues in the past. However, educated inquiries conducted by Islamic feminists have made it impossible to further brush off the difficulties brought up by them. The conversation around Islamic feminism has produced a vocabulary that may be understood by younger girls. Through the discussion, more young women will be able to challenge socially and culturally ingrained conventions by claiming that they have nothing to do with Islam and instead should be more concerned with one's way of life.

The idea of Islamic feminism originally appeared in the 1990s and has gained popularity ever since the turn of the century. The limits of the emerging Islamic feminism should be established at this early stage. It is an international phenomenon that is not localized to any one place. Although some of Islamic feminism's most ambitious ideological articulations have emerged in expatriate and convert groups in the West, its most audacious practices have been carried out in Asia and Africa. Islam and feminism have a long history of collaboration extending back to the 1890s despite the fact that Islamic feminism is a more recent development. When feminism first emerged in the Muslim world, it was in Egypt where what would later be called a "feminist consciousness" emerged in the context of interactions with modernity. Muslim women and men used Islamic reformist justifications to disassociate Islam from the oppressive rules that were enforced in the name of religion. This paved the way for improvements in women's lives and sex-related interactions.

Badran (2009) examines the episteme of Islamic feminism in terms of its being a compilation of activist and intellectual activity carried out in various parts of the world. Islamic feminism is self-contained because it confronts the diversity of culture and

negotiates multiple identities that today's Muslims around the world must contend with. Postcolonial feminism and Islamic feminism have both infiltrated the corpus of literature, much like numerous other sociopolitical and cultural ideologies, which is perhaps advantageous in determining the purpose and relevance of the 1/3 of the world's literature to the current most kaleidoscopic global order.

Islamic feminism uses its fresh interpretations of the egalitarian message of the Qur'anic text to assess hadiths and fiqh. Islamic feminists use Islamic investigative mechanisms to access the Hadiths, which are the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, in order to identify and reject any sexist elements that might be the result of patriarchal manipulation or misinterpretations due to contextual factors. Islamic feminism also looks at fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence, which includes Shari'a and its implications for Muslim family law. This is a crucial component since the Abbasid dynasty, which ruled Iraq in the ninth and tenth centuries, is where many of the institutional, prison and theological themes of modern political Islam are derived from. The meanings and conceptions of gender family members that emerged in a particular patriarchal context, where women were not only subordinate and marginalized, but had also been conceptualized as inferior beings, are therefore influenced by historical Islamist discourse.

### Literature Review

The belief that religions arising from an Abrahamic tradition are intrinsically biased and patriarchal against women is said to be Secular Feminism whereas Islamic feminism is a feminist discourse and practice that is framed within an Islamic paradigm and ultimately illustrates how patriarchal ideology has subverted the equality of all people. It seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality in their life.

A secular feminist Moghissi (1999) examined that a lot of people (including many secular feminists and traditional religious authorities) were dubious about Islamic feminism. Women's rights can only develop from secular, cross-cultural, and global foundations that are wholly unaffected by a society's socio-religious past. They thought secular feminism, which advocated women's rights in a universal language that the general public could understand, was being hindered by the emergence and growth of Islamic feminism. Additionally, they believe Islamic feminism has many flaws and issues. Because their goals are limited and compromised, followers of Islamic feminism will eventually have to decide between their religion and feminism. Despite the anatomical differences between the sexes, the researcher continues, Islamic feminism refers to the reluctance to live one's life in accordance with male-centered aspects of society. She asserts that because Sharia does grant equality to both sexes, those who seek equality within the confines of Sharia and the Qur'an must make concessions and reinterpret both. However, the Surah al-Nisa (men are the protectors of women) of the Qur'an explicitly states that men are superior in many areas, including biological strength. By taking into account the complete ayah, we can see that even this one is misinterpreted.

Women were able to effectively oppose religious patriarchy when they started to read and study Islamic scriptures and learn about the true meaning of the messages Islam conveys through its tenets and teachings. Many secular women who support the efforts of their Muslim sisters think that the forces of revolt and change are based on small-scale, real-world problems that cannot be easily distinguished on a theocratic or secular basis. Iranian feminist scholar, Moghadam (2002) highlights the significance of the writings and public statements of Islamic feminists and draws attention to the crucial role that the

women's press and the activists connected to it play in enlarging readers' literacy and gender consciousness.

