



# Intra family Violence Against Women In Patriarchal Societies: A Thematic Analysis Of Sexual Exploitation In ElifShafak's Novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds In This Strange World*

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**ABSTRACT-** The study focuses on the violation of women's rights by members of their families in the patriarchal family system as demonstrated in ElifShafak's novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. It is about how women are being suppressed in their families that they can't even stand up for their basic rights and depend on a supportive figure to fight for their rights. The worst kind of violation is that women are sexually harassed by power. The theory of radical feminism is applied to the novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* after the close reading. The theory is about male supremacy and the violation of women's rights, and patriarchy is the underlying reason for the infringement. This study analyses the sexual exploitation of children by close relatives and the effect of violence and unsupportive patriarchal families on women's lives. The private patriarchy forces a woman to revolt in one way or another, and then the political patriarchy engulfs her. Sexual abuse, revolt, prostitution, and then the death of the main character is the journey of the destruction of women and the overlapping of such patriarchies. The character studied in the lens is abused by her uncle, and when she gets pregnant, her father doesn't help her, and she ends up as a prostitute. This character is discussed in the context of male dominance, gender inequality and patriarchy outlined in Radical Feminism. Whenever women are abused and have no supportive family, they often end up in the worst circumstances. This research highlights the role of parental training, intrafamily relations, and family support in women's lives.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Sexual Harassment, Feminism, Women's Rights, Prostitution.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents sexual harassment and violations of women's rights in a patriarchal society as depicted in ElifShafak's novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. Intrafamily violence, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse are all serious threats to women. Radical feminists consider this use in the context of male dominance. They believe patriarchy is to blame for women's oppression within the family. In a nuclear family, the father makes all of the family's major decisions. There are many instances in which female children have been sexually abused by their fathers or other male relatives. The harassment has a long history, and the children have been abused for a long time. They surrender because of patriarchy in the family, and if the women object to the violence, they will suffer the worst consequences as a result of male supremacy.

The novel chosen for this study contains numerous instances of patriarchy both within and outside the family. When women's rights are violated by their own families, they have the only option of rebelling. In the patriarchal world, women's exploitation by the family, state, and society humiliates them to a great extent. The novel has been analyzed by looking at the underlying phenomenon of exploitation by the family members in a patriarchal society.

### **Problem Statement**

Within families, domestic violence in the form of sexual abuse is on the rise. It is a common misconception that married women are the only ones who are subjected to violence by their husbands. The truth is that sexual abuse by relatives can have a devastating effect on children and women. In Pakistan, there is a growing trend toward a joint family system. It is, however, undergoing a refashioning, with people considering separate family systems. However, child sexual abuse is on the rise. If a girl is subjected to sexual harassment by her own relatives from childhood to adulthood, her life will be destroyed if she is not supported by her family.

### Significance of the study

This work is significant because it emphasises the importance of parental training. When their children are with their uncles, aunts, and other relatives, most parents believe that they are safe. This study may be useful in eradicating the parental neglect of their children. The majority of parents believe that their children are safe with relatives, but who knows what their intentions are. The study also emphasises the gap between parents and children, which prevents children from communicating and discussing their problems with their parents. The research is important in understanding the patriarchy within the family. Future researchers can use the findings to better understand the effects of personal patriarchy and how it overlaps with political patriarchy.

### Research Objectives

- To find out how women are oppressed by men in a patriarchal family
- To examine how sexual harassment and child abuse can destroy a woman's life in a patriarchal society.
- To discuss the possible role of parental training and family support in women's life.

### Research Questions

- 1) How women and children are harassed by male members of the family in a patriarchal society as demonstrated by Elif Shafak's novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*?
- 2) How far-reaching are the effects of gender discrimination and violation of human rights on the life of a woman in a patriarchal society?
- 3) How can parental training and family support help women lead a better and secure life?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Soraya (2013) examined Sheldon's novel and discovered that men have always been regarded as superior to women. He conducted his research using the qualitative method. Feminist Theory and Rebellious Theory were used for the research. He concluded that society restricted women's contributions and responsibilities to the boundaries of the home. He emphasised the factors that led to the rebellion. To avenge herself and gain equal status and rights, the woman rebelled against the man. Domestic violence drove a woman to flee her home in the famous novel HONOUR. It was an act of defiance against the patriarchy of the family. "Grabbing her arm, Baba drags her towards the van's bonnet." (HONOUR, Shafak, 2012).

