



ETHNICITY, GENDERED JUSTICE AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE VERDICT

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Abstract

This paper analyzed The Verdict (2021) by Osman Haneef to discuss the intersection of ethnicity, gender, class, and religion as it affects the legal consequences in Pakistan. Conceptually informed by the Social Dominance Theory and intersectionality. This qualitative textual analysis was analyzed of the macrostructural themes of the minority racialization, patriarchal control, and institutional complicity as well as, to microstructural level that examines aspects of courtroom dynamics and framing of the story. The results showed that ethnic and religious minorities experience structural legal injustice, being legitimized by the narratives of the dominant group; gendered justice is a method of hierarchy and female autonomy is commodified; even the class privilege offers a small shield, being negated by nationalism and religious discourse; and the intersection between any of these variables creates greater injustices that cannot be called additive discrimination. The comparison demonstrates the novel representing the judicial system in Pakistan as the constant facilitator of the hierarchies where the resistance was treated as the personal but not the systemic kind of change. This study is of both literary and socio-legal significance because it helps to show how fiction can interrogate the problem of structural inequality and highlights the importance of adopting intersectional justice reform.

Keywords: *Social Dominance, Intersectionality, Ethnicity, Gendered Justice*

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1. Introduction

In Pakistan religion and ethnic issues are linked with the prevailing disparities in terms of access to justice as the minority groups can be offered characterized treatment both in and out of court. In the current fiction book *The Verdict* by Osman Haneef (2023), these realities are presented as the blasphemy trial of Danesh, a small Christian boy. The legal proceedings the text gives are shown as nothing but neutral occurrences but rather a process determined by prejudice in the community, the patriarchal conventions as well as vital differences in society. It is significant that it has been represented in this way since it encapsulates the relationship between societal hierarchies and the practices of institutional life as lived out by vulnerable groups of people.

This research adopts the Social Dominance Theory as one of the prisms through which group based stratification systems are used to sustain systems of group based hierarchies through the legitimization of mythologies and institutional behavior (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Religious sermons, court cases decisions as witnessed in the novel, and the credibility of witnesses are all founded on dominant-group narratives, which in turn confirms Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin (2006) argument that cultural ideology is a primary instrument of propagating unequal relations. Simultaneously, the study employs intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), which refers to the overlapping components of ethnicity, gender and class in relation to forming a compound disadvantage to a character such as Danesh and his sister, Mena. It is not religious, gender, or poverty alone that makes them difficult, but a combination of these leading to more extreme types of discrimination (Block & Corona, 2014).

The aspect of gendered justice plays an important role in the plot of the novel. The status of Mena demonstrates that the independence of women may become a point of bargain in the conflicts between men, since this is how a strong man promises to rescue Danesh in exchange of marrying Mena (Rafique, 2023). This illustrates what Holvino (2010) terms simultaneity of gender, class and ethnic oppression in the organizational setting, which in this case comes out as the judicial and social system.

With the use of these frames, the paper will argue that the novel is not just a fictional piece, but through these structures, it expresses injustice. It highlights the role of ethnic and gender hierarchies in the legal processes and why any justice discourse in those set ups cannot be reproduced as instances of singular identities.

The presence of ethnic, religious and gender hierarchies confuses the issue of justice afforded to minority groups in Pakistan. Such hierarchies not only exist in day-to-day life of people but can also be seen within other formal institutions like the judiciary.

In the novel *The Verdict* by Osman Haneef (2023), the author reveals these realities with regard to the legal case of the young Christian boy accused of blasphemy, demonstrating that the decisions made by the courts and the general opinion are produced by the social bias, patriarchal traditions, and wealth. The issue that is reflected in this study is the deficiency of elaborate literary analysis that questions how ethnicity, gender, and class interact in Pakistani fiction in order to form the representations of justice. This study fills this gap and attempts to shed some light on how the literature evidences and criticizes the inequality of the structural system, though identifying the combined models of Social Dominance Theory and intersectionality as a parallel mechanism of inquisition and judging the structural inequalities in Pakistani legal and social system.

