

**Tribhuvan University**

**Gender Role in Muslim Society in Elif Shafak's *Honour***

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of  
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for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled,  
“Gender Role in Muslim Society in Elif Shafak’s *Honour*” is my original work  
carried out as a Master’s student at the Department of English at Ratna  
Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from  
others in the thesis’s design and conception  
or in presentation style, and linguistic  
expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no  
material which led to a substantial extent has been accepted for  
the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other  
educational institution, except where due acknowledgement  
is made in the thesis.

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February 2018

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled “Gender Role in Muslim Society in Elif Shafak’s *Honour*”  
submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Mr. Sitaram  
Badal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## **Abstract**

The thesis is about the gender discrimination in Muslim culture. Gender discrimination is a kind of Practice in a society in which men and women's roles are determined by the cultures one belongs to. Due to the discrimination, not only the roles are defined but also the bearing of children is taken into consideration especially in Muslim culture. Although the world is moving towards the post-modernism, many Muslim women have to confine themselves only serving their male members and bearing children. They are not allowed to expose outside world.

The story revolves around the protagonist of the novel Naze who cannot give birth to a son though she bears eight children. Consequently, she tortured much from the family members. Naze dies untimely in the expectation of bearing a son. Her twin daughters Pembe and Jamila also suffer from many aspects. Even after giving birth to a son named Iskender, Pembe does not feel happy because he is too proud of himself simply being a male. Esma, Pembe's daughter, is conscious that women are dominated in a brutal manner. Her brother goes to a jail for killing his own mother Pembe. Esma thinks of killing him as revenge but cannot because she is a woman, she has love somewhere in a corner of the heart. While comparing men and women, role of women seems stronger than men though apparently men are focused.

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### **Sociopolitical and Cultural Context of *Honour***

Elif Shafak's *Honour* tells the story of a mixed Turkish-Kurdish family. The novel is narrated from the perspective of many characters. This is the story of Naze who gives birth to eight children in the expectation of giving birth to a baby boy. She fails to give birth to a son. Multiple pregnancies become the cause of her death. Her twin daughters play significant role in the novel. They are named differently from their mother and father and with meaning. They are Pembe and Jamila. The novel revolves around the honour of the family, which migrates to London and faces problems such as cultural split.

*Honour* presents the story of a Muslim family, which believes that women cannot represent whole family. Naze, the protagonist of the novel, is victim of male dominated society who has to give birth to eight children with the expectation of son. Alev Adil argues that this novel is like the handwriting of the author. Adil says: "Alif Shafak has been the victim of political harassment in Turkey: a 2006 case against her novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*, under the notorious Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, ensured her global attention as a political figure as well as a literary one" (1). Therefore, Adil argues that Shafak had the dubious honour of being the first writer in Turkey to be indicted for ideas expressed in fiction.

The novel begins with Iskender's pastime in a prison who is imprisoned for killing his own mother at the age of sixteen. Embarrassed from her mother's insatiable desire for the son, Peme considers that having a son is one of the greatest achievements in her life. As she gives birth to her son named Iskender she does not have limitations of happiness and pride. However, her three children have different reactions. Iskender is very proud of being male who wants to dominate the world;

her daughter Esma wants to bring change in him and Yunus wants to understand the cause of these activities.

The novel also describes another part of culture as well in which girls are controlled, dominated and confined in limited areas while boys are considered like leaders or kings. It does not matter if a boy oppresses a girl. It does not become an issue when a boy has relations with many women but for a woman it is a taboo. Through his story, the author questions the cultural mindset that ignores a man's extramarital affairs and betrayals yet does not allow a woman to be with someone else after her husband has abandoned her. Culture treats young boys like kings while oppressing girls. In this respect, Maakie Voorhoeve interrogates how women are dominated in Islamic country. He postulates:

Can it be that this same woman, in inheriting, forfeits her right, along with her daughters, to the legacy, for her husband keeps it to himself and passes it on to his male children, no matter if they are bad, or already rich? After being the lady of the house, she is abandoned and left to live in the house of the separated, while others enjoy her fortune? Is this the Justice that Allah has prescribed? Some husbands without male heirs even deny their wives and daughters any legacy at all, and leave their estate to other relatives. (41)

Thus, Voorhoeve says that Allah does not discriminate between men and women. He implies that males do not have right to say women are not equal to them in patriarchal society.