Khaled Hosseini's novel was studied using a Marxist approach by Meiyono Thoyibi and Nugroho (2016). The researchers discovered that women engaged in both common and radical rebellious acts in order to end oppression. They viewed oppressed people's rebellion through the lens of low social class and status. They concluded that a girl could rebel in order to achieve equal status through education. Ardhiana (2018) stated that when people's interests or rights were not met due to society's or the environment's conditions, the people preferred to rebel. According to him, a woman rebelled when society denied her the right to live an independent life. He discovered that the novel's main female character rebelled and became a spy, demonstrating that men and women can play equal roles because the female character became espionage, a risky task that men were traditionally expected or considered for.

Cultural feminism was defined by Becker (1999) as relational feminism. He claims that under the hyper-masculinity of men, no member of society can mature or live independently. In a patriarchal society, the characteristics of femininity are suppressed. When men are expected to adopt hyper-masculinity traits while women are expected to adopt traditional feminine traits, no one can thrive. In Anita Desai's novel, Neethu (2007) highlighted the psyche and anxieties of married women. The fact that the man is rational and the woman is emotional contributed to incompatibility in a relationship. A woman was expected to always rely on a man for her emotional fulfilment in society. So, when a man did not meet a woman's emotional needs, she suffered in the worst way possible, and her anxiety stemmed from patriarchal stereotypes. Dekeseredy and Kelly (1993) investigated the cheating behaviour of boys in colleges and universities. They discovered that the boys who cheated their partner in university came from a patriarchal family. They saw patriarchy as a dominant factor in their family, and this background

contributed to their infidelity and dominance in their relationships in University.

Yuchen (2019) looked at how rural girls in China are being pushed into industrial work. The girls struggled and left home to work in the industries, that was difficult and demanding. It was a fight against the patriarchy that had been imposed on them by their families. Tonsing (2017) studied married women in Hong Kong who had previously travelled from South Asia and lived in the city. Many of the women asserted that their husbands had used domestic violence against them. They stifled their social interactions and forbade them from leaving the house. Some wives were treated badly by their husbands. He concluded that their married lives were harmed by the cultural patriarchy that surrounded them no matter where they went. Agha and Syed (2018) conducted a thematic and textual analysis of Sindhi books ranging from 1 to 5. They discovered that patriarchy was favoured by the images and text of the books because women were given secondary roles and were depicted as second-class citizens. It was away, according to the researchers, of propagating patriarchy even at the most basic level.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Radical Feminism is the theory used in this project (1960). Inequalities between men and women who were members of antiwar and new left political movements prompted the development of the theory. Women who stayed away from the movements were well aware of the violations of their rights. Their groups were called radical groups. Some well-known radical feminists include Valerie Solanas, Andrea Dworkin, Alice Walker, and Catharine MacKinnon. The feminist perspective of the second wave of feminism is basically radical feminism. Patriarchy, according to radical feminists, is the root cause of women's oppression. The eldest male parent is absolutely supreme in his household. His authority extends to life and death, and he has the same level of authority over his children and their homes as he does over his slaves. The archaic patriarchal family is made up of animate and inanimate property, as well as of wife, children, slaves, land, and goods, all held together by the eldest male's despotic authority. (Shukla, p.49, 2006)

#### **Research Design**

This is a qualitative study, which entails gathering and analysing data in order to reach a conclusion. This is a method of gaining a thorough understanding of a situation or problem. The qualitative method places a strong emphasis on the context. The research is exploratory in nature. The data collected is not the final version; rather, the researchers continue to collect data, which adds to the analysis. The researchers do not have all of the available data when they begin the research, but they continue to gather it, so it is a type of exploration in which the researchers explore extensively.

