

**A Study of Gender Discrimination in *Honor* by Elif Shafak**

**Mahnoor Arshad Abbasi**

[mahnoorabbasi1111@outlook.com](mailto:mahnoorabbasi1111@outlook.com)

BS English Student, Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore

**Dr Fareeha Javed**

[fjaved71@gmail.com](mailto:fjaved71@gmail.com)

Associate Professor of English, Government Graduate College for Women, Gulberg, Lahore

**Corresponding Author: \* Mahnoor Arshad Abbasi** [mahnoorabbasi1111@outlook.com](mailto:mahnoorabbasi1111@outlook.com)

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**ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this paper was to study gender discrimination in the novel Honor by Elif Shafak. Gender discrimination is a type of practice in which men and women are treated differently on the base of their gender. Women suffer more than men as a result of this prejudice, and they have to live under patriarchal system. Despite the fact that the world is moving towards postmodernism, many women are forced to limit themselves to exclusively serving their male family members because of gender inequality. In this paper, many female characters have been discussed, such as Naze, Aisha, Pembe, and Hediye who had to endure discrimination due to patriarchy. Gender studies have served as a theoretical framework for this study. Gender studies is a sociological subject that promotes gender equality and combats prejudice towards women and other marginalized groups. In this paper, the perspectives of gender studies pioneers Judith Butler, S. Gupta, Moore, and Vannemen were utilized to investigate several aspects of gender discrimination, including its major institutes, its forms, and discrimination against women in the educational environment. It was concluded that discrimination affects not just individuals but also the entire nation and it should be eliminated at any cost.*

**Keywords:** Gender discrimination; patriarchy; marginalized groups; Elif Shafak; Honor

**INTRODUCTION**

In Elif Shafak's *Honor*, the division between men's and women's societal roles is questioned as it relates to the Victorian system of patriarchal society. We discover that there are two distinct universes throughout the book: the macho world of males and the feminine world of women. The ego, rigidity, and stress on intellect over emotion are characteristics of the masculine. The feminine, in contrast, is characterized by intuition and compromise.

The novel presents the story of Naze, the novel's main character. She has eight children yet is unable to conceive a son. While expecting a son, Naze suddenly passes away. Her identical twin daughters Pembe and Jamila also encounter plenty of challenges. Pembe does not feel joyful even after giving birth to a baby boy named Iskender because he is too proud of himself for just being a man. Esma, Pembe's daughter, is cognizant of how harshly society treats women. Her brother goes to a jail for killing his own mother Pembe because she loves someone although her husband has left her. In retribution, Esma wants to kill her brother, but she is prevented from doing so because she is a woman.

The book also covers a different form of civilization, one where men are worshiped as kings or leaders while women are enslaved, kept in little places, and subservient. It does not matter if a boy treats a girl badly. While it is not a problem for boys to date more than one woman, it is not acceptable for girls. The

author tackles the cultural paradigm that allows men to have extramarital affairs and betrayals but prevents women from dating after their spouses have left them.

Turkish history, women studies, and literature have all been topics of discussion in Shafak's works, which include titles like Ottoman History from the Margins; Turkey and Cultural Identities; Women and Writing; Sexualities and Gender in the Muslim World; Exile, Literature, and Imagination, and The Politics of Memory. While talking about gender discrimination, in an interview with William Skidelsky for The Guardian, she says: "In Turkey, men write and women read. I want to see this change" (Coachability foundation). Shafak takes a piercing, unflinching look at the trauma women's minds and bodies are subjected to in a social system defined by patriarchal codes in her works. In her novels, she frequently writes about gender discrimination especially in *Honor*.

*Honor* is the reflection of stereotypical mindsets and unjust social system where gender discrimination is the central theme. In order to develop more understanding of Elif Shafak's perception of gender discrimination and its brutal aspects, it is significant to conduct a study of gender discrimination of her novel as it does not only represent Shafak's views on gender discrimination but also helps the readers to have an understanding of unfair system affecting the lives of people especially women. This study therefore aims to study gender discrimination in Elif Shafak's *Honor* and attempts to address the following research questions:

- How are the different aspects of gender discrimination affecting women more than men?
- How do women have to face gender discrimination in different fields?
- Why only women are killed in the name of honor?
- How is violence one of the major weapons of patriarchy?
- What is women's reaction to the use of violence against them?

