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## Revisiting Gender Roles: A Feministic Analysis of Pakistani movie “Bol”

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### Abstract

*Gender roles discussion has gained a special place among feministic analysis. Women are facing difficulties in a male-dominated society. This research is conducted to clarify that men are suppressing the fundamental rights of women. Through feministic Analysis the life of a divorced women having a creative mind struggling to change her father’s patriarchal thought in a Pakistani movie “Bol”. Movies and dramas depict the societal issues of the society deeply—traditional gender roles of not having a right to get an education, get a job, and get married. The social role theory by Eagly, Chimamanda Ngozi’s feminist definition is being discussed with regard to the in-depth meaning of gender role identity in society. Women’s rights are being suppressed by male-dominated society. They do not have the right to speak for their legitimate deeds for the sake of the honor of their males. They have to be silent at any cost. This research highlights the issue of gender inequality and rights suppression.*

**Keywords:** Women's rights, Gender role, Feminist analysis, Society, Eastern culture.

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## Introduction

Feminism is a political ideology that gives brief information about economic and social equality of the expression of sex, and it is organized especially for women's rights (Akhtar et al., 2021; Imran & Gull, 2017). In this research paper, the story of a divorced woman is shown in a movie—a woman struggling for her fundamental rights in society and her sister's rights. Who refuses to conceive a baby, and her husband gives her a divorce. Ironically, her own father, who is a Hakim, is the person who demolishes their rights. She has a transgender brother. The family gives an ideal example of a patriarchal role. Her father got married to a prostitute for the sake of money; for his own sake, he forgot all the rules set by himself for his family. At the end of a war with the savior for the rights and to live life freely, a girl murdered her father, and the court hanged her. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian (2014) author, in his book, *We Should All Be Feminists*, states that “a feminist is a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.” All genders possess equal rights and identities, and that ideology falls into feminism. Moreover, it is a fundamental human right of women who have the right to do whatever they want to do, or their other rights, which are given on a religious basis, must not be demolished at all (Imran & Hart, 2022). Women have a significant role in society. Both men and women have equal rights. Both of them are similar in every sense. If a man is the head of the family, a woman is also a caretaker in the house. Moreover, her fundamental right is to get an equal place in society. Moreover, there must be no violation of her rights. Jutta Joachim (2010) talks about women's rights and the fact that the government is still dismissing women's rights in the United States. Instead, it is stated in the UN organization to give women their rights, but they are still demolished. This research gives a deep understanding of gender roles in a male-dominated society. The oppression of males is suppressing the rights of women (Armutoğlu, 2019; Imran, 2019). Males are doing that for the sake of sustaining their honor and respect. By taking some dialogues from the movie “Bol” and doing a feminist analysis on them, it is found that uneven restriction and not giving fair rights to a family and society leads to destruction.

## Statement of problem

Females have the fundamental right to live their lives in a good way by getting all the rights given to them through society, family, and also from a religious point of view. A feminist analysis of that point in the movie “Bol” will help to understand women's real place in society and the issues faced by middle-class women.

## Research question

1. How are women expressed in Pakistani cinema?
2. How have women's narratives been portrayed through the “Bol” movie?

## Research Objective

This research aims to verify the gender role in the movie “Bol.” It is a Pakistani movie that talks about domestic violence against females and their suppression both in society and in their families. To highlight the issue of male dominance, which leads to uneven problems in the family.

## Significance of Research

This research article on feminist analysis will help to understand the traditional gender roles in patriarchal society in the movie. The dialogues of Zainab, an older, young, divorced girl, and her thoughts. That is how she is unhappy in her daily life. She has no charm, and her father's wish for a son disturbed her mind. Her brother's rap case and murdered by his own father insist that she be violent. In order to protect her sister, who was a prostitute's daughter, she murdered her father. Different writers have written different books and theories on gender roles, giving feminism theories. according to the definition by Chimamanda Ngozia (2014), feminism,” women must have equal rights in society.” The feministic analysis will express the real meanings of tendered and deep meanings in the sentences in the text, with respect to Eagly's (1984) social role theory of feminism and gender development through domestic responsibility.