2.Literature Review

The study of the *Verdict* by Osman Haneef has received attention in the scholarly literature due to its subtle anti-systemic vein of inequality and self-identity intersections that define personal experiences within the legal and social frame of the Pakistani world. Specifically, the lens of ethnicity, gendered justice, and intersectionality helps provide an even greater understanding of how the narrative reveals structural biases of the judicial system and the society at large. This review is a synthesis of foundational academia debates that are pertinent to these dimensions based on works which directly concern the manner in which the novel addresses topics of marginalization, power relations, and resistance.

2.1. Ethnicity and Legal Marginalization in *The Verdict*

The basic dispute that forms the foundation of the novel is based on the trial of Danesh, a Christian boy who was accused of blasphemy, which underlines the ethnic and religion barriers that determine the manner of legality and social value (Haneef, 2023). It has been observed by scholars that the minority identity in Pakistan tends to be associated with systemic vulnerability whereby judicial procedures are indicative of a majoritarian culture as opposed to unbiased law (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). According to Nawaz (2024), the case in the narrative reveals that systems are deeply biased by ethnic corners, and this impedes formal fairness. Instead, this can be explained by the fact that institutionalized discrimination and legitimizing myths allow powerful groups to control the situation (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006).

The racialization of so-called other can be found specifically in the process of Islamophobia manifestation and in the building of minority groups as the inherent danger (Haneef, 2023). Such descriptions are in line with Gilliam and Iyengar (2000) observations on the role of media in enforcing the popular belief that the minorities are dangerous, legal intervention and hence societal reactions.

2.2. Gendered Justice and Patriarchal Enforcement

The gendering of justice in *The Verdict* is not only created by explicit legal exclusion but it is also reflected through the hidden elements of dominating patriarchy as well. It is in Mena as a woman from a poor Christian family that the grounds of social and legal exploitation spring where a factor like the coercive marriage demand by Yusif is the price of setting Danesh free (Haneef, 2023). According to Rafique (2023), these types of depictions fit into the gender expectations of the South Asians, in which female autonomy tends to be a part of bargains within the patriarchal society.

Women agency within the text is not disempowering in every sense. There are some women that fight against gendered oppression, which repeats feminist literary interpretations that discard female passiveness customarily afflicted on the female characters in Pakistani fiction (Rafique, 2023). Nevertheless, these acts of resistance are able to work within the boundaries of overlapping ethnic, class, and religious marginalization, thus hindering the transformative power of these rebellious acts.

2.3. Intersectionality as an Analytical Framework

The intersectionality theory formulated by Crenshaw (1989) gives a good ground on ways to interpret the intersection of disadvantage Tennessee depicts in *The Verdict*. The intersectional oppression (Danesh being oppressed due to ethnicity, religion, status and gender) support the argument made by Block and Corona (2014) that social class should also be included in intersectional analysis to completely interpret the experiences of discrimination within multicultural contexts.

As the literature further stresses, historical legacies of exclusion are impossible to conceive of in the context of intersectionality in postcolonial legal contexts. Holvino (2010) and Collins (1998) encourage the condensation of race, class, and gender as mutually constitutive, which is also reflected in the representation of how hierarchical divisions were established in the colonial time on the basis of the realization of the legal frameworks.

Although research like Murtaza (2023) and Maan (2021), has considered *The Verdict* in descriptions that were comparative and narrative, there is no cogent research that has dwelled upon ethnicity, gendered justice, and intersectionality in relation to the Social Dominance Theory. Most of the existing literature tends to address these variables independently of one another as opposed to a set system of interrelated variables that help to strengthen one another in influencing legal and social outcomes. The discussed literature emphasizes that *The Verdict* can be discussed as a crucial location to analyze the intersectionality of ethnicity, gendered justice in the Pakistani legal fiction. Based on the

Social Dominance Theory, feminist literature theory, and intersectionality studies, one can say that the significance of the narrative by Haneef lies in the fact that he presented a critically important picture of systemic injustice perpetuated by inter-related identities. In this synthesis, there also appears the gap in combined intersectional analysis, which indicates that more specific studies on the intersection of gendered and ethnic biases are necessary regarding legal systems in both fiction and the reality of South Asia.

