

Clash of Choices: A Study of Assimilation and Identity Issues in Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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- Diaspora
- Identity
- Multiculturalism
- Identity
- Alienation

Abstract

The present study is an endeavor for analyzing the phenomenon of the diaspora in the light of the Pakistani diasporic community depicted in Kamila Shamsie's novel Home Fire. It analyses the difficulties faced by Pakistani immigrants regarding assimilation in the culture and society of the host country. The reactions to the prevailing situation of Islamophobia in the west are not similar amongst all the segments of the Pakistani diaspora. This leads to the analysis of different characters in the novel which further highlights the factors like backgrounds and ambitions as the determiners of the course of action that each of these characters follows. The issues of identity and assimilation remain central to this study.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Diaspora studies deal with the lives of immigrants who face various issues regarding their identities. The word 'diaspora' has been derived from Greek words *dia* (across) and *speirein* (scatter) and it means "the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country" (OED). There are three waves of diaspora. Originally, the term referred to the Jews who immigrated to different parts of the world. The second wave of diaspora came during the colonial era when colonizers moved to other lands to expand their area of influence. Slaves were transported from Africa to America to facilitate the new plantations. The third wave of diaspora corresponds with the periods of the Industrial Revolution and globalization when people from the less developed countries moved to the developed countries to improve their lifestyles and to support their families. Pakistani diaspora belongs to this third wave. The term diaspora began to be used in literary criticism consequent to the developments in post-colonial criticism. It borrows the concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and exile from the post-colonial theory.

Some Pakistani novelists have made the Pakistani diaspora the subject of their novels. Prominent among them are Hanif Kureshi, H.M. Naqvi, Mohsin Hamid, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Nadeem Aslam. Hanif Kureshi's two novels *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album* are about British Asian youth. H.M. Naqvi's first novel *Home Boy* is an account of the three young Pakistani men living in New York City and struggling to make their mark in an alien society. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is set in the background of the 9/11 incident and presents the minatory situation faced by Pakistanis living in America at that time.

Bapsi Sidhwa's fourth novel *An American Brat* is about Feroza Ginwalla, a descendant of the Junglewalla clan portrayed in her previous novel *The Crow Eaters* but whereas the latter is a comic romp chronicling the rags-to-riches life of Faredoon Junglewalla and his family in pre-Partition Pakistan, *An American Brat* is a coming-of-age story, a sensitive portrait of how modern America appears to a newly arrived girl and an exploration of the impact it has on her in terms of an identity issue faced in a multicultural and alien society. In one of her earlier novels, *The Bride*, Sidhwa has dealt with the issue of multiculturalism but that was in the context of Pakistani society. *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa depicts the story of a Parsee girl, Feroza, who is sent by her mother, Zareen, to the USA hoping that this might make her daughter liberal as she is always admonishing others on being ultra-modern. Subsequently, Feroza adjusts herself into American society to such an extent that Zareen becomes worried about her intention of marrying a Jewish person. The novel presents a critique on those members of the Pakistani diaspora who try to acquire a new self-fashioned identity when they face a society having altogether different social values and norms from the ones to which they succumbed during their days in Pakistan.

Nadeem Aslam won widespread praise for his fourth novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, which is set in the midst of an immigrant Pakistani community in a fictitious town of England, Dasht-e-Tanhai. In this novel, Aslam deals with the dilemma of that segment of Pakistani diaspora which prefers to maintain its own identity in a multicultural milieu. Aslam's own experiences can be examined to ascertain the possibility of whether the situation shown by him is the outcome of the influence of his life events on his writing or is it something objective. *Maps for Lost Lovers* presents a picture of Pakistani diaspora in the UK who remain mired in their age-old convictions and dogmas. The story is about the various reactions which a Pakistani community, living in an imaginary town of the UK, namely Dasht-e-Tanhai, shows towards the sudden disappearance of two lovers. They surmise the

possibility of honor killing or the implementation of Islamic Law in such a situation. This novel is a commentary on that segment of Pakistani diaspora which remains baffled in a secular and liberal state like the UK due to their deep affiliations with their religion and a liberal environment provided by the state which is devoid of any role played by the religion in the public sphere.