### **Position of Women in Muslim Society**

Gender role is cultural setting rather than natural. In other words, a particular society determines the roles of men and women. Hence, the role of women and men



differs from one society to another. The gender role is determined by various factors such as culture, religion, time, education and so on. In traditional society, marriage, children and family are crucial entity for the women as they are used for bearing children and rearing up them. In most of the societies, women are not considered real ones unless they give birth to children. The ancient society considers women as the weak, irrational, contingent, and dependent and so on. Therefore, they become happy when they are married and conceived. On the other hand, if they cannot become pregnant, they regard themselves to be failure. Judith Butler argues that patriarchy is not able to give universal significance of gender:

The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Where those various contexts have been consulted within such theories, it has been to find ‘examples’ or ‘illustrations’ of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. (6)

In this way, she argues that gender is cultural notion. People socially construct it. Therefore, it is different from one culture to another.

The pioneer of gender studies, Judith Butler analyses gender as fictional reproductive of heterosexuality. Butler postulates: “Because there is neither an ‘essence’ that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all” (140). As Butler says, gender is not fact but the ideas created by people about it. Gender is not itself the word but it is defined by the people in their accords.

In traditional gender role, women are taken as the weaker and objective being

analyzed through the eyes of patriarchal society. Women are defined and evaluated in terms of men. In this manner, Tyson puts: “Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions” (85). Therefore, as Tyson puts, women are not independent in the society. They are dominated in the society economically, politically and socially.

Talking about gender role in Muslim culture Puar Jasbir argues that Muslim women are dominated by men different from the women in other parts of the world including the United States. Jasbir poses:

Gender exceptionalism works as a missionary discourse to rescue Muslim women from their oppressive male counterparts. It also works to suggest that, in contrast to women in the United States, Muslim women are, at the end of the day, unsavable. More insidiously, these discourses allude to the unsalvageable nature of Muslim women even by their own feminists, positioning the American feminist as the feminist subject par excellence. (5)

Puar implies that Muslim women suffer much more than other women do. According to him, even feminists are not able to uplift the condition of women in Muslim society.

Danièle Joly and Khursheed Wadia argues that women have different position and history in different countries. According to Joly and Wadia, the position of women depends on the families and the communities they are in. Joly and Wadia claim:

As feminist scholars we also recognize that Muslim women in Britain and France have varying histories depending on which part of the world they or their families and communities originate from and that these histories may include individual, family or collective political struggles in favour of women's rights whether in anti-colonial movements, as in India and Algeria, or postcolonial liberation and pro-democracy movements such as in Bangladesh or other Middle Eastern and North African countries. (24)

As they present, the position of women also depends upon the pre-colonial and post-colonial era. In pre-colonial era, many women considered themselves as beings to serve male members. They were not aware that women had equal rights and position. However, after the Second World War, women are becoming aware and they are raising their voices for their equal rights from every corner of the world.

Joly and Wadia say that the exploitation of women cannot be universal but individual. It means to say that they do not focus on the normative way but in the individual way like gender studies. They argue:

In our study of Muslim women's political participation and civic engagement, we understand that experiences of oppression and exclusion cannot be universal and that women do not constitute a single category with shared characteristics. Because women live a plurality of different experiences, it is important to acknowledge that Muslim women's exclusion is constructed through a number of intersecting inequalities based not only on their gender but also 'race'/ethnicity, faith and class. (25)

They show great concern that muslim women are excluded from other women from the power holder position.

Joly and Wadia also raise the political involvement of Muslim women and they say that women's participation is a must for making their rights certain. They are not ready to believe that women should be dominated and play less role to involve in war. They claim:

The specific question of Muslim women's participation in politics necessarily has to be related to the relationship between politics and women in general. It is widely assumed that women are less interested than men in politics, as recounted by Duverger: 'they think that politics is mainly a man's thing, because everything encourages them to think this: tradition, family life, education, religion, literature.' Considerable debate has taken place on women's political participation where their higher involvement in political life has been found to be commensurate with educational level and employment outside home. (28-29)

Thus, Muslim women have their own types of problems such as they are dominated from superstitious manner of hiding their faces and they must bear sons to be permanent wife, which are different from others. They are not measure or put in one category. Muslim women have their position according to their settings or places they move to. In other words, they do not have fixed identities.