### **Different Aspects of Gender Discrimination**

The word honor is itself a gender discriminatory word. Thus, honor refers to a system in which people are assigned rank and the right to precedence based on how efficiently they preserve a code of honor, which for men includes employing violence to prevent or redress misdeeds and for women it means maintaining virginity and loyalty to family. One of the well-known traditional patriarchal ideas is that women bear shame while males carry the weighty word honor, and women should never destroy it otherwise her relatives murder her to restore the family's honor because honor means everything to them as we see in the novel that Iskender kills his own mother in the name of honor. Honor killings are a terrible reality for many girls because of the patriarchal value structure. Tradition dictates that killing girls who have been raped or kidnapped is necessary to protect the family honor from being tarnished by a woman's sexual misconduct, especially if she is suspected of having sex before marriage or accused of adultery. In some situations, even women who are accused of adultery or premarital sex should be slain.

Despite the fact that both genders are equally at fault in the eyes of Islam and the law, women typically receive the harshest punishment. This is a gender biased phenomenon and only women have to die in the name of honor as we see twice in the novel first with Hediye at the hands of her father Berzo and second with Pembe killed by her son Iskender. Different questions come into mind while talking about honor killing and they will be answered here. The very first question is why only women are slaughtered in the name of honor? And the response is that patriarchy just does this to appease their male ego as the narrator says. Men want to impose their will on women, and if women do not follow them, then men think it goes against their male ego, and the only way to satisfy their ego, is to kill that woman and set an example for others, not to go against patriarchy. The other question which comes into mind is "Are men and women punished equally for equivalent offenses? Are men also killed in the name of honor"? And the answer is "no". Males and females are not punished equally for same mistakes where a woman has to die when she

taints family's honor and males are not slightly bothered for doing such acts which are the cruellest kind of discrimination against women.

Shafak puts it in these words:

*So it was that in the land where Pink Destiny and Enough Beauty were born, 'honor' was more than a word. It was also a name. You could call your child 'Honor', as long as it was a boy. Men had honor. Old men, middle-aged men, even schoolboys so young that they still smelled of their mothers' milk. Women did not have honor. Instead, they had shame. And, as everyone knew, Shame would be a rather poor name to bear. (14)*

The other aspect of development of gender discrimination is that it mostly transfers through the females as we see in the novel, mother Naze transfers the patriarchal system to her children. It gives the notion that daughters are taught by the matriarchy that they are less capable physically and intellectually than sons, and this process is passed down from generation to generation. Males are taught by women that they were made of thick, black cloth. It denotes that they tell women that the lightest fabric was used to create them and males themselves are dominant, powerful, and easily prevail over women. Whereas women are oppressed and weak. As Shafak says:

*There were always two sides, and two sides only. Win or lose. Dignity or disgrace, and little consolation for those who got the wrong one. It was all because women were made of the lightest cambric, Naze continued, whereas men were cut of thick, dark fabric. That is how God had tailored the two: one superior to the other. As to why He had done that, it wasn't up to human beings to question. What mattered was that the colour black didn't show stains, unlike the colour white, which revealed even the tiniest speck of dirt. (14)*

Most people are unaware of this aspect of gender discrimination, but it is illustrated in the passage below. Mostly patriarchy snatches the freedom of women and limits them in the name of their protection. Due to this, males enjoy superiority because they impose a lot of rules on women in the name of protection. Women feel their life bonded and stifling because of these imposed rules. Shafak says:

*People are being beaten up on the streets. An old man was knocked unconscious by stones just last week. What fun are you talking about?' 'Oh, so you're the big hero. Save us, please.' The slap. It came suddenly, as if from out of nowhere. Esma held her cheek, too shocked to move. 'You stay away from this,' he said, without looking at her. 'I warn you.' She watched him strut back to the café, hurrying. Once she thought she knew her elder brother like the back of her hand, but no longer. He had always protected her from others. Yet now, for the first time, Esma felt as if she had to protect herself from him. (201)*

The idea of oneself in opposition to others is a further manifestation of gender discrimination that is highlighted in the previous quote. Women are generally treated like others in sexism. For themselves, men start to think broadly, but simultaneously they start to think conservatively about women. The protagonist, Iskender, who makes his English girlfriend pregnant at the young age of 16, tries to convince her to have an abortion. However, he adopts a more cautious approach when speaking about his mother.