Kamila Shamsie's seventh novel, *Home Fire*, is a story of three siblings of Pakistani origin who are settled in the UK. Shamsie based the story of this novel on Sophocles's Antigone in which a sister gives priority to religion by arranging the burial of her rebellious brother over the decree of state (King). So one can anticipate a theme of rebellion and defiance in the novel. However, Shamsie deals with it in a contemporary setting of the Pakistani diasporic community.

The story of the novel revolves around two sisters; Isma and Aneeka, whose lives are centered on their brother, Pervaiz- a member of Daesh. Their lives undergo a dilemma similar to that of Antigone i.e. the confusion of whether to follow the directives of the new Home Secretary, Karamat Lone, or to facilitate their brother's return to normal life in the UK.

The lives of the Pakistani diaspora in the US and the UK have become tough in a post-9/11 and post-27/7 world. They are eyed with suspicion whenever they have to travel. Isma's missing the flight to the US and then the way she is interrogated at the airport reflects this trend of xenophobia prevalent in the West.

Only those immigrants become free of this stress of being under suspicion all the time who manage to assimilate themselves in the host country. The character of Karamat Lone indicates how one can become a Britisher despite having a Pakistani Muslim background. Lone, despite having a Pakistani origin, acts like a hardliner and conservative Home Secretary opposing any kind of concession towards Pakistanis or the ones like Pervaiz so that he may remain acceptable to the upper echelons of British politics. This mindset shows a relatively new dimension in the studies of multiculturalism which is being increasingly affected by the lack of tolerance in the indigenous population. Pervaiz's falling prey to Daesh through his friend, Farook, is a rather exaggerated depiction of the influence of Daesh in the UK because, after 27/7, the British intelligence agencies, as well as immigration authorities, are vigilantly keeping a check to ward off any such influence.

Karamat's son, Eamonn is yet another example of assimilation but his assimilation should have been quite smooth as compared to his father's because of his Irish mother and a name that sounds British. As Isma is the eldest among her siblings, so it is she who had to take care of them after the demise of their father, about whom Farook tells Pervaiz that he was a 'martyr' in the American War on Terror. Therefore, Isma and Aneeka have to face the issue of identity which has become more complex for the families like theirs because the mainstream British media and civil society do not own any terrorists even if they are one of their own. They immediately label them as Muslims of, mostly, Pakistani origin. The title of the novel is from one of the WWI songs. It indicates a state of emergency or crisis as the turbulent lives of Isma and Aneeka are undergoing.

To sum it up, Shamsie's account of the sufferings of two sisters arouses pathos but her depicting all the things associated with Pakistan is, somehow, her own earnest desire to be accepted as a Britisher like Karamat Lone. Moreover, such a depiction of xenophobia is an intrinsic part of neo-orientalist writings.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The present study of Shamsie's novel, *Home Fire*, aims to explore the various issues faced by the Pakistani diasporic community in countries like the UK. These issues range from

finding it difficult to adjust to the culture of the host country to the loss of identity and failure in the acquisition of the new identity in a complex scenario of Islamophobia prevalent in the western world.

1.3 Research Objectives:

Following are the main objectives of this study:

- i. To find out the impact of living in a multicultural milieu upon the identity of ones from another country
- ii. To find out the significance of assimilation for the Pakistani diasporic community

1.4 Research Questions

Following are the research questions determined by the researchers finding answers to which is the crux of this study:

- i. How the characters of the two sisters display the issues of identity crisis in a multicultural setting?
- ii. Why assimilation or an inability to assimilate in the host country becomes a cardinal issue for the immigrant characters?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant for the people in the society because it provides an insight into the multiple issues faced by the Pakistani diasporic community in countries like the USA and the UK. Immigration to these countries attracts a large number of Pakistanis who are willing to do anything to achieve that goal of their life. However, their immigration, mostly, leads to a more complicated life in the host countries where they find it extremely difficult to adjust themselves to the values and norms which are completely different to the ones to which they adhered to in Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