Islamic feminism can be split into two groups on the basis of epistemology: those that are well-developed and defined and those that are less so. Wadud (1999), Barlas (2019), Al-Faruqi (2000), Reda (2013), and Abou-Bakr (2013 and 2015) are among the authors who have written about the Qur'an and its exegetical tradition in the first group. Ali (2010) are the leaders of the second collection of works, which focuses on critical interactions with Islamic fiqh or jurisprudence. Academics from Indonesia and South Africa, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir (2013) and Sa'diyya Shaikh (2004), have also interacted with the Hadith tradition, albeit to a lesser extent. Finally, Sa'diyya Shaikh's (2012) research on Sufi thought and its significance as an ethical and theological corrective to Islamic jurisprudence's patriarchal views and teachings represents another expanding area.

Ali (2010) makes a similar connection between the opinions of classical jurists on marriage and marital rights and the roots of gender discrimination in Islamic legal theory, which frequently diverged from the ethical interpretations provided by the Qur'anic text. Ali asserts, like Mir-Hosseini, that conventional legal experts saw marriage as a form of ownership where the husband had the right to engage in sexual activity with his wife.

El Fadl (2005) also emphasizes how crucial it is to base Islamic law on a "moral vision and ethos" that exemplifies "God's beauty." According to Abou Fadl (ibid), Islamic law must at the very least embody absolute moral standards that transcend location and time. To ensure that legal interpretations and procedures are in line with derivative moral values, which are necessary for a higher moral society and change and advance across time and space, it is also vital to complete this initial phase in the reform process, El Fadl (2005).

Additionally, Islamic Sufi thought, according to Shaikh (2012), can overcome Islamic laws under-privilege of the ethical in hegemonic patriarchal religious norms on gender rights by offering a much-needed ethically and metaphysically-grounded remedy. One significant methodological flaw that Islamic feminist academics have found in many theological modernist understandings is the notion that the Islamic textual legacy is presented as a single cohesive item that is sacred and unchanging. This means that the textual tradition—often regarded as divine and unchanging—includes the Qur'an, Hadith, important exegetical works, and significant schools of fiqh as a whole. One method used by Islamic feminist scholars to overcome this gap is to unpack and demystify the multiple levels of the textual tradition. Scholars use a variety of hermeneutical techniques within this broader hermeneutical framework.

Badran (1994) explicated that Muslim authors began using the term "Islamic feminism" in the 1990s to describe various feminist activisms that targeted women in the Muslim world. It is extensively debated in such research in terms of its applicability and acceptability as a feminist category. It has been used in extremely unique circumstances to explain movements in different countries at different times e.g. Mir-Hosseini and Afshar's in Iran and Göle's (1997) paintings in Turkey. Islam accords women such great value that the entire chapter Surah An-Nisa is devoted to them. Islam places a great priority on women which is evidenced by the Qur'an's second-longest chapter (which is being devoted to them). It also appears to encourage employing violence against both men and women who participate in unfettered sex in other places. These scriptures support the equality of men and women before Allah and forbid polygamy with more than four spouses. This is the main defense used by patriarchal nations today to restrict

women's rights and support the practice of honor killings. To accurately interpret the Quranic writings, nevertheless, is important.

Badran (1994) opines that Islamic feminism derives its justification and explanation from the Qur'an and promotes equality and fairness for men and women throughout the course of their existence. She continues by claiming that by misrepresenting Islam and mistreating women, radical Islamists have tainted how people in non-Islamic countries view it. Seedat (2013) examined in a study that the marriage of Islam with feminism increases disputes and makes it simpler for extremists to distort the Qur'an to serve their own political agendas. Instead of creating a new sect, she believes that Islamic feminism should emphasize and express what has existed in and continues to exist in the verses of the Holy Qur'an. Islam has opposed oppression of anybody since the beginning of time, regardless of their gender, religion, age, or other traits. We should instead work to reflect the actual essence of Islam and its teachings in order to restore everyone's rights, which are promised by Islam but denied by society.