### **Critiques of the Novel**

Adil claims that Shafak is a changeable writer, a shape-shifter. Her style, technique and voice change significantly from novel to novel and language to language, as she writes both in English and Turkish (2). The novel follows three generations of the Turkish-Kurdish Toprak family from Istanbul and the Euphrates to

London, and the codes of honour, which bind and break them. Adil argues that *Honour* is magic-realist rather than naturalistic. A child waits by a river for a passing stranger to name him because his mother believes he is damned; a young girl is given a bowl with a coiled rope in it and left to hang herself. Once the narrative enigmas are resolved, we see how the characters serve the greater whole: everything has a reason. The mapping and intertwining of destinies collectively, rather than any single consciousness, is what really engages Shafak in this novel. Crimes of the heart reverberate across the years, and the Topraks' notion of honour leads to tragedy for all.

There are many aspects in the novel. Elif Shafak raises the issue of cultural split when Torpak family moves to London from Istanbul, Turkey. When they come there, they bring their own culture and encounter with new culture in London as well. Falling in love with someone, getting married to another, having extramarital relationship and many more are the examples of cultural conflict.

Despite many related issues, the researcher likes to focus on the role of masculinity to shape the identity of women characters. It focuses on gender role in which traditional concept of using women as reproductive beings, bodily representative and the things to provide enjoyment to men or masculinity as a whole. Moreover, the position of masculinity is individual not normative. In other words, the gender identity of femininity and masculinity should be studied individually not in a normative way as individual people have their own experience and feelings to each other. Many critics have commented the novel in various ways:

Maureen Freely reviews the novel and argues that the book attempts to dissolve the false narrative what she regards in Turkish societies. Freely claims:

Shafak is an extremely popular novelist in Turkey, particularly loved

by young, educated and newly independent women who appreciate her fusion of feminism and Sufism, her disarmingly quirky characters and the artful twists and turns of her epic romances. Born in Strasbourg to a diplomat mother, educated in Europe, the United States and Turkey, she writes some books in her native Turkish and others (like this one) in English. In everything she writes, she sets out to dissolve what she regards as false narratives. (1)

Therefore, it can be interpreted that Shafak wrote the novel to solve the problems what she experiences in her place.

Alev Adil comments that this novel is magic-realistic because some strange things are shown here. Adil expresses:

*Honour* is lushly and memorably magic-realist rather than naturalistic. A child waits by a river for a passing stranger to name him because his mother believes he is damned; a young girl is given a bowl with a coiled rope in it and left to hang herself. Once the narrative enigmas are resolved, we see how the characters serve the greater whole: everything has a reason. The mapping and intertwining of destinies collectively, rather than any single consciousness, is what really engages Shafak in this novel. Crimes of the heart reverberate across the years, and the Topraks' notion of honour leads to tragedy for all. (2)

Adil comments that the novel is magic-realist. He gives the example of magic realism in which a child waits to be named by a passing stranger. Thus, the novel proves to be true which seems impossible apparently.

Similarly, Lucy Beresford poses that the author captures the a cultural phenomenon in which a man can leave family for others. Beresford says: “Shafak

captures a culture where a man can abandon the family home to shack up with a mistress with no redress, but where a woman who elopes will be presented with a rope as an unspoken instruction to do the decent thing” (1). Thus, she describes the novel as the discrimination between men and women. The novel depicts the characters who are only actors in Muslim culture. Male counterparts victimize Muslim women. The women are used as only child producing women. To show them who they are women have to go beyond patriarchal rules and prove themselves as capable beings.

Thus, the novel deals with the gender discrimination in Muslim culture. Many women are victimized for not bearing sons. They have to undergo many psychological, physical and mental ordeals with the expectation of bearing sons. The sons are reared with pouting nature right from their childhood. They are so pompous that they do not follow good culture. They treat badly to the female members as they have learned from their senior males in the family and the society.

### **Gender Role in Muslim Society in *Honour***

Gender study deals with the women how they are different in terms of sex from one culture to another as the gender is socially constructed phenomena. The researcher presents some evidences how Muslim women are treated in their houses and outside of the houses. The research also focuses on how women are treated if they give birth to the daughters instead of sons. In this research, the focus is on the Turkish-Kurdish Muslim women how they are victimized in many respects such as compulsion to bear sons, to be confined within the houses; their cultures follow together wherever they go.