## Literature Review

Farhana Haque (2019) discusses the impact of feminism in the field of women's studies, stating that feminism was noticeable in feministic movements. We can see that the feministic movement started, and evaluation takes place in this regard. Through the theories of gender development, women exist in society. In one of his research works, Javeed Ahmad Raina (2017) overviews feminism as a political movement. In every sphere of life, justice must be the priority. Feminism is a serious attempt towards social equality. Males and females have equal spots in society. If a man is the root of a family, a woman is the branch of that tree. Huzaifa Pandit (2008) looks up platonic love in an increasingly worthless world. In his research paper, he mainly discussed the treatment of women concerning misogynist tendencies. Gives a representation of culture through the influence of the Christian West and the Islamic East. The concept of Orientalism is used to identify women in society. His research paper focuses on those things. Sanna Tapiokaski (2007) sums up that the contribution of the feminist analysis offers gender identity. Gender identity that women also possess the same place in society as a man possesses. Applying feminist critical discourse analysis in examining gender identity might be interdisciplinary work toward children's fantasies.

Michelle Lazar (2007) states that feministic analysis gives a complex and deep understanding of sustaining hierarchically general social orders. It gives rational information about feministic prospective gender ideology and institutionalized power asymmetries between groups of men and women, which are complex across cultures. The family or society is demolishing women's rights to education and marriage. The right to get an education is the right of both genders, not only for boys. Only males do not have the right to get married according to their own wishes; instead, it is also the right of a girl to choose her life partner with her own wishes. She has to spend her whole life with that person. So, her right is also to choose a spouse of her own will. Leslie J. Millar (2000), a writer, discussed the relationship between women and post-modernism in her research paper. A critical discourse analysis was done on postmodernism, which affects women's tendencies toward society. And postmodern challenges toward social sciences. This postmodernism tends towards the raising voices of females for their rights. In the 19th century, women had the right to vote as civilians in the country (Atuase, 2018). According to James (1998) regarding feminist writings, Susan James asserts at the outset that "Feminism is grounded in the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or not fair toward them.

### Research Methodology

This research is quantitative. This research paper gives information about women's place in society, especially those who live in Pakistan with their families. Feminist analysis, a deep understanding of the meanings of dialogue, and descriptive analysis give the themes of the research. The researchers used different techniques to extract the text sample to understand the text's theme through qualitative methods and descriptive explanations to answer all the questions.

**Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949)** discusses the oppression of men fundamentally over women on every level by attempts toward the feministic perspective. The book also discusses a biological perspective that the maternal elements are primarily passive and the paternal elements are initiative. Female humans occupy a subordinate position in society. She gives an argument on women that the concept between men and women is just like enslaver and enslaved person. Feminism's point of view is profoundly discussed in the book.

**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014)** explains the definition of women. The overall equality of both genders, socially and politically. Moreover, according to her, the great contention of feminism is to understand both sexes equally. And she says that; "Feminist is the person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes."

**Eagly's Social Role Theory (1984)** In this theory, the discussion is about gender development based on social factors. Women are supposed to be domestically responsible. Gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labor that characterizes a society. In his perspective, men's greater participation in paid positions causes stereotypes against women against men.

### Theoretical Framework

By applying Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014), and Eagly's social role Theory (1984) concepts and feminist analysis upon the selected dialogues, the concept of gender role is revealed. The discussion is about the oppression of men fundamentally over women on every level by the attempts toward the feminist perspective. The book also discusses a biological perspective that the maternal elements are primarily passive, and the paternal elements are initiative. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains the definition of women. The overall equality of both genders, socially and politically. The discussion is about gender development based on social factors. Women are supposed to be domestically responsible.

### Data Analysis

In this movie, a girl named Zainab, an elder daughter of the family, narrates the whole story to the audience. Mostly, the camera angle in the movie is MLS (medium long shot), as every person is depicted in the whole story in a good way. Some songs are energetic in order to show some hope. The movie's background music is slow and shows sorrow, grief, and helplessness. Some dialogues are taken from the movie subtitles and are analyzed using the concept of gender roles. A description of each dialogue helps to understand this. The movie starts in a jail where Zainab is accused of murder, and she wishes to narrate her story in front of the media. She belongs to a religious family. In her house, there are seven girls and one transgender brother whom his father never accepted as a child. The father is a Hakim by profession, and his business is decreasing steadily with time. Zainab, a suppressed girl, has a curious mind, and she often asks her father several questions, which makes him anxious—a male-dominated house where women are not allowed to ask questions of males. The male has the right to give commands and orders, and all the family members have to follow them. Here is a dialogue when all the family members are sitting for a night meal and discussing the amount of meals being less for all. Then Hakim sahib says to his wife that she cooks well, so that is why there is a shortage of meals, and then he says with an anxious smile,