Aghacy (2009) addressed the issue of Arab masculinity in the Middle East by highlighting the disastrous effects of continued violence on masculinity representations. She specifically draws attention to the vulnerabilities and concerns of Arab masculinity. In her book *Masculine Identity in the Fiction of the Arab East Since (1967)*, she studies masculinity in literary works from the Arab East in the context of a particular set of anxieties about gender roles and sexuality in Arab society. Gender studies have only focused on the position of women; hence the portrayal of Arab males as gendered subjects has lagged behind in the region. Gender relations, in her view, are a complex and contradictory reality that exist in particular historical and geopolitical settings. Through a series of critical readings of contemporary Arabic novels, she offers a mosaic of masculinities, challenging the cliché of the prototypical Arab man and reflecting an alternate representation of manliness in varied socio-cultural circumstances. The researcher revealed how flimsy masculinity is and how it is entwined with femininity.

### **Material and Methods**

The examination of the text in this study incorporates Islamic Feminism theory to show how unjust patriarchal society is to women. The researcher carefully analyzes the text in order to identify the episodes in the book. The observed instances have been investigated in accordance with the tenets of Islamic Feminist theory by Margot Badran (1994). The acquired data then has been evaluated to get the answers to the research questions. An analytical approach and explanatory method are used to analyze and interpret the data, which is collected in the form of words. The technique supposed for these studies is Islamic feminist theory in order to analyze the approaches wherein literature portrays the narrative of male domination through exploring the social, political, and mental forces embedded within literature. This study is simply qualitative research aiming to discover the concept of patriarchy and its depiction in the selected novel.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Islamic feminism is a global phenomenon that supports women's empowerment and creates local, national, and international social, political, economic, and cultural change. The theory also aims to empower girls so that both men and women can practice their faith equally, which will help to actualize the concept of an Islamic community or ummah. Islamic feminists work to do this by taking a holistic approach to the issues at hand, establishing connections between textual readings and social contexts to show how they interact and produce fictitious spiritual truisms.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Applying Islamic Feminism as a theoretical framework, this chapter analyzes the selected textual evidences to prove that Elif Shafak's the selected text is a counter narrative to the patriarchal society which keeps women confined under the four walls of their houses, to give birth to babies and look after them at home. There are two types of families in the novel: one which believes on patriarchal notions and the other is totally different from these notions and believes in freedom in every respect of their lives.

The couple is worried about their daughters but Naze is considered responsible for all this crime. Considering her ninth baby as a boy she wants to give birth the infant by putting her own life at stake when doctors tell that both the baby and the mother are in a serious condition. Although she is in a serious condition fighting between life and death, but still she wants to give birth the infant at every cost. Even though Naze was soaked in blood and the baby was still within, hours passed. Naze instructed the midwife to rip open her womb and remove her son: *"Cut me, you bitch! Take him out, '...It's a boy, don't you see? My son is coming! You spiteful, jealous whore. Take a pair of scissors! Now! Cut my belly open and take my son out!"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 26). She does not care for her health and her life because to give birth to a baby boy is a kind of blessing for a mother in a patriarchal society. In this way, she is trying to imprint the patriarchal notions in her daughters' mind that are living with her in the four walls of the house and helping her in household chores. Naze's present condition can be compared to what Al Zahra'a (2020) highlights the theme of anxiety of masculinity, constructive identities by tradition and society, physical and psychological violence of men towards women on the basis of gender.

Her husband gets furious at her refusal and bursts at her saying, *"What do you mean you didn't have the money? How much did they give you?"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 68). Poor Pembe who is neither able to tell her husband the truth, nor able refuse for the fear of chauvinism towards women replies him *"Nothing. I'm not going to work for them again."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 68). At her reply, Adem (being a patriarch) bursts at her raising his voice a notch *"What the hell are you talking about?'...I have debts, you know that."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 68). It can be understood from the above mentioned discussion that it is the duty of women in a patriarchal society to run the house as well as save the honour of their men whereas men's role is just to make the women pregnant and punish them over every little thing they consider right. Their purpose is just to make the women confined in every aspect of life. Adem's attitude towards Pembe can be compared to what Rafique et al. (2021) analyzed in a study that Iskender becomes the victim of culturally transmitted ideology. The powerful influences like Society, culture and immediate relations instigate him to commit this criminal act.