The paper utilized a qualitative textual analysis of the novel by Osman Haneef *The Verdict* through the lenses of Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) in analyzing the ways in which ethnicity, gender, class and religion overlap to support the forces of inequality in the system. The entire novel has been analyzed taking a contextual information about the legal systems in Pakistan, blasphemy laws and also postcolonial socio-political processes to have a sound socio-legal reading. The two frameworks were employed at the same time, whereby the SDT was employed to define hierarchy enhancing myths, institutional discrimination, and legitimizing narratives and, intersectionality was employed to chart the compounded effects of identities that overlap. Macrostructural themes of racialization of minorities, patriarchal domination, and complicity of institutions were tracked and microstructural analysis of conversations, court hearings and positioning of stories were analyzed. The coded categories of racialization of the Other, gendered coercion, institutional bias, and marginalized resistance were backed by verbatim text evidence and observed through prismatic conclusions of the hierarchies in the real-world context. A cross-cultural observation of counterterror incantation and postcolonial legal discourses as well as literary descriptions of judicial disparities framed the novel on the wider socio-political arena. Concluding the synthesis process, the research questions were directly answered as it demonstrated that *The Verdict* displays the judicial system as co-conspirator in maintaining a domination and literary critique of structural oppression was present.

3.Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this research combines both Social Dominance Theory (SDT) (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) in the consideration of how this novel, *The Verdict* performs ethnicity, justice of gender, and intersecting systems of oppression. Such a dual-lens strategy enables a more subtle account of the intersection of different identity markers, including religion, ethnicity, class, and gender to give rise to different patterns of marginalization and counter-action in the story.

The Social Dominance Theory argues that the societies are structured into hierarchies that are group-based, and are sustained using institutional processes,

legitimizing myths, and institutionalized discrimination (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The Verdict, in this manner, reveals how the minority ethnic and religious identities are systematically disadvantaged in the legal proceedings. Homicide 34 A story of a Christian boy Danesh, who was accused of blasphemy, demonstrates how ethnic minority situation was combined with being subordinate under the law, where court bias and social stigma both came together to prejudice the legal prosecution (Haneef, 2023). This is in line with a claim put across by Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin (2006) that those who exercise power can enforce dominance because they are able to create ideological reasoning that makes unequal treatment normal.

The research invokes gendered justice, which is a theoretical concept of disparate (and in varying degree) application of the legal regulations on socially constructed gender norms that usually favor male authority and challenge female agency. The nature of female characters in the novel like Mena has to live with multiple disadvantages, attributed to their gendered condition, as well as their class and religion. The pressured marriage bargain that Yusif makes, as a price to release Danesh shows how the patriarchy standards entwine itself with legal, ethnic standing, controlling female bodies and their autonomy (Rafique, 2023). Through feminist criticisms including more comprehensive ones as elucidated by Holvino (2010), the relationship between gender oppression and ethnicity and classes cannot be purportedly examined separately hence the importance of this concept in establishing the interpretative stance of this study.

This usage of intersectionality, as described by Crenshaw (1989) gives the analytical background to the comprehension of how various types of discrimination are integrated to give rise to a unique experience of discrimination. In The Verdict, the lives of Danesh and Mena show the interaction of religious minority with poverty and gender to result in even greater legal and societal disadvantages. This indicates the opinion by Block and Corona (2014) about social class as a rather important yet understudied aspect of the intersectional research. The framework represents the interactive nature of identities in the story through its conception of the discrimination.