***“God has blessed you with only two attributes: You cook well and you give birth to many girls.”***

A man who is dominant in the family, a father of seven daughters named Shafatullah Khan, teases her wife that she is useless. She has just two skills: she can cook well, and the second is that she gives birth to girls. He blamed his wife for giving birth to so many girls, but that was not her fault at all. It is god's blessing. According to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014), both sexes should be treated equally, so a male doesn't have any right to say these kinds of statements to a woman. In the later part of the story, it is clear that it is not the woman's fault that she gives birth to a girl or boy; instead, it is the man's fault. He has the ability to do this, as Chaudhary Isaac, a person who belongs to the red light area, told us. It is always considered that women are responsible for giving birth to girls. The book also discusses a biological perspective that the maternal elements are primarily passive, and the paternal elements are initiative. According to Bergoffen (2012), the second sex is a very complicated terminology that applies to different cultures and social settings such as Hakim Sahib does not allow his daughters to get further education after 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He undermines their fundamental right to get an education. A right which is given by religion to them, but he ironically argues that it is not suitable for girls. Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), the basic right of a girl is being oppressed by their father. The relationship between a husband and wife and father and daughter is just like master and slave (Lehtonen, 2007).

***“We sisters were asked to sit home after 5<sup>th</sup> grade.”***

Here, Zainab, the elder daughter of the house, says that the daughters were not allowed to go to school after 5<sup>th</sup> grade even though the school wall was attached to their house. All their legal wishes were suppressed by their own father. A man was dominant not only in the young and old but also in the lives of children. They were unable to take a free breath without the permission of their father, but this strictness made them violent. Zainab decided to stop the increasing population of the house and take her mother for an operation. She also left her husband for this reason as she did not want a baby at such an early time as her husband was the only person who earned it. When her father came to know about the operation, he slapped her daughter, and she said,

***“Like a typical man, you raise your hand when you are speechless.”***

From that point, Zainab started to raise her voice. She argues with her father to talk with her rather than beat her when he is speechless. She questioned her father why he was doing so. On a useless and cruel reply, she crosses her limits and bravely says that

***“I wish I were God. I would make every man give birth to a child, so that you could know....”***

The pain that is felt by women while giving birth to a new life is deathly. Here is again the point of view of Simon De behavior (1949) being discussed that it is not a woman's fault that she gives birth to which gender these all things belong to god's wish. The story steadily moves forward. Zainab decides to send her brother on the job she discussed with a neighbor, and Saifi starts a painting job in the absence of his father. He was an innocent boy. Some rascal men raped him and through him in the field. For a family member, he was lost. No one knew what happened to him. When Hakim sahib comes to know he becomes very anxious and tells his daughter that,

***“I wish your husband would have to kill you.”***

Instead of being her father, he used such kind words for her. A woman is so much suppressed in society that she cannot raise her voice on her own, so how can she raise it for her siblings? In a male-dominant society, there is all kinds of freedom for a male to do whatever he wants to do, but in the case of women, no attention is being paid towards their fair wishes.

When night fell, Hakim sahib was confirmed about the rape of his son. He became restless because of his respect for society. Men and women are the same creation, so why the sin of man is neglected in society? The right to live a life is also taken from them. His son was not an average person by sex but a human being. About him, he shows his wish that,

***“By god's wish, he is already dead....”***

Saifi was his blood, but he did not accept him after his rape case, and at night time, he went to his room silently, locked the room, and murdered him. Zainab sees all the murdered and asks her father

***“You believe in God, and yet you hate his creation.”***

Giving life and taking away life is the right of god. It doesn't belong to humans they murdered another human creature for the sake of respect.

An inspector comes for the investigation of the dead Saifi and when he asked in his enquiry about the death, Saifi Hakim Sahib becomes restless at a moment and says abruptly,

***“Killing in the name of honor must not be something new for you.”***

That was an old tradition that daughters were hanged in the name of honor and respect, but it is still present in today's life among typical people. As Hakim Sahib kills his own son in the name of respect. For him the death of his son is acceptable instead of the rap news narrated by every neighbor. Eagly's social role Theory (1984) talks about the gender stereotype both domestically and socially. Hakim sahib's son was a human being but he takes his life being rude. And his rudeness tends towards the violent behavior of the house member her second daughter wishes to marry with Mustafa who was against his wish. He suppresses her right by deciding that she should be married with an aged man. There was a huge age gap between the couple. Ayesha the second daughter weeps. And she questions about this,

***“Ayesha's mother says look at her age you are making such an unsuitable match.”***

This is the basic right of a girl also given by religion to choose his life partner. And this right is being spoiled by the society. According to Simon De Behavior's *The Second Sex* (1949) it is oppression of man over women at every feminine perspective. The rights of women are demolished by man.