Men have the conscious and unconscious belief that they are powerful, self-assured, and guardians of women. Although women are rapidly developing physical and mental strength, they are nonetheless constrained by their incapability as a psychological attribute. Despite the fact that Iskender's father had abandoned his mother, she currently lives like a widow and is residing alone. But she is not permitted to find a companionship for herself. On the other hand, almost every male character is in extra marital relationship in the novel. Shafak writes:

*That's not true! Why do you always get so worked up when I mention her?' 'Because we've talked this through. We made a decision! Together! I went to my uncle, got the money. I found the clinic. I made an appointment. Twice! You kept postponing. Finally, we agreed to go ahead. And now the princess says she's changed her mind. (220)*

In the novel, gender studies show that having a son rather than a daughter is not just a simple desire but a much wild one. It is believed that men have a responsibility of continuing the ancestral line. Not having a son is considered disrespectful to the ancestors in that society. Females have such a strong desire to gain power through male offspring that they even put their own lives in danger. As is clear from the passage that follows, the mother believes that her womb should be divided into pieces, and her son should be taken out. Despite how painful this act is, the mother is willing to do it for a son, who eventually causes her death.

At that moment Naze, lying there with her eyes clamped shut, dancing with death, bleeding umbrage, lifted her head and yelled: 'No, you whore!' It was a cry so shrill and forceful; it didn't sound as if it had come out of a human being. The woman in bed had turned into a wild animal, famished and feral, ready to attack anyone who stood in her way. She was running in a thick forest where the sun cast shimmering gold and ochre reflections on the leaves – free in a way she had never been before. Those within hearing distance suspected she had lost her mind. Only the mad could scream like that. 'Cut me, you bitch! Take him out,' Naze ordered and then laughed, as if she had already crossed a threshold beyond which everything was a joke. '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 17-18)

Most women pass away while giving birth to a child. A study demonstrates that at the age of 37, women typically generate about 25,000 eggs, and as their age increases, this production declines. Only 1,000 eggs remain to be fertilized at age 51, but in the instance of Naze, who passes away at the age of 49, this strongly shows that there are still many women who are illiterate because they are unaware that pregnancy at this stage may be fatal. On the other hand, males are more educated than women in the novel but they use their knowledge to upgrade themselves. Another aspect of gender discrimination is that women conceive repeatedly in desire of a boy under family pressure or for other factors. Yet because they do not view newborn girls with the same blessing as newborn boys, but end up dying.

*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. (Shafak 18)*

Another aspect that contributes to the development of gender discrimination has been identified and it is passed down from generation to generation. Naze, however, was unable to conceive a baby boy throughout her life and eventually passed away as a result. But, Pembe, her daughter becomes successful in having a baby boy just at the age of 17. She treats him like a king and considers him to be her greatest accomplishment which demonstrates that she not only considers males superior but also transfers it to her children. As a result, her son later becomes ready to murder his mother. He believes that he is honorable and has the right to do everything since he sees himself as a sultan, as her mother refers to him. He believes that no one else has the right to do what they want to do, which he considers incorrect. He therefore tries to kill his mother when she fulfills her own wishes.

Here she was, only seventeen and already breastfeeding a son. She couldn't help suspecting that from somewhere in the heavens, under a watery light, her mother was watching her with envy. "Eight births, five miscarriages, one dead baby, and not one was a son . . . And here you are already giving a healthy boy to my hare-brained daughter. Why, Allah? Why? (Shafak 18)

The media's influence on the propagation of gender inequality is another important factor in the development of gender discrimination in which mostly male heroes are wealthy, powerful, and successful, whereas all female heroines are poor, submissive, and helpless. When Pembe, in her childhood, goes to watch a movie and sees the futility of heroin and the power completeness of the hero, it affects her psychology and she thinks that women can do nothing and are dependent on males. She believes that being married will bring her a prince charming-like young man who will save her from the hardships of her life, but the reality is totally different.