Such a conceptual model places The Verdict as a good piece of literature and a social and political commentary. The novel also reflects the social inequalities we see in real life because the inequalities of ethnicity and gender are deeply embedded in the legal system, which reaffirms the view by Collins (1998) that oppression coupled with race, class, and gender are inseparable systems of institutions-level effects. This synthesis unlocks the flexibility to treat structurally described elements with variety and multiplicity of identities identified within intersectionality to do what the historical paradigm cannot: to allow a multifaceted approach of how fictional writings can expose or reinforce social hierarchies or even counter narrative.

4. Ethnicity, Gendered Justice and Intersectionality in the Verdict

The legal outcome in the case of Haneef is interjected by fusion of identity markers instead of serving as a product of neutral decision-making. The trial of Danesh, a poor and a Christian child, is depicted as pre-determined through social positioning: those endorsed as the model members of the community, i.e., as the witnesses, are deemed credible whereas the minority voice counts as irrelevant (Haneef, 2023, p. 130). The description of the courtroom given in the novel Judge Mehboob admonishes that this is a court room. Maybe you can do that in America but this is Pakistan” is a possible claim about national-cultural expectations as an excuse of differentiation of legal standards (Haneef, 2023, p. 180).

Religious marginality is compounded by the fact that class isolates: the exclusion of the mother of Sikander, who tells him, it is the perception of the rich people: “You rich people think we are yours” (p. 76); the religion of Sikander; the similarity between the illiterate Danesh and the other characters; they all show that access to procedural safeguards and popular sympathy is limited only to the wealthy. Gender also overlaps: Mena as a poor Christian woman who is clearly vulnerable is being instrumentalized when Yusif sets a condition that gets Danesh freed by marrying Mena and turning gendered subordination into negotiating power (originally (Haneef, 2023, p. 116).

Interpreted in terms of Social Dominance Theory, such textual operations (written as they are in Social Dominance Theory) reflect institutionalized processes of re-inscribing group-based inequalities: legitimizing myths (the community moral right to be heard), institutional deference (courtroom privilege to dominant witnesses), and unequal access to resources (access to wealth in order to outplay in courts). Intersectionality is the reason why legal punishment, as well as the social sanctions, are multiplicative rather than additive in Danesh: His minority religion, poverty, as well as his sister being sexually exposed interact with each other to create a legal outcome nobody of the single axes could fail to create (Crenshaw, 1989; Block & Corona, 2014).

Patriarchy in *The Verdict* is functioning as both social practice at the level of everyday life and as institutional support. The outside social actors in the court setting would include Pir Piya intimidating witnesses (p. Judicial violence (217-19) includes the application of mob justice (99-100) and lynch mobs (p. 214) pledge cheers such as “Death to the infidel!” (p. 214) Displaying how extra-legal patriarchal and majority forces inflect the law through the legal milieu. Within the court, institutionalized patriarchy and majoritarian control are replicated by the following: the rejection of cross-examination by

the judge and the subordination of community elders to greater forces (Haneef, 2023, p. 180).

During the dispute between the families, Yusif employs the negotiation of marriage, as he demands to give Mena in exchange of Danesh (p. 116). Marriage negotiation is a weaponized weapon of patriarchal ownership of women in a legal dispute; the human female body becomes a bargaining chip in the conflict between tribes. This shows a typical SDT process: hierarchy- promoting behaviors are rationalized by cultural discourses (i.e., defense of religious purity, male authority) that are considered good reasons to accept disparity (Pratto et al., 2006).

Significantly, Haneef does introduce resistance (female rebellion, Sikander in the guise of legal representation), yet that is snuffed out by institutionalism and myths of culturalism. According to Rafique (2023), although there is the emergence of the counter-narratives of female agency, they have to work within the restrictive boundaries-the novel thus demonstrates that norms of patriarchy are resistant as they are entrenched in the social practice as well as the juridical process (Holvino, 2010; Rafique, 2023). In a nutshell, patriarchy and institutional organizations work in conjunction to normalize ethnic and gender grades instead of rectifying them.