Esma observes the whole scenario between her mother and father that how her father is dealing with her mother without any fault. When again Pembe tells her husband that *"They didn't pay me ..."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 68) then there comes silence as witnessed by Esma, their daughter. This silence and the sentence she speaks can be the symbol of her husband's brutality towards her. It can be interpreted that either Pembe is weeping at her husband's harsh attitude or is afraid as much that she does not able to speak more and her husband is waiting for ferocity towards her. Again Esma tells the reader that her father's loud voice is heard while rebuking her mother for money and questioning her authority *"You come home at this hour and you think I'm going to believe your lies. Where's the money, you whore?"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 68). Pembe is extremely worried about her present society but wants to stick to the situation because of her mother who imprinted these notions in her daughters' mind that being a woman is a sin and men are always superior

to women. Also, she associated this social construction to religion. Pembe's present situation is the same as Hussain et al. (2023) explored in a study the violence of men towards women.

Jamila (a feminist), Pembe's twin sister, wants her sister to move on in her life, leave her husband and say good bye to the patriarchal concepts by giving her examples from other parts of life. Since she is a midwife and also a feminist, so, did not marry to any man and is spending her life in her own. She wants the women to be free from chauvinism and live their lives by themselves. She gives an example of a birth case telling her sister the difference in the thinking that *"I've just come back from a difficult birth. Conjoined twins. One dead, one alive. If you were here, you would ask: 'Why does He let this happen? It's unfair.'" (Shafak, 2013, p. 80).* She tells Pembe that if you were at my place, you would consider it God's unfairness and his wrath towards humans for their actions but for me this is not the case. In actual, the birth case is the symbol of a patriarchal platform where there are two types of humans: the dead (which represents the women in a patriarchal society) and the alive (which represents the male social members who are living their lives happily).

Jamila wants the women to be free from such clutches of family, marriage and religion etc. and tells her sister to think in another way for her own benefit. She wants her sister to move forward and forget what has happened in the past with our parents saying that *"My dear, we cannot erase the past. That's not in our hands. I am not, and I never was, upset at you or at Adem."* (Shafak, 2013, p.80) but she still wants her sister to get rid of the life she is living now and questions her beliefs again and again *"Can you stop a gusty wind from blowing? Can you make the snow turn any colour other than white?" (Shafak, 2013, p.80).* She asks if she can stop the oppression her husband is committing towards her by sending her to other people's homes for wages and also orders her to work at home and bring up her children. She also questions her sister whether she is able to say anything against the patriarchal system and structures she is living in where snow is always considered white which means where men are considered always superior to women and the women are unable to raise their voices against these systems. She asks her sister whether she can raise her voice against this patriarchal system where there is no respect for women and they are considered the property of male social members. Jamila explores the hidden agendas of the male dominated society in the guise of the sophisticated masks of Islam as what Hassan and Alhousseini (2020) have explored in their study.

Jamila is extremely worried about Pembe's stickiness to the past rules and regulations and tries her best to make her sister free from this very bondage. She tells her that *"We easily accept that we have no power over nature. But why don't we admit that we cannot change our fates?" (Shafak, 2013, p.80).* She convinces her sister to not accept what is going on because everyone has his/her own power. None is superior to other. Neither God Almighty, nor the Quran says this rather these all are social constructions by patriarchal society to make the women marginalized always. It is not God Almighty who gives men superiority to confine their women in houses, orders them for labor work and bring up their husband's children, and to make the men happy in either way. For the sake of getting benefit and exploiting the women, the chauvinist society has constructed these notions by itself and for strengthening its impact on women and exploiting them more and more; this society has associated these notions to religion. It is not the God who confines us to accept the authority of male social members and accept the fates as they are rather we should protest against this brutality for getting our rights back and living our lives freely. Jamila tells the same to her sister that Quran gives the women equal rights to men as Tohidi (2002) and Najmabadi (1993) have explored in their studies.