*The heroine was a poor, pretty girl in love with a boy who was very rich, very spoiled. But he changed. Such was the magic of love. While everyone – starting with the boy's parents – disparaged the young lovers and connived to separate them, they would meet secretly under a willow tree on the banks of a river. There they would hold hands and sing songs as sad as a sigh. (Shafak 12)*

According to Butler, gender is an idea that people have made rather than a fact. Gender is not itself the word, rather it is a concept that people define collectively. Women are viewed as the weaker and more objective being in traditional gender roles, which are viewed through the prism of patriarchal culture. Butler contends further that men act in this way because they view themselves as superior and women as inferior. They believe that women in the society should accept and respect patriarchy because they do not have their own distinct thought processes. The pioneer of gender studies, Judith Butler analyses gender as a fictional product 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)*

According to Butler, society determines the role of a gender. Hence, Naze illustrates the usual societal mindset where society believes that a woman's purpose is to be an obedient daughter and that a woman's ultimate objective in life is to be a wife and serve her husband till she passes away. Whether he is kind or cruel, there is no way for a woman to go back, which raises the question: If a husband is kind, it is alright, but if he is not nice a person, why are women unable to leave their husbands? The answer is due to stereotypical thinking of society women cannot dare to do anything. They cannot leave their tyrant husband because it is their role as a woman to tolerate brutality of the man which is defined by society for her, as a weaker gender. The only option left to them is to put up with the brutality because even their own parents would find it difficult to accept them if they returned home after marriage. As a result, most women are expected to be patient and put up with the cruelty. This mindset serves as a catalyst to provoke discrimination against women. Shafak writes:

*Go and bring me tea,' Berzo snapped. 'You talk too much.' 'Perish the thought,' Naze murmured as she headed to the kitchen. '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!' That threat, empty and impetuous though it was, would become a prophecy. Even long after she had passed away, Naze would come back to haunt her daughters, some more than others. After all, she was a stubborn woman. She never forgot". (10)*

Another most terrible aspect of gender discrimination can be seen in the novel and that is psychological torture which women have to face by patriarchal system. In the following passage it is told that a woman Hediya is presented a rope to hang herself because she elopes with someone but there is no such punishment for a man Adem who leaves his family to shack up with a mistress with no redress.



Shortly before they left the house, she saw her stepmother carry in the large, round, brass tray used for all their meals. The woman spread the dining cloth on the floor, set up the wooden base and balanced the tray on top. For a second Pembe thought she was serving Hediye some food. But an odd meal it would be. There were no plates. No water. No bread. Hediye, in the meantime, did not budge. A statue of salt. The last thing Pembe saw was a cauldron being brought in. Dying to know what was inside, she took a chance. 'I'm not feeling well. My throat is sore. Dying to know what was inside, she took a chance. 'I'm not feeling well. My throat is sore. 'I'm not feeling well. My throat is sore. Perhaps I should stay at home.' The woman shook her head. 'Your father's orders. Nobody stays in the house.' ... She had hanged herself with the rope served to her in the cauldron". (Shafak 246-248)

If we analyse women's status from a gender viewpoint, we discover that because of inequality in various socio-economic aspects and the patriarchal culture, women are even more susceptible to devastation. Equal treatment of women and men results in safer and healthier societies. Gender parity is a fundamental human right. Gender equity is advantageous to everyone.

### **Major Institutes of Gender Discrimination, its Types and Gender Discrimination in Educational Sphere**

According to some proponents of gender studies, marriage is the most prominent institution of gender discrimination where after marriage males believe they are superior and leaders of the associated women and believe that after marriage women must spend their lives according to their male counterparts. Instead of trying to comprehend women's point of view, men try to impose their will on them and expect them not to question patriarchy. They also depict the most realistic picture of genders and say that after marriage male emancipation increases and women become more subjugated. Men think that now women become their property and they can treat them as they want. According to S. Gupta, marriage is a strongly gendered institution. Men who enter co- residential relationships (either marriages or cohabitations) behave more traditionally than men who live alone. He discovers that young women who marry tend to become less egalitarian, whereas men in their early twenties who marry tend to become slightly more egalitarian.