#### **Data Analysis**

For data analysis, some instances from the novel were chosen based on the themes, which clearly addressed women's subjugation to men's dominance. The text's relevant constituents were examined through the lens of Radical Feminism. Under Radical Feminism, the research questions were answered appropriately, and the findings were presented based on the analysed data.

#### **Thematic Analysis:**

In the selected novel, the research is focused on intrafamily relationships and their effects on women's lives. The researchers read the novel carefully and analyse the text for sexual harassment, child abuse, patriarchy, and male supremacy. The research analysis is based on a careful reading of the text. The study is exploratory in nature. The study continues to investigate the content and analyse it through the lens of radical feminism. The research will focus on three of this theory's postulates. These postulates are used to conduct the analysis. With the help of quotes from the text, the protagonist Leila's childhood, abuse, adulthood, prostitution, and death are examined. The postulate of the theory related to the selected themes is applied to each selected quotation. Male Supremacy and Gender Discrimination are the first two postulates. Feminists' mission statement is to eliminate male supremacy over females in society in all aspects. Men are regarded as superior to women solely due to their gender.

The one body organ serves as a primary criterion for determining superiority, wisdom, and authority over inferiority, folly, and submissive roles in women. Radical feminists speak out against this

discrimination based on gender. Sexism is discrimination based on gender. Because of stereotypes and gender roles, women are particularly affected. It's a form of discrimination against women. Radical feminists are speaking out against sexism and want to root it out. It addresses patriarchy's oppression and subjugation of women. Patriarchy, according to radical feminists, is the ultimate cause of workplace sexual harassment, intrafamily sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of inequality of rights. The patriarchal power structure gives men power over women, which they use to satisfy filthy desires.

Patriarchy on a personal and political level is the second point of the theory chosen for research. Patriarchy, feminists argue, is deeply rooted not only at the political level but also at the personal level. Women's enslavement is not solely the fault of the world; patriarchy has its roots in families as well. The family is the most important factor in maintaining patriarchy in private life. In family relationships, there is a power dynamic in which the male dominates the female. Feminists use the term "sex politics" to describe male dominance even in sex. The family is the most important factor in maintaining patriarchy in private life. In a nuclear family, the father is the supreme authority figure, and his decision is treated as if it were a decree. Sons are given precedence over daughters. These are just a few examples of patriarchy in action. The worst stage occurs when girls are sexually abused and oppressed by their own family members due to power imbalances.

Sexual harassment is the most heinous form of degrading and humiliating women, and radical feminism examines it. This third postulate examines the novel in greater depth. Harassment is commonplace in the workplace, schools, universities, parks, streets, and offices, among other places. Not only does the theory oppose harassment outside the home, but it also opposes harassment within a home. Intrafamily sexual harassment is a highly sensitive topic that many people avoid discussing. Their silence contributes to the legalisation of intrafamily harassment. At this very sensitive level of intrafamily harassment, radical feminists broaden their horizons of discussion. These three postulates are used to analyse the novel thematically.

"You have always been my favorite, he said. 'I'm sure you are aware of that'" (Shafak, 2019, p.65). Uncle makes an effort to make Leila feel special. While Leila is only six years old, this is the first time he approaches her to fulfil his lusty desires. When a man harasses a woman, he praises her and makes her feel like she is the only thing that matters to him. In his lust, man can become so blinded that he preys on children with these dirty tactics. When a child is treated with special care, especially by uncles or other family members, the child feels privileged, unaware that his very close uncle is harassing her. This is how Leila ends up. She and her family members are initially pleased when her uncle recognises her importance. Uncle praises her in front of the entire family, and no one ever realises the uncle's evil intentions, because this is the dilemma in nuclear families: when children are close and loving to their relatives, parents are proud and satisfied. In her novel, Elif Shafak satirises the family system.

"At first the circles were small and light, but they grew larger, reaching her privates. She pulled away, embarrassed. Uncle inched closer" (Shafak, 2019, p.64). Under patriarchy, radical feminists discuss child harassment. They believe that patriarchy causes men to sexually abuse children. Men in positions of power and authority try to suppress women, and they are so drunk on power that they abuse children. Female child sexual harassment is more common than male child sexual harassment, and perpetrators are mostly men. This power structure is represented by Leila's disgusting uncle. Parents' neglect is also a form of abuse because they are responsible for their children's safety.