Danesh and Mena are composed as co-constitutive of intersectional vulnerability. As a Christian child, Danesh is disadvantaged in the social hierarchy; his poverty deprives him of intellectual capital and legal literacy; Mena is subjected to sexualized negotiation and possible tarnishing of reputation because of her sex. The novel includes the frontal concrete episodes of witness credibility bias (p. 130), the promise of Yusif (p. 116), inappropriate intimidation of Pir Piya (p. 99) and mob violence (p. 214). Taken together, these moments indicate how processes of the law recreate postcolonial hierarchies (e.g., applying the law inherited or modified by the postcolonial state, such as blasphemy adjudication, are retooled to exert predominant group domination) (Haneef, 2023; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

No one is either good or bad... The situations and conditions of a person thus tend to compel their actions into the terrible manner" (p. 90) thematically reinforce that the actions of these characters are worked out with regard to their social situation. This is in line with the SDT observation that subordinate accommodation to hierarchy tends to perpetuate it; the novel depicts collaboration by the victims, the observers as well as the elite which propagate dominance (Pratto et al., 2006).

Meanwhile, Haneef employs restrained levels of hierarchies-mitigating forces: the defense of Sikander is used in paradigmatic resistance and a couple of characters work against type. However, the story takes pains to reveal that even a combination of these

forces cannot bring down these bigger legitimizing myths and institutional procedures; both local authority (the Pir Piya and the leaders of the community) and the authoritative power (the rulings in the court) work together to suppress any outcry. In such ways, Danesh and Mena explain how intersectionality creates a synergistic, long-term disadvantage where legal recourse stands an option but limited and frequently symbolic as opposed to structural.

The Verdict does not emphasize legal injustice as the product of individual judges going wrong or rogue elements but, in a more predictive argument, legal injustice as the product of interlocking systems, majoritarian religiousness privilege, patriarchal gender norms, and class inequality. The novel supports SDT in its argument that mechanisms of reproduction include not only legitimizing myths but also the day-to-day activities of institutions (here, courts, police, and community leadership that reify hierarchies), and intersectionality provides another explanation as to why Danesh and Mena could not be examined in one of religion, class, or gender (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Pratto et al., 2006; Crenshaw, 1989; Block & Corona, 2014). In practice, this text states that law reform should not be a separate endeavor, but one that is concurrent with cultural transformation: faulty procedures alone will not help revamp legitimizing myths and informal pressures that continue to back them.

This discussion unites the study and its conclusion of ethnicity, gendered justice and intersectionality in *The Verdict* to view the novel in terms of Social Dominance Theory (SDT) and intersectionality by Crenshaw. It interdepends the close-textual evidences with the theoretical frame to demonstrate how Haneef presents law as the stage where myths that allegorize, patriarchal arrangements, and the privilege of a favored boyhood forms a type of injustice that is resistant and resilient. I also cite or summarize the novel and thesis closely where I do, I state what page of your uploaded document I am referring to.

In the text, it is made clear that the identity given Danesh of Christian is not a neutral background information but rather the actual center that predisposes him to suspicion and dispossession. The credibility of witnesses whose reputation in the community is considered a “two pillars of the community” is granted, surpassing evidentiary reasoning, a trend that the novel stage-manages again and again to demonstrate the replacement of social authority by the evidentiary authority. The courtroom drama details how guilt was established as a social judgment in anticipation of the actual verdict by the court: the social significations are transacted in social ritual sermons, marches and merely refined by the formalities of the courtroom language. The religious speech deployed by Pir Piya, as he tries to persuade Harami not to murder: Mark my words... There will be no other higher place in heaven than that of a believer who dies in the defense

of the honor of the Prophet, crystallizes how the sanctified narratives turn into extrajudicial violence.