Jamila again encourages her sister to not to accept the societal norms but to protest against them saying that *"It's not that different. If Allah guided us on to separate paths, there must have been a reason for that."* (Shafak, 2013, p.80). She tells her that Allah is not unfair towards women because he is a Creator of all human beings and loves all the same. It is not God which gives power to one human over the other on the basis of gender rather it is all social construction. In religion, all human beings are equal and are considered powerless or powerful not on the basis of gender but on their piety. It is not that Allah has created the men and women different for the sake of making them powerful and powerless but the reason can be different. Everyone has his own life and must live on their own *"You have your life there; I have my life here. We have to accept."* (Shafak, 2013, p.80).

Pembe takes a decision and takes separation from her husband. She lives alone with her children and brings them up alone. Neither she takes care of her husband's absence, nor takes any money from him for her children. She asserts herself as a feminist that she can do what she wants. Pembe's children are forward as compared to their mother. Her younger son, Yunus, is though seven years old but still he wants to think the old rituals wrong and wants to purify himself from these brutal clutches towards women. Yunus has a girl friend, Tobiko, who too wants him to free himself from old myths that are the construction of society. When he responds her positively, she inquires saying that *"'Don't you ever change,' ... 'Don't let the greedy capitalist system get to you.' 'Okay.' 'Give me your word. No . . . wait. Promise on something that matters to you.'"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 58). Tobiko is so afraid of this male dominated society that she wants promises from him that he will not ever adopt this system. She compares dominated system to a capitalist system where the poor are looted and exploited day by day. Since the women are powerless like the poor people, therefore, she wants promises from Yunus to not to adopt such tyranny towards her ever.

Yunus himself is too exhausted of such a male dominated system that he does not want to adopt it anymore and takes an oath from Quran that *"'And there and then, his lips quivering, his heart hammering, seven-year-old Yunus made an oath to Allah that he would never ever let the capitalist system get anywhere near him, though he didn't have the foggiest idea what that could mean."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 58). Yunus, being a feminist does not accept this brutality towards women because he belongs to a new generation which says good bye to the old and constructed myths. Being an Islamic Feminist, he interprets the Holy Book truly as what Allah Almighty wants. Neither he wants to adopt patriarchy, nor wants the other people in his surroundings to apply it to others. He considers both men and women equal. He does not love his father due to his fierceness towards his mother. He wants to live a happy life with respect.

Yunus is a young boy who wants to purify his society from patriarchy but still he does not aware of the complete detail of the capitalist society and wants to know from his elders. He discusses this matter with the Captain who tells him in detail the definition of this system and says that *"'People like you means the have-nots,'"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104). Not knowing why the Captain is comparing them to have not, Yunus wants to demand the definition again *"'What is a have-not?'"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104) and on his demand the Captain explains the definition in detail in such a way that *"'The have-nots are the people who have been denied the right to have, so that the haves can have more than they should have.'"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104). He wants to remind Yunus through have not concept about the capitalist system Tobiko tells him already. He tells him that it is the have not system which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. The people who are in power snatch the authority of the less powerful people. In actual, he reminds him about the patriarchal society which tries to exploit women from every aspects of life. The male social members



enjoy their lives happily by making the adulterous relations with other women, drinking beer, and asserting their power over women at home. They consider women as a puppet and use them in their own way without taking care of the crime they commit towards them because it has become their right to control only women and confine their emotions in the four walls of the house.

Yunus wants to know more about have not from the Captain and he goes on saying that *"No other species on earth is as arrogant and cruel and greedy as humans,"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104) which means that humans' lust for power does not satisfy by their own rights so, they want to snatch others for strengthening their power. Further, the Captain discusses that *"The entire capitalist economy is built on the systematic exploitation of the have-nots by the haves."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104). This means that the men are not exerting their power over women their own but it is a complete system behind it. This system is not other than the patriarchy where men and women are considered different biologically and the duties of both genders are assigned to them separately. The men are considered biologically superior to women so, their duties are to control women, to exert their power over them, to exploit them, and to consider them just as a possession. The Captain gives the same reason for exploitation as Atta ullah et al. (2021) explored the gender and power in a study in which they examined the male dominated society where the structured roles associated to males and females are assigned to them. This gendered power is nurtured in male social members by enabling them to prejudice, discriminate and exploit the individuality of women. The male members of the male chauvinistic society deprive women from education, financial stability and individual freedom. They enjoy their lives but the women are confined to the four walls of their house for bringing up the children and cooking for their males.