Heide Moghissi says that Diasporas, who migrate from any countries to the European countries, bring their culture with them. They want women to be loyal to the men. They deny their daughters to important programs. Moghissi claims:

A small minority of diasporans expect women, much more than men, to be loyal to the traditional patriarchal regime of the homeland, to the extent that they deny their daughters the right to participate in coeducational activities such as swimming or field trips. Europeans of the extreme right and neo-fascists treat honour killing and other violence as evidence of a 'barbaric culture' that must be discarded together with 'the immigrants'. (123)

It happens especially in Muslim culture in which women are very much exploited by males in every aspect.

Likewise, he talks about Turkish people who have specific discrimination between men and women.

Kurdish patriarchy, with strong ties to feudal ways of life, is reproduced among diasporans of diverse backgrounds, including rural and urban, educated and illiterate, male and female, young and old, rich and poor. Violence against women, even in the form of honour killing, has occurred in a number of countries. Facing extensive media coverage and increasing Kurdish resistance, especially in Scandinavian countries, a few victims of honour killing were taken to Kurdistan to be murdered there. (123)

Therefore, honour killing takes place to the women who defame their family. The society allows them to kill a woman if she brings any ill reputation in the family.

Elif Shafak's *Honour* is the story of three generations of a culturally split Turkish-Kurdish family that undergoes yet another cultural division when it migrates to London. The story starts when Naze, who had always wanted to have a boy, gives birth to twin girls whom she names Kader (Destiny) and Yeter (Enough). Her



husband, thinking that the names are a challenge to fate, renames them Pembe and Jamila. However, the twins come to be associated with both names in the end and are called Pembe Kader (Pink Destiny) and Jamila Yeter (Enough Beauty).

The novel presents the problems of Muslim women who are victims of males. Men take women as playthings manipulating them in their own ways. Such play of women takes place when Adem falls in love with Jamila but chooses to marry Pembe because, in his opinion, Jamila's honour had been tainted. The union, as both of them later find out, fails to bring either of them any happiness. They move to London while Jamila chooses not to marry and starts helping women during the birthing process.

At its heart, the story is about immigrant life that shelters and holds on to the values and traditions of the native place. Shafak's portrayal of diasporic life in London is similar to that of writers such as Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith and Monica Ali who offer insights into the challenges of immigrants living in London. Pembe's son Iskender describes their ideological dilemma this way.

Shafak weaves the narrative web with the ease of a master storyteller. Pembe, considers being a woman of untenable thoughts and unfounded fears treats her son Iskender as the greatest achievement of her life, probably because he was the son that her mother Naze could never have. Whereas always more ambitious and rebellious than her identical twin Jamila. She is amazed that all three of her children are so different from each other. When the novel opens, Iskender is a man counting his days in a prison in London where he is incarcerated for the crime of murdering his mother. He was only 16 when he killed her in the name of family honour.

A culture treats young boys like kings while oppressing girls. Some readers might find the theme of honour killing too unsubtle or feel that it has been written from a desire to cash in on the popular tendency to see honour killings as daily

happenstance in Muslim communities. But Shafak speaks for young Turkish women. Her version of feminism is one that young women tend to associate with the most as it allows them the freedom to assert their identities without worrying too much about the equality scale between the two genders. Shafak's characters are dynamic and fluid, evolving as the story progresses, in a process of 'becoming' rather than remaining fixed in rigid identities. Their pasts are haunting characters, affecting and shaping their lives in London.

Naze, one of the main characters of the novel, has assimilated that women should be subservient to their husbands. By defending herself, she says to Berzo about her daughters: "No daughter of mine will abandon her husband. If she does, I'll beat the hell out of her, even if I'm dead by then. I'll come back as a ghost!" (11). Her confidence shows that her daughters will follow their husbands without qualm.

Muslim culture is guided by the thought that sons are more important than daughters. Men and women both crave for male babies because they think that they can control everything in the society unlike girls who are dominated and exploited:

Pembe was seventeen years old when she became a mother –young, beautiful and apprehensive. There she was in a room bathed in a dusky light, staring at the cradle, as if she was still not convinced that this baby with his pink, fragile fingers, translucent skin and a blotchy purple mark on his button nose had defied all the odds and survived; that he would, from now on, be her child, hers alone. Here was a son – the son that her mother had craved, and prayed to have throughout her entire life. (17)

From the statement, it can be implied that the desires of having sons is burning in every Muslim women. They take pride of being the mothers of sons rather than

daughters. Moreover, women are dominated, exploited and even beaten if they give birth to daughters.