In a patriarchal society these things are very normal. Pakistan a homeland where males set the rules for family and women's rights are suppressed on the name of honor. Ayesha used to ask a question about her right from her mother. She asks about her identity in life. She considers herself not a bottle which will sell to any one for the sake of respect. According to Simon De Behavior's *The Second Sex* (1949) the rights of women are being demolished by men.

***“He has fathered children, mother not medicine, which he can give to anyone.”***

Women are not toys but they were treated so in a male dominant society. Gender role of a man in family or society is extrovert in the movie. The people living in the house are unable to do what they want that gives a clear understanding of studying gender role in movie “Bol.” Elder daughter and the protagonist of the story is being called as a slut by her own father he threatens her to leave her in the

red light area. Threatening women, abolish their legal rights comes in the dominance of males in family.

***“Yes, they might give me money if I give this girl to them in exchange.”***

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014) she explains about the definition of feminism is to treat men and women equally. But that are not given to this suppressed family. Seven girls which don't give the right to breath freely according to their own wish. Zainab take a step again and married Mustafa and Ayesha for their happiness only she was the one who raise her voice in front of father. Shafatullah comes to know about all he slapped her and beat her very brutally. He called her with several abusive words ***“You wretched woman! Disloyal women.”*** When girls tried to work for the sake of helping her father he again start objection on their jobs. Due to the lack of knowledge he started giving religious point of views to stop girls from that all. Instead of that, Islam is the religion that don't have any objection over the jobs of women. But this gives freedom and respect to all the women. But, he uses it in a wrong way. He says that

***“I have started going to the red light area. But I am not a pimp to make girls work.”***

He don't have any son but regardless of that he always wished to have it. According to Eagly's social role Theory (1984) a man or a women can have stereotype behavior when they are being suppressed domestically and socially. Hakim sahib started to go at red light area and married a prostitute so here is the question that why all the restriction are for women only even, if she have fair wishes they are being demolished for the so-called honor of the male. When his daughter tries to convince him, he again says,

***“I needed a son to make circumstances good, but instead you witches came into the world, one followed by another.”***

Here, he doesn't pay attention to the faults that he has done with him and his family. He is just stuck with his motives; he doesn't care about anyone in the house. Further, Zainab explains that this uneven restriction made all of them wrong. They used to hide things from their father.

***“Father Strictness made us go bad. We had to hide even small legitimate desires, and we had to lie to hide them.”***

At the end of the movie, she murders her father in order to save the life of her sister. She did it to save a life. Now, they were free from all the restrictions. A male who is dominant in the house is not a loyal person. He always used to torture his family with his rules, which did not apply to himself. So, from this analysis, the concept of gender roles is described very deeply through dialogue explanation.

## Findings

The research reveals the existence of a gender gap in society. The ideology of feminism and women's improvement in Eastern culture through the different conceptions of theories on feminism. According to Katy Jenkins (2019):

***“It is essential that feminist values infuse and underpin every aspect of research.”***

The problem highlighted in the movie is the suppression of females. Women's rights are being suppressed by their own family members. Moreover, for their freedom, they decided to live their life freely without any restriction on the way towards living a happy life as all the women of the house never got their rights. Right to education, right to marriage, right to do a job, and right to live life freely. The concept of gender roles is described very deeply in data analysis. The results of the analysis of dialogue show that male dominance in the home is used to demolish the fair rights of his wife and daughters. The mixture of so many characters makes the storyline interesting.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that women face various issues throughout their lives, including neglect by family members and unequal treatment in society. To support the feminist narratives in the “Bol” movie, the authors tried to argue that Eagly, Simon, and Chimamanda Ngozi have highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's rights. By analyzing dialogues from a feminist perspective, the authors have shed light on issues related to gender roles and promote female empowerment in society. The lack of equal rights for women, including basic living rights, is a significant problem that needs to be addressed. The themes of feminism and women's rights are

central to discussions of culture and religion in our society. This study would be helpful for future studies on women's issues such as identity, social status, and independence.

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