Similarly, Moore and Vannemen argue:

*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)*

As a result, Moore and Vannemen contend that marriage is one of the root causes for gender disparity. They are unable to think outside the box of traditional ideas about men's and women's dominating and dominated roles. The following paragraph discusses marriage as a primary source of patriarchal empowerment. As we see in the novel that the Esma's father is gambling and the mother feeding his children. It is a scenario that most families experience when males disregard their duties and all burdens fall on women, who must bear them at all costs. Patriarchy believes that by only marrying women, they become their masters and may treat them whatever way they want.

*My mother first started to work shortly after my father had gambled away two months' worth of wages. Suddenly, money was needed like never before. While Iskender was at school, Mum started to go to the houses of the rich, where she would take care of their toddlers, cook their food, clean their rooms, scour their saucepans, iron their clothes and occasionally offer a shoulder to cry on. I would be left in the care of a neighbour, an old woman with a sharp tongue and poor hearing, but otherwise nice. (Shafak 70)*

Even in this circumstance, where a male neglects his duties in a marital contract, he is not treated as women are. If a woman is wrong, she is regarded as wrong, but if a male is wrong, woman is punished for his flaws, which is the greatest sort of discrimination. The traditional thinking of patriarchy is ridiculed in the next quote, where man accuses woman of being the reason for his infidelity as she is insufficient for him, but the question is if a woman does the same, will she be forgiven, like a male in a marriage contract? And the answer is no because marriage is the most prominent institution of gender discrimination in which men are thought to be superior and women are thought to be inferior. Men are free to do whatever they want, whether wrong or right, but women must bear whatever is written in their destiny by their male counterparts, and if they object, they are considered disobedient wives. How absurd that the creators (males) of these rules do not apply these standards to themselves, but instead discriminate and believe they are superior beings to whom no rules apply.

*She knows that he's moved in with another woman.' 'Well, what do you expect, if she's not woman enough to keep her husband home . . . ' Tariq said, leaving the sentence unfinished. Adem should have never married that woman. There were better girls for him and yet, inexplicably, he had fallen for Pembe. Why her, and why so suddenly, Tariq had never understood. Not that he didn't see Pembe's beauty. But in his eyes, this only added to her unreliability. Men were mistaken when they coveted attractive women. They could flirt with them in their bachelor days, but a spouse ought to have attributes other than good looks. From the very beginning he had opposed this marriage. But Adem had been alone in that godforsaken Kurdish village when he asked for Pembe's hand. Alone, and terribly young. (Shafak 143)*

According to gender studies, marriage causes young women to become less egalitarian. Where men are allowed to have extramarital affairs, women are not allowed to have a male friend; they are not even allowed to look at another man, even if her husband has abandoned her. He merely uses her to raise his children. Yet the question is why they do not retaliate? And the answer is because most women do not want to reform the patriarchal system. Shafak writes in the novel:

*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. Always. My heart is full of words unsaid, tears unshed. I don't blame him. I blame myself. It was the biggest mistake of our lives that I was his bride, instead of you. It's true, he never loved me the way he loved you. He is a man who has many regrets and no courage. I feel sorry for him. (84)*

The narrator recounts how women function in marriages where men can do anything and mistreat women in all respects, including verbally and physically. Even on the most basic issues, they beat them. Women have to endure this insult from their male counterparts. Why women cannot retaliate? Women have to bear everything with patience, either by choice or by force. On the other hand, men have become slightly less egalitarian, and the answer is mostly in the fact that Middle Eastern women are financially and emotionally dependent on their male counterparts. They are not well educated and have no source of income, that is why they cannot stand independently in the society and they need a male, so they have to face brutality.