The term 'diaspora' is used by post-colonial critics to refer to those immigrants who migrate and settle in the developed countries. Originally, it was used to refer to the Jews who got dislocated from their land of origin. Subsequently, many other categories of dislocated people were added to the ambit of this term. Colonizers and the slaves, transported to the colonies in America and Australia, were also a kind of diaspora. In a later period, professionals from various erstwhile colonies started settling in the Occident. So, the term diaspora is not restricted to the experience of Jews rather it covers millions of people who live outside their native lands. Diaspora literature has a global reach rather than being limited to the national or ethnic level. It is transnational in nature because diasporas add cultural diversity to areas of their residence.

Cohen (2006) speculates that there are shared diasporic sensibilities and common thematic concerns that invoke similar responses from the writers (p. 64). Consequently, some of the issues dealt with in diaspora literature are common such as issues of identity, problems of history, confrontation with racism, intergenerational conflicts, and difficulties in building new supportive communities. However, each marginalized group has got its indigenous experience which needs representation and critical reception.

Displacement of individuals leads to their getting mired in the identity crisis. The individuals facing such a crisis resort either to display the incongruity or consistency between the phases of their life spent in the host and home countries. According to Cohen (2006), “Self-fashioning is achieved concerning something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening ‘other’ must be discovered or invented to be attacked or destroyed” (p. 9).

The immigration of the indigenous people of the Indian sub-continent to Europe and America came about in three phases under the empire. The first of these was in connection with indentured labor. Judith M. Brown, in her book *Global South Asians* (2006), states that indentured labor was the recruitment of laborers under a contract for laborers for a specified period of time developed from the 1830s in response to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in the British and other European empires. The next phase of immigration under the Empire is contract labor (the 1850s-1930s). In this phase, the Indians moved to East Asian and East African colonies to avail themselves of the opportunities for work under contract for a specific period, under conditions which were freer and less arduous than those suffered by the indentured. The last phase of Indians’ immigration to the foreign countries, during Raj days, coincides with the growing economic opportunities and the improvements in the means of transport during the second quarter of the 20th century. They traveled widely overseas for varieties of trade and commerce, sometimes to places where there was a long-standing Indian commercial presence, as in East Africa, and sometimes to places where Indian communities were being built for the first time. Many took up permanent residence overseas or at least stayed for many decades, creating the core of a settled diaspora. “They were often known as ‘Passenger Indians’ who paid their way, in contrast to those who arrived under the indenture or some other form of labor contract” (Brown, 2006, p. 36).

Migrations from India and Pakistan continued after the end of British imperial rule in 1947. According to Brown (2006), South Asian immigrants mostly moved to the UK, the USA, and the Middle East countries to find better opportunities for jobs. There was an acute shortage of manpower in these regions. Britain was reconstructing its economy at home after the devastations of the Second World War and offered considerable opportunities for employment for the skilled as well as the unskilled. South Asians were a part of the larger movement of people from the New Commonwealth. People from India and Pakistan had a free right to access Britain during the early years of independence. The flows from South Asia were only slowed when from the early 1960s successive governments of Britain enacted legislation restricting New Commonwealth immigration, out of concerns about social tensions where there were large and distinctive ‘colored communities’, the pressure placed by immigration on housing in certain areas, and to ward off a massive influx of South Asians from East Africa.

Brown (2006) also gives an account of how the South Asians began making the USA their destination for attaining a comfortable lifestyle:

The USA became the Mecca for the aspiring immigrants from many places in the less- developed world, when it, too, revised its immigration laws in 1965, abandoning the National Origins System set up in 1924. Under the new dispensation, there were quotas for the eastern And western hemispheres with 50000 more available to the eastern hemisphere. (p. 55)

These conditions were further relaxed in the coming years and allowed the immigrants to use their Green cards to bring their relatives to the USA as well. This led to the rise in the Asian-American population from 8,78,000 in 1960 to well over 7 million in 1990. These immigrants live side by side with people from other regions of the world having different faiths and cultures. If the new millennium has laid bare some of the deepest tensions felt by some South Asians in their new homelands, it has also seen a wide range of cultural interactions that have influenced not only the migrants and subsequent generations of South Asians in the diaspora but also the societies where they have settled.