"You are a naughty girl," Uncle said. He looked solemn, almost sad. You seem so sweet and innocent, but it is just a mask, isn't it? Deep underneath, you're as dirty as all the others. How you have fooled me" (Shafak, 2019, p.66). The patriarchal mindset holds that men are always correct and women are always wrong. Things and roles are always decided by men in a patriarchal society. Uncle has been harassing Leila and is still trying to persuade her that it was she who convinced him. He embarrasses her to the point where she hides the cruel harassment from everyone because she believes it is her fault. Power, patriarchy, and property all play a role in sexual abuse. In a patriarchal society, a man wields power over the woman, who is regarded as his property. Sexual assault is primarily caused by this mindset and system.

"When you are older, I'll protect you from boys. You don't know what they're like. I won't let them get close to you" (Shafak, 2019, p.65). In a patriarchal society, the concept of security, protection, and safety is ingrained in the minds of women from an early age. They've been taught that the man is the one who will protect the woman in any situation. They haven't been taught how to defend themselves. They are occasionally harassed by their protectors, who claim to be there to protect them

from men. This is something that happens to Leila. Her uncle, who is supposed to protect her from other men, is the one who is using her for filthy gain.

“I used to think to myself, why, she’s a sweet innocent girl, but it turns out you like to play games with men’s minds...Remember how you behaved on the bus that day, giggling all the time to get my attention? Why were you wearing those tiny shorts? Why did you allow me to come to your bed at night? You could have told me to leave and I would have done so, but you didn’t. You could have slept in your parents’ room, but you didn’t. Every night you waited for me. Did you ever ask yourself why? Well, I know why”. (Shafak, 2019, p.98)

The above lines demonstrate how men always find a reason to harass women. Uncle is attempting to justify his harassment by pointing out her attire. When Leila tries to stay away from him, he convinces her that she is filthy and defective. These lines also reflect the family's trust in their uncle and niece relationship. He sleeps with Leila for a week in a row, but no one seems to notice. If a woman is raped in a patriarchal society, she is held responsible for her appearance. No one considers her suffering but instead blames her for being in provoking clothing and thus being raped. Man is not held responsible or punished. The woman is held responsible for her miseries.

“Doctor? So the whole town hears about it? Never. Do you understand? You are not to talk about this to strangers. Leave it to me” (Shafak, 2019, p.106). When her parents learn that she is pregnant and that her uncle is to blame, her father tries to keep her quiet. Instead of Leila, he is more concerned with his reputation and family. She always hides this painful truth from her parents, but when the truth is revealed, her parents prevent her from speaking up for herself. This is patriarchy on a personal and private level, where a father or a brother is the authority figure who makes decisions about the family's future. Leila's life is ruined by her personal patriarchy. Power relations are linked to patriarchy. There is some sort of power distribution in it. The father has ultimate power in a patriarchal family, and male dominance is a representation of patriarchal society's power structure. In a patriarchal society, according to feminist Simone de Beauvoir, man is the subject and woman is the object. She uses the terms, equality in difference and difference inequality to represent the power dimension and distribution in a married couple. “Then he added, too quickly, as if verbalizing an answer he had memorized earlier, this is a family problem and we'll find a solution together as a family” (Shafak, 2019, pp.106-107). These lines discuss the significance of intrafamily relationships as well as women's rights. Leila's father puts his intrafamily relationships ahead of her daughter's rights. In a patriarchal society, women's rights are regarded as a minor issue. Instead of seeking justice for his daughter, her father is attempting to save his relationship.

“Listen, let’s all calm down now. We must deal with the situation wisely. We’ve had a family meeting. Your cousin Tolga is a good boy. He has agreed to marry you. You will get engaged” (Shafak, 2019, p.108). Male supremacy and patriarchy are reflected in these lines. Leila's father wants her to marry her cousin, whose father has harassed her sexually. Her father is uninterested in learning about her wishes. Instead of speaking out for her daughter, he tries to save his family relations. Man is always considered superior to woman in patriarchal societies, and this is also true here. Without her consent, his father decides on her fate. Women, children, and property belong to man, according to Walby (1990), and he is the authoritative figure. Leila's father wields power and does not see the need to even discuss the situation with Leila. He simply makes a decision and announces it, without taking into account her rights or feelings.