After exposing the brutalities of the male dominated society over the women, the Captain goes on to another topic which is the interest of the Islamic Feminism. He tells Yunus and other people gathered there that *"You, me, our little friend here, and his family, we are the Commoners! The Salt of the Earth! The Great Unwashed!"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104). He tells them all that both the men and women are equal. God Almighty has created us all on equal basis. We are the same on this earth. If we (men and women) commit any wrong doings, we are responsible for them. Not only women, but also men are responsible for their crimes. After this, Yunus has realized that his mother too is facing the same condition and she is living in a capitalist society because she always cleans *"the house,"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 104).

For the sake of explaining patriarchal society, the Captain further gives more examples to Yunus for clarifying his point about capitalism that *"Wake up to the truth, lad!"* ... *"People like your parents are being exploited all the time so that others can fill their pockets."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 105). In actual, the Captain wants to tell Yunus that just like the capitalists who exploit the poor people as residing in our environment, the patriarchal exploits the women in the same way. When Yunus tells him that his family is not poor at all, the Captain explains this matter again saying that *"at home no one referred to himself as needy, deprived, low-class or, for that matter, as a have-not."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 105). He explains further that since we are living in a patriarchal society, therefore, we do not take it serious at home. In fact, women are being exploited by our social male members and it is the part of our environment, so, we do not take this matter serious. Women are being deprived of their rights and every power they exercise over women is not real but the construction of our society.

In this novel, the house represents the whole society where both the men and women live. But if men want to enjoy their lives in the house and throw women out of

this happy home, the feminist thinker does not accept it. Same is the case with Tobiko who does not want to go out of this happy house where men can enjoy their lives but women have no place. She protests against this patriarchal system that *"Nobody is going anywhere,"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 144). She wants to live in the same house which means in the same society and enjoys the equal rights to men. When poor Yunus, who is too young and unable to comprehend, asks Tobiko *"But the house belongs to them, right?"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 144) means that men have power over the society and all the rules and regulations are exercised by men over women, then Tobiko tells him that *"No, it doesn't. Some houses are everyone's property. If you ask me, all houses ought to be like that."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 144). She does not want to accept the patriarchal notions that everything is men's property and women have no right at all.

Iskender tells his sister that according to their mother, there are two kinds of people *"...the frog-allies and the snail-allies"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 154) where the frog is the symbol of men and the snail represents women in society. Frog has the characteristics of the males in the society that just like male social members frogs too are *"better, excited and disgusted by its bulging eyes and scabby skin"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 154). Men have the same qualities in a patriarchal society and they behave with snails the same as the men do to women. Just like the women, snails too have become the prey of frog when the snail is put in the same glass where the frog is *"The frog immediately forgot about its distress, concentrating on its prey. In the meantime, the snail was inching its way along, hoping to break free of its prison, unaware of the danger. The frog leaped once, then twice, and caught the snail"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 154). This all shows that the glass is the symbol of the house where men and women live together and just like the frog, the men too behave the same with women. The frog brings brutality towards snails as men to women in a patriarchal society. The men exert their power over women and exploit them one way or the other as what the frog does *"the frog ate the snail, a sticky, gluey slime oozing out of its mouth."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 154).

Once Zeeshan tells Iskender about his religion that *"My religion is love,"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 172) which means that he truly interprets Islam and challenges the previous definitions of the Islamic rules and regulations that the society constructed. For Zeeshan, it is not Islam which asks men to exercise power over women rather the true definition of Islam is to love women because they the part of life cycle, without them life is incomplete, and they are the beauty of the home. Being a patriarch, Iskender tells Zeeshan that the universe is about *"Aggression, brutality, corruption, terrorism . . ."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 172) and *"Murder."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 172). This irritates Zeeshan and he tells Iskender that you have interpreted the religion wrong because *"You see animals kill animals. Big insects eat small insects. Wolf eats sheep. Oh so much blood."* (Shafak, 2013, p. 172). He tells Iskender the different interpretations of the religion in this way. He tells him that it is our patriarchal society which leads men to interpret the universe this way and associates this interpretation to Islam so that this myth can be strengthened. He tells him that the patriarchal society forces men to go for brutality, aggression and exploitation towards women. Since women are portrayed as powerless social member of society, therefore, they are exploited by society.