The researchers have managed to find some research papers on topics similar to this one. The first one is titled “Speaking in Tongues: Conceptualising Femininities in Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*” by Ms. Sana Imtiaz and Prof. Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. It analyses the feminist aspect of the selected novel from a diasporic angle i.e. the diasporic identities of the female characters in this novel. The second research paper is by Jutta Weingarten of Justus Liebig University, Germany, and is titled “Traditional Claustrophobia-Intersections of Gender and Religious Identities in Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*”. As the researcher of this paper was not familiar with the different aspects of Pakistani society, so she errs in analyzing the religious ties binding the people of Pakistan which she fails to take into account. Another research paper is by Mr. Sijal Sarfarz of International Islamic University, Islamabad, and is titled “Representation of Islam: A Post-Colonial Reading of Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*”. This one strives to refute the image of Islam as depicted in the novel using Edward Said’s model of Orientalism. It is to be noted that the two novels selected by the researchers of this study have never been compared to analyze the diverse nature of the Pakistani diaspora.

“Rise of Global Terror and (Re) formulations of Muslim Identity Since September 11”, a research paper by Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan of NUML, Islamabad, presents the changing scenario for Pakistan diaspora in the west through analysis of the works of Ghose and Hamid. He has dealt with the issues of memory, exile, cultural clash, and identity. Dr. Awan’s research covers the transformation in the image of the Pakistani diaspora in the west as well as the different stages in the behavioral approach of the Pakistani diaspora while living in a multicultural society.

In another paper “Unwilled Choices”: The Exilic Perspectives on Home and Location in the Works of Zulfikar Ghose and Mohsin Hamid”, Dr. Awan presents a comparative perspective of the experience of Pakistanis living in a multicultural milieu through analyzing the works and personal experiences of Ghose and Hamid.

Radek Galabazna of Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic studies the issues of subjectivity and identity in Kureishi’s *The Buddha Of Suburbia* in his paper “Theatre of Identity: The Buddha of Suburbia”. He analyzes the categories of subjectivity and identity as power effects of the predominant discourses of ethnicity, race, class, and gender.

Amardeep Singh in his paper “Names can Wait: The Misnaming of South Asian Diaspora in Theory and Practice”, applies the term catachresis renewed by Jhumpa Lahiri to Area Studies, South Asian Studies, and Post-Colonial Studies describing how the US State Department conceived Area Studies Centre to support the US interests during Cold War. In his view, the dominance of South Asian Studies over South Asian literary studies is another instance of catachresis resembling in its impact to the one in *The Namesake*.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the present study comprises the views of eminent academic and critic, Avtar Brah, about identity, multiculturalism, and assimilation in the diasporic context. The researchers have employed the concepts of culture, multiculturalism, identity,

self-fashioning of the new identity, and diaspora as enunciated by Avatar Brah in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (1996).

Brah (1996) sees the diasporic phenomenon as “essentially about settling down, about putting roots somewhere else” (p. 179). Therefore, diasporas have to shed away their indigenous identity to assume a new self-fashioned identity so that they complete their experience of being away from ‘home’. She, further, avers that diasporic experience has political, socio-economic, gender, and racial dimensions to it:

All diasporic journeys . . . are embarked upon, lived and re-lived through multiple modalities: for example, of gender, race, class, religion, language, and generation. As such, all diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common ‘we’. (pp. 180-181).

Hence, diaspora is a complex phenomenon. It is not all about moving to another country and settling there rather it entails a continuous struggle on the part of immigrants to conform to an alien culture.