*He circled the van and opened his wife's door. 'Get out!' 'Oh, please,' Aisha said, her face ashen. 'I said get out!' Grabbing her by the arm, Baba dragged her towards the bonnet of the van, which had popped up when they came to a stop. He said, 'Since you know so much about cars, fix this.' Not a single muscle moved on her face. Baba shoved her head down into the engine and stopped only when her forehead hit it with a thud. 'What? Can you not fix it?' She mumbled, words so strangled neither Adem nor his brothers could make out their meaning. But they all heard Baba announce, 'Then zip your mouth and don't tell me how to drive. (Shafak 53)*

The sense of superiority and pride that the patriarchy enjoys is another sort of prejudice that can be seen in the following quote where a man is humiliating his wife by saying that how will she know about car repairing which is a technical task which clearly shows that males think themselves to be superior. They think that only they can do higher and technical work and they look down upon women's household work and do not want to do their tasks and even do not want women to interfere in their work.

*As we can see, the males feel that all low-level and household tasks belong to women, while all high-level tasks belong to men. Males typically hold managerial jobs because they not only possess greater decision-making authority, but also more social networking chances, which is a crucial factor in their dominance. Women must sacrifice their familial obligations in order to pursue a successful profession. "Do I tell you how to cook lentils? Of course I don't. Because that's not my job. And driving isn't your job, woman! What do you know about cars?". (Shafak 52)*

The family is another major institution that promotes gender discrimination. In the passage below, we see that a mother refuses to name her daughter because she does not want baby girls, but the mother also refuses to name her son because she thinks that if she does so then Azrael, the angel of death would not be able to identify him and snatch his breath. But the question is why this discrimination occur? The situation is the same, except there is hate for infant girls and affection for male child, which is the cruellest type of gender discrimination by families. And the answer is stereotypical thinking of matriarchy that they can gain power in family and society by giving birth to a male baby.

*Such was Pembe's unease that she refused to give her son a name. It was a way of protecting him from Azrael, the Angel of Death. If the baby had no particular affiliation, she thought, Azrael would not be able to find him, even if he wished to. Thus, the boy spent his first year on earth without a name, like an envelope with no address. As well as his second, third and fourth years. When they had to call him, they would say, 'Son!' or 'Hey, lad!'. (Shafak 20)*

The following passage demonstrates how discrimination affects women's consciousness and forces them to consider how they differ from males. Esma uses the analogy from the past to claim that women are represented as weaker beings than males because like their name they are more easily crushed down. Women are viewed as fragile and frail, whereas males are portrayed as victorious and powerful like their name suggests.

*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. With names such as Nilüfer, 'Lotus Flower', or Gülseren, 'Spreading Roses', or Binnaz, 'A Thousand Blandishments', women were decorations for this world, pretty trimmings on the side, but not too essential. (Shafak 170)*

The phrase "gender discrimination" refers to two different categories of illegal workplace conduct: Making decisions that give an employment benefit exclusively based on an employee's gender or sex is the first of these. Examples of this kind of conduct include refusing to hire a woman, elevating a woman above a man purely on the basis of gender, or paying women less than males for the same work. Sexual harassment is the second form of unlawful gender discrimination. Discrimination in a hostile work environment is the most prevalent kind of sexual harassment. When a co-worker or supervisor's actions make the workplace unfriendly, threatening, or offensive, this happens. A hostile work environment can also result from conduct that hinders an individual's capacity to do their duties



*One afternoon, while Mum was cooking and I was playing under the kitchen table, the woman's husband appeared. There was a faint, sour odour emanating from him – aftershave and whisky. His eyes were bloodshot but oddly amused. Unaware of my presence, he staggered towards Mum and grabbed her sides. 'Hush,' the man said, putting his finger to his lips. 'They're all sleeping.' They're all sleeping. They won't see us. They're all sleeping. So, we can sleep too. I'll buy you nice things. Shoes, bags, clothes, a pair of golden earrings .... (Shafak 71)*

The novel contains examples of sexual harassment, which is the second form of gender discrimination. Women not only have to face work place harassment but also, they are paid less as compared to men. As we see in the novel, our protagonist gets sexually harassed by the family's overseer. He values her body more than her work, and when she rejects him, he stops paying her salary and viciously abuses her for not fulfilling his personal needs. This kind of discrimination is prevalent in the modern culture, where many women experience workplace harassment due to which they suffer monetarily and psychologically. But the question is whether workplace harassment affects that individual or the entire nation? And the answer is, if employees have to focus on dealing with sexual harassment, their attention span for work may be drastically reduced, and we will undoubtedly suffer losses on a global scale. As we see that our protagonist has to face sexual harassment in her work place and she leaves the job.