Esma, Adem and Pembe's daughter and Iskender and Yunus's sister, forcefully sits with the men who were discussing about a matter where women are not allowed to attend such meetings. She is the one of the feminists who wants to assert her. She tells the men present in the meeting that if men are the savior of women's honor then why they snatch the honor themselves by giving them the example of the men about whom the men were discussing in the meeting saying that *"Do you think those skinheads bully only men? You're damn wrong. They attack women too. And girls. If I'm good enough to be a victim,*

*I'm good enough to fight back.*" (Shafak, 2013, p. 181). She bursts at men saying that why she should be stopped at this act? It she who speaks for her rights and challenges the authority of male social members who consider themselves superior to women. It is Esma who speaks for her, for her community, and for those who have slept in their graves silently. She paves way for other women who are being silenced by men due to their power.

Iskender forbids Esma to live in the four walls of her house because he cannot guard her all the time. He forbids her to not attend the meetings of the men. This thing irritates Esma and she bursts at her elder brother without taking care of his power because she does not want him to protect her and she questions his authority saying, *"Who says you have to keep an eye on me?"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 184). She again reminds him about her mother's belief on old myths. She tells him that it is their mother's fault who has brought him up this way because she was living in a patriarchal society and under the influence of her mother's upbringing that men are superior to women since they are biologically strong, their mother adopts the same notions and makes her son the same patriarch who is acting like the owner of the family. She, moreover, reminds him his power that she herself is able to take care of herself and she does not need her brother's guard for this saying that, *"I can take care of myself, thank you very much. It's all Mum's fault. She raised you like this. Malamin, berhamin. And now you think you're the Sultan of Hackney!"* (Shafak, 2013, p. 184). She tells him that their mother always used the powerful language for him. The words like *"Malamin"* and *"berhamin"* are the examples of the power which are related with men, so, she connects them to her son, Iskender.

## Conclusion

The study's findings suggest that by spotlighting the patriarchal ties that force women to endure suffering, Shafak awakens the eyes of a broad audience. Women must submit to and uphold cultural norms since men are the stronger members of society and are the ones who are responsible for maintaining them. The hypocrisy of men to keep society in balance in a way that suits them is shown in the novel *Honor (2013)*. The study comes to the conclusion that because women are the weaker sex, they suffer. Men may even kill women in order to put an end to a dispute between a rebel and the community they are a part of. The study comes to the conclusion that there is a duality in Turkish society and morals that permits males to kill women while sparing men. Shafak attempts to reflect on the unfair treatment women experience in Turkish society and other patriarchal societies throughout the selected text. Women are frequently silenced and subjugated by patriarchy and presumptive gender norms which prevents them from living life on their own terms and forces them to sacrifice their pleasure for the good of their families or society. The research has highlighted the injustice done to women in Elif Shafaq's novel *Honor (2013)* through Islamic feminism. Islamic feminism tells us that men and women are equal before God and in Islam.

With the help of the above mentioned characters, the researcher highlights that the selected text is all about Islamic Feminism where at first, the patriarchy is shown, but later, the characters, who questions the authority of men are being introduced. They explain the ways the patriarchal system is made and falsely associated with Islam. Also, they reinterpret the Islam and false system to give women equal rights to men in every sphere of life. They highlights that the patriarchal system does not exercise the Islamic notions towards women rather this system is the social construction to make men powerful, to exploit women, to confine women to the four walls of the house, to make them enable to work hard for men and bring up the children at home, and save the honor of men one way or the other. The Islam gives equal rights to women and men and does

not make the men superior to women on the basis of gender are also foregrounded in the study.