The desire for sons was so great in Naze that she thought every time about them. She continuously gives birth to nine children, all females but she dies at last before her dreams are fulfilled to give birth to sons: “Naze did not survive. Nor did the baby for long – the baby whose gender she had been wrong about the whole time. Her ninth infant, the child who killed her and then quietly passed away in her cot, was another girl” (19).

Pembe is very proud because she gives birth to a son. She compares the child to Alexander the Great. She is also very happy because unlike her mother she becomes successful to give birth to Iskender. They are Kurdish-Turk, therefore they call him Askander in Kurdish while Iskender in Turkish: “So it was that her first child, the apple of her eye, would become Askander in Kurdish and Iskender in Turkish. When the family immigrated to London, to the children and teachers in his school, he was Alex – and this was the name he would be known by in Shrewsbury Prison, by convicts and guards alike” (25). They change the name to Alex after to going to London. In other words, they change their attitude, name, language as they move to London.

There is contrast between the women who have to serve males and the women who are rulers or are in a high position. As Pembe and Jamalia correspond through letters, the latter is very curious to know about England and the women’s status there. Pembe writes about the Queen, which seems opposite what normal women get such facilities:

The Queen lives in a palace. So big she gets lost in it. But they find her and put her on her throne again. She wears a different dress every day,

and a funnel hat. It has to be the same colour as the dress. Her hands are soft because she puts on gloves and lots of creams , and she doesn't wash the dishes. I saw her pictures at school. She seems nice. (32)

From the statement, it can be interpreted that Pembe is writing what normal women cannot get such things. It shows the position of women in England especially those who come from outside the country because though they are far from their native country, their experience, culture, religion and many more have come together with them.

There is no any disagreement by Muslim women whether they like to marry or not. According to their systems, women are ready to become second, third, fourth wife, etc. They are used by males as their property. Moreover, they compare women after certain age like thirty to a melon gone badly: outside fine inside rotten.

Therefore, a girl who has passed marriageable age must marry a man of any age. It is because of gender discrimination. The narrator describes:

Even so, she could marry a disabled or elderly man, just as she could agree to become someone's second wife – or third or fourth, though that was rare. Only the wife who had been married first was legal, of course, and could go to a hospital or courtroom or a tax register office and claim to be a married woman with legitimate children. However, in this part of the country no one went to such places anyway, so long as you were not in serious trouble or dying of an infection or out of your good mind, in which case what difference would it make whether you were the first wife or the fourth? (34)

Thus, women are considered children producing machine. They do not have position higher than that. If they cannot produce children, they are regarded good for nothing

women.

There is always domination over women. Women are treated differently. Men think that women should be under men otherwise they fall down from the top. The Muslim culture discriminates men and women in such way. Roxana experiences such thing in the society of patriarchy. The narrator explains:

Girls, who aim highest end up falling down the furthest, people always warned. But, even if that were true, even if she would stumble eventually, and even if her dream was destined to be shorter than a butterfly's breathe, it would count for something to have made the attempt, wouldn't it? Roxana was her own creation. She had found herself a name (Roksana, Roxane or Roxie, as men interchangeably said), a nationality, a past, a future and a story to tell. The truth, her truth, was not hidden under layers upon layers, like a Victorian lady's petticoat. It consisted of the total of all the fabrications that made her what she was – a girl from a sleepy town in Bulgaria pretending to be Russian and dancing to Brazilian sambas in a striptease club in the heart of London. (59)

It shows how difficult it was to struggle in her life. She has hidden her identity to be away from difficult situation. She pretends to Russian or Brazilian while dancing in London. It implies that she does not feel happy in the society where patriarchy rules.

Similarly, Pembe is frustrated with her life. She is a woman on the one hand and she is in another country England on the other hand. There is nobody to understand her problem. Her husband, who is one of the men, does not take her as a human being with whom he can consult in any matter. As Pembe does not have any one to share her problem in England, she makes so by writing letter to her younger

sister Jamalia describing her situation in London. Pembe writes:

Since I came to this island, where I have yet to see the sea, I have wished many times that you were by my side. But never as much as I do now. If you were here, I would put my head in your lap, and tell you that I am falling. Will you hold me? Adem is no husband to me. He doesn't come home any more. He has found himself another woman. The children don't know it. I keep everything inside. (90)

Thus, their attachment is more comfortable than she has attachment with her husband.