Culture is such a complex term that has wide meanings within its ambit. Different philosophers, scholars, and thinkers have defined it in different ways. Brah (1996) defines culture as “the symbolic construction of the vast array of a social group’s life experiences” (p. 18). Her definition implies that the culture of a person may change when he gets an experience of living away from his native land i.e. in exile or diasporic state and thus confronting the issues of identity crisis and alienation before assuming the new identity. She also takes into consideration the power structure imbibed in South Asian culture which is in contrast to the cultures of Britain and the USA. She views multiculturalism in the USA and Britain as a corollary of different historical events. She links it to the racial and ethnic prejudices found in these two countries from which American society has moved forward but British society still retains traits of treating Asians and Africans, not as their equals.

The idea of identity is somewhat ambiguous. A social group living in the same territory may undergo a change in its identity over time while people living in different regions may share a common identity in an age of globalization. Brah’s (1996) concept of identity is that it is “simultaneously subjective and social, and is constituted in and through culture” (p. 21). It implies that one’s identity is directly related to one’s culture. Having encountered more than one culture, thus, renders one in a state of confusion viz-a-viz one’s identity.

2.2. Research Method

The research has employed thematic analysis as the research method for this study under the research paradigm of phenomenology. Thematic analysis is done by analyzing a text from the angle of various themes which are identity and assimilation in the case of the present study.

3. New Worlds, New Dilemmas: Analysis of *Home Fire*

Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire* is a critique of the issues faced by the Pakistani diasporic community in the UK. From the very first chapter, the strands of diasporic issues of assimilation or lack of assimilation are provided as the foundation of the whole narrative. “She had expected the interrogation, but not the hours of waiting for that would precede it, nor that it would feel so humiliating to have the contents of her suitcase inspected” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 3). The manner in which Isma is treated by the immigration officers gives a great insight into the prejudices against the Pakistani communities in the western world. The ones who travel to the USA or the UK having Pakistani origin are always

subjected to such kind of humiliating interrogation at airports. This gives a shock to especially those people who are always under the illusion that only the western countries respect human values and accord respect to individuals. However, this blatant display of nationalistic bias leaves them all the more perplexed when they go for immigration.

“The interrogation lasted for nearly two hours. He wanted to know her thoughts on Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, the *Great British Bake Off*, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, dating websites” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 5). Here, the sham of the freedom of expression in the western world is exposed as the ones like Isma have to prove their Britishness by accepting the western narrative about matters ranging from political to social nature. She is expected to accept homosexuality as something legitimate which in contradiction with her religious beliefs. If she expresses her conformity with Islam’s denunciation of homosexual practices, she would not be able to reach the USA for her studies and if she conforms to the western beliefs about homosexuality, her inner self will remain perturbed. Then the authorities need her to align herself with the western position on the Middle East conflict which does not see it from a humanist angle by ignoring the atrocities of Israeli forces towards the innocent Palestinian civilian population and by condoning the crimes against humanity committed by Israel. Here, again she has to conceal her sympathy for the helpless Palestinians. The views about dating websites have also to be acceptable to the immigration authorities notwithstanding the values and norms which Isma inherited from her lineage and Pakistaniness. So, if, on one hand, the Pakistani diaspora communities have to discard their values and traditions to adjust themselves in the host countries, then, on the other hand, they are also expected to suppress their pain for the plight of persecuted people like Palestinian Muslims.

Eamonn’s meeting with Isma and his subsequent interest in becoming frank with her also reflects the difference of values inherited by two different kinds of people amongst the Pakistani diaspora. If Eamonn has inherited a thorough British identity through his father, Karamat Lone, who has assimilated himself in the British culture and society to the extent that he ultimately gets appointed as Home Secretary, and through his Irish mother; then Isma remains tied to the eastern values which her family imparted to her. This clash of value systems is quite evident during their initial conversations.

She stood up, mug in hand, and walked over to him.

They only open up this counter when it’s busy.’