*You're a good woman, a saint. Please have pity on me. My wife will never know. Neither will your husband. They're all sleeping. I'm not a bad man. But I am a man, like any other, and I have needs. My wife isn't a woman any more. She's changed since the baby, always weeping, whining. The entire city is sleeping. My mother pushed the man against the wall; in his drunken state he offered little resistance. His hands dangled at his sides, his body slackened as if it were empty, like a soft toy. Yanking me with one hand, grabbing her handbag with the other, Mum stomped down the corridor, but then realized we the other, Mum stomped down the corridor, but then realized we didn't have enough money to go home. 'Sir . . .' she said. 'You haven't given me my wages.' He was standing by the door, slightly teetering. 'You want money?' he asked, sounding surprised. 'It's my monthly –' He cut in. 'You treat me like this and on top of that you want my money? What a bitch you are!'. (Shafak 71)*

Women appear to experience harassment at work in addition to being devalued as candidates for higher education. Most people believe that a women's life should be spent in getting married rather than going to school, but the question is why do they think so? The answer is education will empower women and make them aware of their rights. Once they acknowledge the rights that Islam has granted them, in addition to their legal rights, they will certainly eradicate the roots of gender discrimination against them.

*'What's a constitution?' she asked suspiciously. 'The law, you ignorant woman! The big book! There are things that are allowed, things that are forbidden, and if you don't know the difference, you're in deep trouble.' Naze clucked her tongue, still not convinced. 'How's that going to help my daughters get married?' 'What do you know? If one day their husbands treat them badly, they won't have to put up with it. They can take their children and leave.' 'Oh, where will they go?' Berzo hadn't thought about that. 'They can seek shelter in their father's house of course. (Shafak 10)*

From all the above discussion, it is concluded that gender inequality is obviously an urgent problem in the world. Despite the fact that its volume has decreased significantly in the developed countries, it still persists and causes many people in underdeveloped countries to suffer from its consequences on a daily basis. And there are several factors that contribute to gender prejudice that are difficult to address. However, academic equality, equal rights in marriage, equal access to economic resources, equal compensation, no workplace harassment, and progressive attitudes of people are reasons to believe that

gender inequality will be eliminated in the future. Then, perhaps, everyone would be able to live in equality regardless of gender.

## CONCLUSION

This paper studied gender discrimination against women in the light of Elif Shafak's novel *Honor*. Gender discrimination is primarily a result of the roles that society has established for both genders. The researcher concentrated on gender studies in which male prejudice is experienced or felt by females. In a traditional society, men and women generally play different roles that are dictated by patriarchal ideology. By examining the novel from the standpoint of gender studies, this study concludes that women are being punished for a crime that they do not commit, for instance, they cannot give birth to a baby boy.

The elimination of gender discrimination is one of the key components of a democratic society. The stereotyped society itself is the underlying cause of this contagious sickness. Generally speaking, this form of disparity exists everywhere in the world and has been so for a very long period. It is time for the entire globe to work together to eliminate this outdated idea. The Nobel Committee stated that if we do not provide women equal rights and opportunities, we would not be able to achieve democracy and peace.

To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get educated and develop, gender discrimination must be monitored at every stage. Hence, regardless of gender, everyone needs to start in life with an education and other chances. To accomplish this, the society must unite. This paper just covered a miniature part of the global study. The researcher hopes that it can contribute a little to carrying out further research on how women are dominated and what they can do to equalize their position despite patriarchy? What changes in disciplinary and cultural environments affect gender? If matriarchy comes in power, will it damage the society same as patriarchy does?

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