Pembe never realizes that her husband is a part of her life so that she can share her feelings. She wants to keep close to her sister though Pembe is with her husband.

Pembe says that Adem is no husband to her. There is patriarchal domination over Pembe. In this way, Muslim women are suffering from men in one way or another.

However, there is a great change in women after Naze. Esma, for instance, thinks about her looking at different perspectives around her. She evaluates her position, her relation to other boys how they want to touch her. There seems a bit improvement in the position of women from that of previous times. Esma compares:

I often wondered why female names were so different from male names, more whimsical and dreamlike, as if women were unreal, a figment of one's imagination. Male names embodied power, ability and authority, like Muzaffer, 'the Victorious One;' Faruq, 'One Who Distinguishes Truth from Falsehood'; or Husam al Din, 'the Sword of Faith'. Female names, however, reflected a delicate daintiness, like a porcelain vase. (183)

Here, it shows the consciousness of women how they are different from men. Esma takes the reference from the past and says that women are symbolized weaker beings

than men. Men are compared to be victorious and powerful while women are helpless and weak.

Muslim have unconscious concept that men are strong, confident and protective. Women are under their control. Although women are becoming strong gradually in physically and mentally, they still are limited to their incapable psychological trait. It may be reason that Muslim women always desire for giving birth to sons. They do not stop bearing children until they get sons. Naze is the example:

One sunny day Berzo had taken his eight daughters to visit a consecrated pool in Urfa. Naze was about to give birth again, despite her age, and the family had gone there to pray for a son. The clouds were buffering across the vast, generous sky. People were everywhere, a soft murmur of voices, like the faint rustling of leaves. Overwhelmed by everything they saw, the girls huddled together, timid but thrilled.

(187)

Here, we can find that women are presented as timid and dependent as they huddle together. Psychologically, women think that they are weaker than men. They should be protected by men in many cases.

However, there is a gap between man and woman because they can understand of similar things when they have similar sex. In other words, what a woman can understand another woman, it is almost impossible for a man to understand a woman. Therefore, women can exchange everything with their same sexed people. Jamila, for example, gives her daughter same name to her dead twin to remind her of her twin sister. She is happy to give birth to her daughter though culturally it is not widely accepted. The narrator explains:

She [Jamalia] was in a city on fire, alone and heavily pregnant. She had to find a place to give birth but everywhere she turned there was turmoil. Buildings came crumbling down, people dashed left and right, dogs howled in fright. In the midst of the commotion Jamila saw a huge bed with thick carved posts and silky pillows. She lay there and gave birth to a baby girl. Sometimes inquired as to her daughter's name, and she said, 'I shall call her Pembe after my dead twin.' (189)

The relation between Jamalia and Pembe show that they are very close to each other not only physically but also mentally and psychologically. Although, Pembe is no more in the world, Jamila remembers her as if she is close by.

It is not because women need sons but because of the society and cultures they want to bear sons. Women are called successful or failure in terms of whom they give birth to: sons or daughters. The narrator describes:

Suddenly everything that had been fermenting inside her – her shame at not being able to give a baby to a man who had married her solely to have a son; her agony at being as barren as a desert; and her resentment at having to take care of another woman's eight children –erupted into a sharp, sour fury at Hediye. (265)

Thus, it is considered a sin for them. Inwardly, the Muslim people especially traditional ones believe that they are bearing daughters because they have not made god happy.

C. L. Bolzendahl and Myers D. J. endorse this thesis by arguing that because women have more vested interests in increased egalitarianism; men are expected to be less egalitarian than women. Both longitudinal trend studies and panel studies note that men are less gender egalitarian than are women. Young men in particular are



hesitant to challenge the cultural standard of the mother role and the expectation of negative child outcomes due to maternal employment. Perhaps this hesitation is because in general men benefit from women's unequal performance of family and household task.

Similarly, R. L. Blumberg and Coleman M. T. maintain that "male control of the top echelons of the political economy affects the national policy agenda, the opportunity structure that women encounter, and the prevailing ideology of what women's place in that structure should be" (234). The unequal distribution of opportunities may affect women's perception toward gender inequality. In addition, dominant gender ideologies that devalue women's work may condition the perception over gender inequality.