‘Thanks, kind of you to say. Where is—?’ His vowels unashamedly posh where she had expected the more class-obscuring London accent of his father. (Shamsie, 2017, p. 16)

This is not only the indicator of the difference in the brought-ups of the two characters but also a representation of the value system of two kinds of families in the Pakistani diasporic population. There are people who like their children to accept the western lifestyle in its entirety and thus cutting off every sort of connection with the culture of the home country resulting in the acquisition of a new identity— which is only an artificial one without any roots; and there are people who like their children to keep intact with the values and norms of Pakistani society even while living in the countries like the US and the UK to keep their original identity intact. Isma’s bewilderment at Eamonn’s having an elitist accent in contrast to his father indicates the difference between her economic status and that of Eamonn’s who has seen only opulence in his life and is unfamiliar with the kind of struggle that his father or Isma’s family had to undergo to settle down in a country like England. The second generation of immigrants who succeed in acquiring a sound financial position in the host country is, usually, immune to the culture, language, and identity of their ancestors. Therefore, they cannot understand the problems of the people who are not so successful in making their mark in the host country or who have migrated from their home country recently.

During one of their meetings, Eamonn asks Isma,

‘Can I ask you something?’ he said. ‘The turban. Is that a style thing or a Muslim thing?’

‘You know the only two people in Massachusetts who have ever asked me about it both wanted to know if it’s a style thing or a chemo thing’. (Shamsie, 2017, p. 21).

This conversation between the two highlights the Islamophobia of Eamonn and many like him as he associates her headwear to the Muslim identity and thus distances himself away from that identity. He is unable to comprehend the practice of wearing hijab followed by Muslim women. This mind-set, though contrary to the western values of the freedom of an individual to choose anything for their dresses, is prevalent in the western world where the practice of wearing hijab is stigmatized as the symbol of Muslim identity and, thereby associated with the phenomenon of terrorism. This tendency of feeling insecure by the indigenous population in the western countries in a period of increasing Islamophobia has affected the lives of Muslim immigrants in general and Pakistani origin in particular because of the negative portrayal of Pakistanis’ image by the western media which are quick to blame them for anything or any event that is negative, be it security threats or the exploitation of the facility of social security offered by the western states.

Eamonn’s later flirtations and intimacy with Isma’s sister Aneeka are also an indication of the difference in the values inherited by Eamonn. Although Aneeka comes closer to him only for the sake of her brother so that she might convince Eamonn to plead Pervaiz’s case with his father and ask him to have a lenient stance towards him. During their relationship, Eamonn asks Aneeka one morning, “‘What were you praying for?’ . . . ‘Prayer isn’t about transaction, Mr. Capitalist. It’s about starting the day right’ (Shamsie, 2017, p. 70). There are many such instances when Eamonn expresses his unfamiliarity with the religious and social practices followed by people like Isma and Aneeka. It, again, is an indication of the detachment of the Lone household from Pakistani and Muslim identity.

Such kind of anti-Muslim propaganda further alienates Muslim youth who are easy prey for the terrorist organizations to brainwash them and to exploit them for terrorist activities. Pervaiz is such a young man. Isma’s sister, Aneeka, is closer to their brother, Pervaiz, who has joined Daesh and is hunted for by the British authorities. When she comes to know, that it is none other than Isma who passed the information regarding Pervaiz’s activities to the police, she expresses her anger by not talking to her. Isma finds it difficult to convey to her that sooner or later the authorities would have to come to know about it and then, in case of her not co-operating with them, the whole family would have been the victim of their ire.

‘Isma, you’ve made our brother not able to come home.’

Isma touched her sister’s face on the screen, felt the cold glass. ‘Shh, listen to me. People in the neighborhood knew. The police would have found out. There was nothing I could do for him so I did what I could for you, for us’. (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42).

Isma, being the eldest among her siblings, has to act with sanity in such a situation of emergency. This is what she tries to convey to Aneeka who is unable to comprehend the prevailing Islamophobia in British society and its implications for her and Isma when Pervaiz has been discovered to be a member of a terrorist organization. This has been experienced by many diasporic households after the events like 9/11 and 27/7 who have been on such crossroads to let a member of the family be taken away by the authorities on suspicion or conviction of terrorism in order to let the rest of the family live relatively peacefully despite a constant display of suspicions and humiliating attitudes towards them shown by the local people whose biases against them are a relegation from the pluralist multicultural world to the old patterns of lack of tolerance towards the non-white people.