## References

- Aghacy, S. (2009). *Masculine Identity in the Fiction of the Arab East since 1967*. USA: Syracuse University Press.
- Ali, K. (2010). *Sexual Ethics And Islam: Feminist Reflections On Quran, Hadith, And Jurisprudence*. New York: Oxford One World Press.
- Al Zahra'a, F. (2020). *Subversive Masculinity in Elif Shafak's "Honour"* [Master dissertation, University of Mohamed Kheider Biskra].
- Badron, M. (2009). *Feminism in Islam*. London: One world Publications.
- Badron, M. (1994). *Feminism, Nation and Islam*. England: Princeton University Press.
- Barlas, A. (2019). *Believing Women in Islam*. United States: University of Texas Press.
- Bertens, H. (2001). *Literary Theory The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Bhavya & Arora, A. (2016). The Theme of Expatriation and Identity Crises in the Short Stories of Rohinton Mistry. *An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations*, 4(1), 168-174.
- Chauhan, N. S. (2021). A Critical Analysis of the Novel *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 6(5), 62-67
- De Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage
- Foucault, M. (1998) *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, London, Penguin.
- Glinka, N. (2018). Intertextuality in the Modernist Literature. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Thought*, 7(3), 147-154.
- Göle, N. (1997). *The Forbidden Modern*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Gordon, J. (2022). A pedagogical stylistics of intertextual interaction: *Talk as Heteroglot Intertextual Study* in higher education pedagogy. *Language and Literature*, 31(3), 383-406.
- Mir-Hosseini, Z. (2011). Beyond "Islam" vs "Feminism"! *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, 42(1), 67-77.
- Moghissi, H. (1999). *Feminism And Islamic Fundamentalism: London New York: The Limits Of Postmodern Analysis* Zed Books.
- Naidoo, K. S. (2018). *"Name Rhymes with Shame": representations of migrant women protagonists in selected African texts* [Doctoral dissertation].
- Najmabadi, A. (1993). Veiled discourse-unveiled bodies. *Feminist Studies*, 19(3), 487-518.
- Nkealah, N. (2008). Reconciling Arabo-Islamic culture and feminist consciousness in North African women's writing: Silence and voice in the short stories of Alifa Rifaat and Assia Djebar. *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde*, 45 (1), 19-41.
- Picchi, M. (2020). *Muslim Marriage and Contemporary Challenges*. Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives.

- Qayyum, A., Rahman, M. & Nisar, H. G. (2019). A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Characterisation in Doris Lessing's *A Woman on a Roof*. *Global Regional Review*, 4(3), 1-12.
- Ruggi, S. (1998). Honor Killing In Palestine. Commodifying Honor In Female Sexuality. *Middle East Report*, 28, 5-12.
- Shaikh, S. (2012). *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Seedat, F. (2013). Islam, Feminism and Islamic Feminist: Between Inadequacy Inevitability. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 29, 25-45.
- Shafaq, E. (2013). *Honor*. United States: Viking Penguin.
- Shukla, M. (2014). Scratching the Labels: A Feminist Reading of Shashi Deshpande's Select Short Stories. *Lapis Lazuli -An International Literary Journal*, 4(1), 208-216.
- Wadud, A. (1999). *Quran And Woman: Reading The Sacred Text From A Woman's Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wallby, S. (1989). Theorising Patriarchy. *Sociology*, 23, 213-234.
- Welchman, L. & Hussain, S. (2005). *Honor Crimes Paradigms And Violence Against Women*. London: Zed Press.
- Wilson, A. (2006). *Dreams, Questions, Struggle: South Asian Women In Britain*. London: Pluto Press.
- Yamani, M. (1996). *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives*. London: Ithaca Press.
- Yasmeen, S. (2012). Islamisation and Activism of a Muslim NGO in Pakistan: Jama'at-ud-Da'wa as a Case Study. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 47(3), 407-424.
- Zacharia, A. & Senthamarai, T. (2023). The Representation of Female Characters in Elif Shafak's "The Bastard of Istanbul"- An Analysis. *Dogo Rangsang Research Journal*, 13(5), 37-41.
- Zacharia, A. & Senthamarai, T. (2023). Gender Roles in Turkish Society: A Journey through Elif Shafak's *Honour* and *The Forty Rules of Love*. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 8(3), 222-228