On the other hand, S. Gupta says that marriage is a highly gendered institution. Men who enter coresidential unions (either marriages or cohabitations) behave in more traditional ways than they did when living as a single person. He finds that entering marriage typically led to young women becoming less egalitarian, whereas men in their early twenties who married become slightly more egalitarian. Similarly, Moore and Vannemen finds: "Individuals who were divorced or separated were more egalitarian than were currently married individuals. Furthermore, the gender role approach posits that men and women are socialized to conform to socially constructed gender roles in a marriage and housework is divided accordingly" (5). Thus, they argue that marriage is one of the causes of gender inequality. They cannot go beyond the box of traditional thought of dominant and dominated role of men and women respectively.

We can find similarly situation in the novel when women are exploited under their male counter parts. Pembe feels same as she feels dominated in her house:

Pembe was in the kitchen, humming an old Kurdish love song, 'Susan Susie', which had a melancholy that weighed down the spirits of the singer, as most old Kurdish love songs tended to. She was, however, far from forlorn. Though her mind was in a whirl and her heart ached for Elias, Pembe couldn't help but feel a sense of bliss. Her sister's presence had renewed her faith in life and given her fresh hope. (311)

Thus, Pembe feels she is a victim of gender inequality. She has to serve male members in the family. She realizes that as long as she is with male members, she has to help and work for others.

Thus, women in Muslim cultures are treated differently from other cultures around the world. Although the preference of daughter is decreasing in other cultures, here women are dominated inside and outside of the house if they do not give birth to sons. Their living is troublesome because women are not allowed to independent lives. Women are punished for the crime they never committed because the male societies are guided by prejudice over women. Naze, one of the principal characters, is victim of male chauvinism in the Turkish-Kurdish family though they are migrated to England. The novel, thus, portrays the female characters who are only actors in Muslim culture. They are becoming slaves in their own houses. They do not have any say in their own houses. Male counterparts victimize Muslim women. The women are used as only child producing machine. To show them who they are women have to go beyond patriarchal rules and prove themselves as capable beings.

### **Conclusion: Domination of Naze at Her Own Home**

The thesis deals with the gender role in Muslim culture. The role of women and men differs from one society to another in the culture. The researcher focuses on gender studies in which a woman, particularly in Muslim culture, experiences or feels

discrimination. Generally, patriarchal ideology determines the role of women and men in traditional society. By analyzing through the perspective of gender studies to the novel, the researcher came to the conclusion that Muslim women are punished for the crime they never committed simply they could not give birth to sons.

When the protagonist of the novel Naze fails to give birth to a son, she suffers much from the family members. As a result, she dies in the hope of bearing a child. Her twin daughters Pembe and Jamila play significant role. The novel pictures the picture of the family, which migrates to London and faces problems such as cultural split. Even after giving birth to a son named Iskender, Pembe does not feel happy because he wants to dominate the world. He does not respect anyone.

In Muslim culture, girls are controlled, dominated and confined in limited areas while boys are considered like leaders or kings. They have the traditional idea that a boy can reprimand a girl privately or publicly. It does not become issue when a boy has relation with many women but for a woman it is a taboo. The novelist enquires the cultural mindset that ignores a man's extramarital affairs and betrayals yet does not allow a woman to be with someone after her husband has abandoned her.

Women are dominated by male counterparts inside and outside of house. The researcher proved that gender role is cultural setting rather than natural because it differs from one culture to another. A particular society determines the roles of men and women. Marriage, children and family are crucial entities for women as they are used for bearing children and rearing them. Their most part of their life is spent with children. She finds the new society frustrating because she feels that she does not find the appropriate society to adapt with.

Pembe, for instance, is frustrated with her life. Nobody understands her problem as she is in England far from her own original culture. There is nobody to

understand her problem. Her husband does not take her as a human being with whom he can consult in any matter. As Pembe does not have any one to share her problem in England, she makes so by writing letter to her younger sister Jamalia describing her situation in London.

Pembe never realizes that her husband is a part of her life so that she can share her feelings. She wants to keep close to her sister though Pembe is with her husband. Pempe says that Adem is no husband to her. It is very clear that there is patriarchal domination over Pembe. In this way, Muslim women are suffering from men in one way or another. In this way, women in Muslim cultures are treated differently from other cultures around the world.

Therefore, gender discrimination is a hindrance for women. They are not treated as equal beings but different. Males blame females for not bearing sons while scientifically women have no role to determine the sex. Although they are being educated, their thinking level is far below. The research is just a miniature part of the global study. The researcher hopes that it can contribute a little to carry out further research how women are dominated and what they can do to equalize their position despite patriarchy.

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