Leila spoke slowly

“I don’t think so. I think you are trying to save Uncle” (Shafak, 2019, p.109). Leila realises her father is attempting to save his younger brother. She is the victim and deserves her father's support, but he is attempting to work things out in his patriarchal way. Uncle is never questioned about his filthy deeds. Uncle receives no punishment or hatred because he indirectly justifies his actions. Patriarchy is to blame for women's abuse. In a patriarchal society, when a woman is abused and justice is not served and the perpetrator is not punished, the abuse becomes the norm. For her father, Leila's rights are of minor importance. He wants to protect his name, his family, and his system.

Shafak (2019) wrote “Just because you think it’s safe here, it doesn’t mean this is the right place for you” (p.111). For a woman, the safest place is at home. She is expected to keep herself safe from society outside of her home. No one ever mentions the security of one's own home. Harassment is

commonplace at work and elsewhere, but no one discusses harassment in the home. If a relative harasses a woman, the priority is to save intrafamily relations, not the woman. A patriarchal mindset believes in rules and a man with this mindset always thinks that he is doing the right thing. Father is the head of the family and he decides about the family and relation and never considers the will and consent of a woman. This realization provokes Leila to leave her home and go to Istanbul.

“You can’t go back to your family, that’s clear, he said. Look, I have known girls like you- most were from shitty towns. Some did all right here, got places but many didn’t. Stick with me if you are clever enough, or Istanbul will crush you.” (Shafak, 2019, p.113)

When Leila leaves her home and goes to Istanbul, she meets a boy in Istanbul. This boy sells her to a brothel and she ends up as a prostitute. She was sexually harassed in the family by her uncle and this thing led her to be harassed forever. This is how sexual abuse and victimization destroys a woman’s life. The few minutes or hours of men’s pleasure demolish a woman. The child harassment, suppression and forced marriage lead to the prostitution of Leila. Society is always cruel for a woman. Her heaven is always her home but in a patriarchal family, a woman is not safe. If she has the safety of her body, she does not have the safety of her rights. In the case of Leila, she does not have either.

“These murders were not randomly committed. One particular group, without exception, was targeted. All the victims were streetwalkers. Normal female citizens do not need to worry about their safety” (Shafak, 2019, p.217). The deputy police chief ensures the safety of women in Istanbul by saying that only prostitutes are murdered. Leila is murdered by two boys and the chief is relaxed about this murder because this is the death of the streetwalker. This is how private patriarchy leads to political patriarchy. Her suppression in the family brings her to prostitution and then suppression in society brings her death. The dialogue is ironical as well. Normal female citizens are guaranteed security while once Leila was the normal female citizen but not safe at all.

“You’ve brought us shame,’ he said, his breathing laborious. Everyone is talking behind our backs. I can’t go to the teahouse any more. I can’t walk into the post office. Even at the mosque, they won’t talk to me. No one greets me on the street. It’s as if I’m a ghost; they can’t see me. I had always thought, ‘Maybe I don’t have riches, maybe I couldn’t find treasures, and I don’t even have sons, but at least I have my honour. Not anymore. I am a broken man. (Shafak, 2019, pp.114-115)

The concept of honour is always associated with a woman. She is murdered for the honour. In patriarchy, a man thinks that only he has honour and this honour is strongly linked with a woman. If a boy drinks, flirts and has illegal sexual relations, he is never considered a cause of dishonour for his parents but if a girl does the same then her father loses the honour. The rules and standards for living life are not equal in a patriarchal society. Man is always supreme and he can do whatever he wants but the woman is enchained brutally by society. Forgiveness is always for a man and not for a woman. When Leila becomes a prostitute, she calls back her home but her father disowns her because he cannot forgive a woman for his dishonour.