In terms of the SDT, the scenes described below would closely be aligned with what Sidanius and Pratto define as legitimizing myths, i.e., culturally viable accounts of how world can and should be constituted to the benefit of dominant parties to such an extent that discrimination by institutions should be viewed as somehow necessary or inevitable (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The novel indicates the effectiveness of such a myth to be multilateral since they work at the same time on the level of elite circles and mass circles: here judges use the idea of political cost, there are preachers that influence the audiences, and the media spread the hegemonic discourse.

The analysis explains that gender is not an independent axis that operates independently, instead, the vulnerability of women in the plot is the process of reproduction of the religious and class power. The fate in which Yusif is described as doomed unless the sister marries Yusif Ali Khan is a terrible shade of female independence as a transactional power in a male to male sabotage.

This situation of Mena thus reveals a double bind: she is already marginalized as a Christian; she is a vulnerable poor woman who does not have any institutional support but is easily driven down since her refusal presents a breach of power to a powerful man. This trend is reiterated by the feminist interpretations mentioned in the thesis (e.g., Rafique, 2023) that project gendered violence in the novel as part of structure and not an individual characteristic.

Class privilege is recurrently portrayed as the moderator of the law which the characters experience. The elite background and being educated abroad means that Sikander is both empowered and able to make use of legal machinery beyond the reach of Danesh and suspect he is a stranger and open to delegitimization on the basis of foreign orientation. It is upon these two border conditions that are securely cocooned in an apparatus of resources and are now under attack since the moment when they are not granted access to the question of belonging, indicating the interrelatedness of nationality with class when it comes to defining boundaries of legal status.

When taken collectively, the textual evidence indicates that the poor are not just deprived of resources but are also victims of symbolic logic of equating poverty with culpability; through money, procedural space and avenues of social escape are purchased that are made visible without naturalizing them in the novel.

The scenes in the court that were shown more than once serve as the reminder of the fear of political and social punishment by the judiciary itself: This is so clearly

expressed by the unwillingness of the judge Mehboob to reject blasphemy cases, as he believes he may be reprimanded by the authorities or the people. Corruption and transactional access (such as the case of Danesh where a guard was paid to gain exclusive access to the museum) are further indications of how law based institutions become spongy to extra-legalities.

This confirms the argumentation of the thesis that institutional discrimination also operates not only through the formal workings of law, but its informal economies; SDT resolves why actors in and of institutions tend to recreate hierarchy - because the practices and ideologies of the institutions provide them with de facto incentives and social license to do so safely or rationally.

In the novel, resistance is not shown as non-existent. Sikander and Sanah perform legal and rhetorical kinds of resistance, the action in court of Sanah and the appeals to conscience, by Sikander, and other people also demonstrate moral braveness, such as Danesh. However, the study reveals these to be circumstantial, as opposed to structural solutions: individual agency can reveal hypocrisy and get a temporary reprieve, but rarely disrupt the mythic scaffolding that legitimizes violence. This supports one of the most critical SDT insights embodied in the paper, there are hierarchy-limiting forces at work, however, the effectiveness of these forces relies upon the transient changes in institutional interests and cultural discourse, rather than on individual acts of heroism alone.

Readings of *The Verdict* through SDT and intersectionality offer three intersecting dynamics working in concert (1) mythic legitimation (religious and cultural discourse that ostensibly justify exclusion), (2) resource asymmetry (the class and professional capital that allows differing legal experiences) and (3) gendered mediation (the body of women becomes the locus where other hierarchies are prohibited). The usefulness of Crenshaw intersectionality, then, lies in that it does not allow us to think of these axes as such; the novel illustrates multiplicative disadvantage race, religion, class, gender that is traced in high detail in the thesis. In practice, the study indicates and the thesis explains that only legal change is not enough: changes require intersectionality including how the law is applied, media ethics, and grassroots support via empowerment that allows opposing the myths of legitimation.

The Verdict production of injustices of religious, classed and gendered others through co-productions between the legal institutions, cultural narratives and everyday patriarchy. The two centric SDT-intersectionality perspective assigned to the study provides an explanation of institutional mechanics how institutions behave and experience how Danesh and Mena are exposed in disparate ways. The novel by Haneeff, therefore, becomes a powerful cultural artefact towards the diagnosis of structural injustice: what

must change (namely, myths, incentives and unequal resources) and, at the same time, how the above will be equally difficult.

Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) allowed to better define the role of ethnic, religious, gender, and class identities that intersect in order to create an equilibrium of injustice, which is systemic in the novel socio-legal environment.

First, structurally, there is demonstrated legal disadvantage of the ethnic and religious minorities. Danesh and his Christian identity defines his guilt under the eyes of the court because the testimony of the minority is dismissed whereas the dominant-group witnesses are without question (Haneef, 2023, p. 130). Religious rhetoric, like the one by Pir Piya encouraging violence in the name of the defense of the faith (p. 214) proves the concept behind SDT of legitimization of the myths.

Second, gendered justice is a hierarchical way of control. The practice that turns female autonomy into a commodity in *The Verdict* is when Yusif claims that Mena is required to marry him to be granted the freedom he holds over her brother (p. 116). This is in line with what Rafique (2023) reveals about women in *The Verdict*, which is that they are placed under the pressures of patriarchal trades that support the ethnographic and class disparities.

Third, the privilege of the classes ensures only problematic security. Sikander was trained for elite and can fight back against the irregularities in law, and his approaches are not accepted as him being a foreigner (p. 180). This adds credence to SDT which says that neutralization of hierarchy-attenuating resources occurs when resistance is together with their messages framed to portray that it is not patriotic.

And last is the disadvantage of intersectional oppression, the multiplicative and non-additive nature. The poverty, religion, and age of Danesh and the added status of being a poor Christian woman to Mena compound their vulnerability which validates the argument made by Block and Corona (2014) that avoiding the issue of class and gender downplayed the extent of ethnic oppression.

The overall picture in the novel presents the judicial system in Pakistan as a part of the system that helped perpetuate the dominance with counteractive efforts viewed in an individual and consequential manner rather than in a structural way. The results show that the justice reforms should not concentrate on one axis to the detriment of other axes because this would make it easier to maintain the structure and mechanism of inequality.

5. Conclusion

In the present study it was aimed to explore the manifestation of ethnicity, gendered justice and intersectionality as portrayed in *The Verdict* by Osman Haneef that reflects upon the social legal landscape in Pakistan. Using the theoretical concepts of Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), it became possible to discover that the novel is actually not a courtroom story; it is a systemic critique of the collusion between legal institutions and societal norms to ensure that hierarchy is perpetuated at a group basis.

The data, further showed that the ethnic and religious minorities in the text are always made to appear legally vulnerable with their credibility being undercut by validating myths of majoritarian moral authority. Gendered justice plays the role of providing enforcement of these hierarchies where the autonomy of women is commodified during the male negotiation. Class privilege also makes an appearance as a partial cushion, although it is often nullified when the resistance is explained as a culturally invalid practice by nationalist and religious means. Importantly, the events of such characters as Danesh and Mena prove that the discrimination is intersection ally compounded and multiplicative instead of additive.

The story of Haneef demonstrates that it is not distant and separate individuals failing to do what is right but the inevitable result of a system resting on interlinked cultural narratives, institutionalized discriminations and social-economic marginalization benefiting each other. Resistance is also depicted in the novel but such efforts, although morally strong yet to a great extent personal and limited by vested power structures, match the predictions of SDT that forces work to decrease hierarchy and explain or contribute to an explanation of why hierarchy attenuating forces find it difficult to dispel established legitimizing myths unless cultures and the institutions supporting them also change in various ways.

Finally, *The Verdict* is a literary and even socio-political text, in which the story works against the ultimate unveiling of structural inequalities that still exist in the postcolonial legal justice. The current research illustrates that an intervention to bring justice in such settings should be intersectional in nature both in that they should not focus on the laws written on paper but also cultural and institutional set up that govern how such laws are entrenched in the real word.

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