The contrast between the fathers of Eamonn and Isma is yet another facet of the multiplicities of immigrants' identities. When both of them tell one another about their fathers, this becomes very explicit. Isma texts him: "I envy your father. Mine died while being taken to Guantanamo" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 45). Thus, Isma who has seen a life full of deprivations due to her father being away from home for most of the time due to his suspiciously extremist mindset and involvement in the terrorist activities sees Eamonn's father, who has taken a completely different path for assimilation into British society, keeping away from any sort of controversy that might have harmed his prospects for making his way to the office of Home Secretary, as a success story which her father was not. It is this sense of alienation that prompts her to excel in her field so that she, too, one day, be assimilated into the British society, and then no one would be able to raise doubts about her affiliations.

Each one of the main characters of the novel viz. Isma, Aneeka, Pervaiz, Eamonn, and Karamat stand for a particular category of people among the Pakistani diaspora. Shamsie, through her portrayal of Isma, has brought to the fore the young girls in the Pakistani diaspora who become resilient in the face of difficult situations like the sense of insecurity in the wake of an increasing bias towards their identity. She has only one aim i.e. assimilation by moving away from the legacy of her father just like Okonkwo's yearning to get rid of the image of his father in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. For it, she can even let go of her brother who, himself, is responsible for his downfall. Aneeka is another facet of the Pakistani diaspora who is more conscious of her emotional affinity with her brother and, for saving whom, she is willing to pay any price. In this sense, Aneeka, in her emotional association with her brother, is a stereotypical depiction of Pakistani women who spend the whole of their lives giving the men convenience whether they are their husbands, brothers, sons, or fathers. The three male characters also differ in their nature from one another. The character of Karamat is the one who remains free of any sentimental value. He has made his way up in British society through a hard struggle. So, he is not willing to let his hard-earned reputation be lost by allowing any kind of sympathy for the brother of Aneeka. He represents the segment in the diasporic community whose main aim is assimilation and for it, they happily embrace the identity and mind-set of the host nation. Eamonn represents the second-generation diasporic individuals who, in the circumstances like his, become estranged from the ideology, culture, and identity of their forefathers and align themselves with the western indigenous populace in every manner. On the other hand, Pervaiz is an epitome of the second-generation diasporic community, who inherits a legacy of extremism from either, their fathers or inculcate it through their social interactions with the people like Farook who manage to lure them to the folds of the organizations like Daesh. The young men like him are generally the kind of youth that is reportedly recruited by the terrorist outfits. However, the time at which the story of the novel is set is such that such occurrences have become minimal due to an extremely vigilant system of immigration and security in the western states. Therefore, the novels like this one are a bit exaggerated accounts of the involvement of the people of Pakistani origin in the involvement of terrorist activities.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis of the novel *Home Fire* manifests the various issues faced by the Pakistani diasporic community in the UK in the contemporary times when terrorist incidents like 9/11, 27/7, and the Paris attacks have been utilized by the mainstream western media to tarnish the image of Muslim immigrants in general and of Pakistani origin in particular. In such circumstances of an increasing sense of insecurity, two extremes are emerging amongst the Pakistani diaspora i.e. the ones who find it difficult to assimilate themselves in the British society due to increasing animosity towards them owing to the propaganda and negative portrayal of their image by the western media and the others who remain

determined to excel in the host country even if they have to forego the Pakistani identity and the sympathy towards the other Pakistanis trapped in the hostile circumstances.

The present study is delimited to the diasporic analysis of Kamila Shamie's *Home Fire* only because diasporic studies are an ever-changing field in cultural studies due to the dynamic nature of the impact of globalization and multiculturalism. In light of this study, the following recommendations are presented for the benefit of further study in the field:

- i. The immigrants should be made aware of the solutions to the issues that they face so that they do not further damage the image of the home country as the character of Pervaiz does in the novel.
- ii. The aspirant immigrants should take into consideration the various issues that they might have to face in other countries before migration.
- iii. The states like Pakistan should take proper measures to safeguard their image overseas through a proper system of guidance for the immigrants of Pakistani origin who are, in fact, the representatives of the identity and culture of Pakistan.

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