Shafak (2019) wrote “we don’t have a daughter called Leyla. Leyla Afife Kamile: you don’t deserve those names” (p.115). The father of Leila never breaks his relation with his brother who is responsible for Leila’s prostitution but he disowns his daughter who is the victim in the filthy hands of an uncle. This is why the inequality of patriarchy is questioned by feminists. Her father sees the effects but does not consider the cause. In a patriarchal society, it is always a woman who is blamed ultimately no matter what happens to her. The father has a selfish approach. He is only concerned about his reputation, honour and relatives as head of a patriarchal family. Not for a single second, he thinks about the pain of Leila and her sufferings. He can be a great brother and authoritative figure but he is not a good father at least.

“It’s like breaking horses, ‘said one of the women. That’s what they are doing to us. Once our spirits are broken, they know we don’t go anywhere” (Shafak, 2019, p.121). This line reflects the suffering of a prostitute. The process of becoming a prostitute not only damages their bodies but souls. Their bodies and souls are exploited. Prostitution is legalized and this is another way of subjugating the women, their bodies, souls in a so-called privileged and patriarchal society. Prostitution is women subjugation in a patriarchal society. A prostitute is a sex worker and a man has the right to take her as a sex object. This is humiliation in which a woman is only preferred just for her body and she is an object for man. He can use her the way he wants.

“The first year together she tried, over and again, to understand him and his needs. Her own were unimportant. But he was never happy, the frown lines on his forehead reappearing fast, like a window that steamed over as soon as it was wiped.” (Shafak, 2019, p.158)

This line reflects the struggle of Humeyra (dancer friend of Leila) in her married life. There is a kind of gender discrimination not only in society but in very close relations. In patriarchy, these gender roles are defined. A wife is always supposed to be very understanding and appealing while a husband considers her according to his needs and demands. A woman is considered responsible for a healthy relationship and its survival. In the institution of marriage, there are defined inequality in the couple. Man is dominant and woman is subservient. She is supposed to lead a life according to the desires of her husband.

“Everything but pain. There was no pain down here. Her mind had fully shut down, her body was already decomposing and her soul was chasing a better fish. She was relieved to have left the Cemetery of Companionless. She was happy to be part of this vibrant realm, this comforting harmony that she had never thought possible, and this vast blue, bright as the birth of a new flame. Free at last.” (Shafak, 2019, p.304)

People who believe that prostitutes are to blame for all of society's filth kill Leila without considering what dirt makes a prostitute. In these lines, it is analysed that even after death, a woman's body and soul are not at peace in the graveyards established by men based on low standards. The soul of Leila is vibrant and happy when it is away from the patriarchal cruel society built by them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Elif Shafak's novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* addresses child sexual abuse, women's rights violations, and the journey to becoming a prostitute. This research focuses on the sexual harassment of women by their members of the family and its impact on their life. The novel follows Leila, who is sexually harassed by her uncle throughout her childhood. Private and personal patriarchy becomes a major source of her demise. Her father, as the patriarchal head of the family, does not support her, and she ends up as a prostitute. Because patriarchy establishes a power distribution structure, radical feminists believe patriarchy is the primary cause of sexual harassment, violations of women's rights, and prostitution. Men are superior to women because they have power. This power division in Leila's family labels her as inferior.

Outside of their homes, women are taught to be cautious of men. They haven't been taught how to stay safe in any environment, including their own homes. Parents and relatives in traditional family systems agree that a child's affinity grows when he or she is very close to uncles, aunts, and other relatives. Those uncles do not seem to be a major threat to the children's safety, according to the parents. Most of the time, there is a lack of communication between parents and children. As a result, when children experience something unethical, they do not inform their parents. If the parents learn of the accident, they must provide emotional, physical, and other forms of support to their children. When Leila's father came to know about her pregnancy, he should have been supportive of her. Leila is forced to leave her home due to his blunder. Parents should be encouraging and understanding. Leila's father does not forgive her when she calls him from Istanbul, and she continues to work as a prostitute. Parents should be very kind, supportive, and communicative with their children, and they should be very concerned about their children's safety, even from close relatives. With the help of this research, a future researcher can work on family relations, parental training, understanding between parents and children, and the insignificance of combined family systems.

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