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– Narendra Karki

Critique of Islamic Patriarchy in Yousafzai's *I Am Malala*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Central
Department of English in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

By

Narendra Karki

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Central Department of English
Letter of Recommendation

NarindraKarkihas completed his thesis, entitled “Critique of Islamic Patriarchy in Yousafzai’s *I Am Malala*” under my guidance. I recommend this thesis to be submitted to the Research Committee for final examination of viva voce.

Khem Raj Khanal

April, 2016

Tribhuvan University
Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled “Critique of Islamic Patriarchy in Yousafzai’s *I Am Malala*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Narendra Karki has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of
English

Date: _____

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Abstract

This research is concerned with how the narrator of the memoir, *I Am Malala*, female characters of happen to make an entry into the secular western world in the course of fighting against the atrocious practices of Islamic society. In *I Am Malala*, the narrator is compelled to raise voice against the ban on the rights of girls to education. Her father motivates her to give expression to her opinions on any act of atrocity and injustice that she comes across in her life. Malala is the leading activist who devotes her life to the emancipation and empowerment of women in general and Muslim women particular. She is of the opinion that no force however tyrannical can check the liberation movement of women. Malala holds the view that education is key to the guaranteeing of women's access to most of the important apparatuses of state.

Through her activist politics, Malala appeals all the girls of the world to raise their voices against the oppressive forces ranging from Islamic doctrine and ruthless patriarchal practices. The memoir strengths combine in what is perhaps it's most horrifying and important scene when the boy, his mother and a friend watch a televised execution, common in Qaddafi's Swat valley that in the novel takes place in a basketball arena. The boy sees their next-door neighbor made to climb a wide, sturdy-looking aluminum ladder, and notices how at every rung he stopped and begged for mercy. Islamic patriarchy renders the positions of female characters vulnerable is critiqued in *I am Malala* by Yousafzai. In *I am Malala* the oppression of Islamic women in the patriarchal society of Islamic world is challenged by the narrator who is driven by the flamboyant rebellious spirit.

Contents

Letter of Approval

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Representation of Female Characters in Yousafzai's *I Am Malala* 1- 19

II. Critique of Islamic Patriarchy in Yousafzai's *I Am Malala* 20-47

III. Malala's Concern with Gender Equality and Individual Freedom 48-50

Works Cited

I. Representation of Female Characters in Yousafzai's *I am Malala*

Malala is the chief character and freedom fighter for the life, liberty and education of the Muslim women, she is the person of strong desire and opinion for the right liberation and education of Islamic female. Malala has the strong faith on scientific and modern type of knowledge which leads female toward the important apparatuses of state. Malala appeals all the Muslim girls and women of Pakistan as well as the world's to raise their voices against the suppressive forces of Islamic patriarchal practices by campaigning vivid educational programmes and awareness programmes in the country.

Islamic patriarchy renders the positions of female characters vulnerable is critiqued in *I am Malala* by Yousafzai. In *I am Malala* the oppression of Islamic women in the patriarchal society of Islamic world is challenged by the narrator who is driven by the flamboyant rebellious spirit. Girls are hardly encouraged to go to school in Islamic society. More than two third of Islamic girls are forced grow up without seeing the faces of school. Even if lower level of education is granted to them, the Islamic authority always alienates women from opportunities of higher level of education. In the Islamic world, much undemocratic and tyrannical government comes into establishment. This condition is flatly challenged by the narrator of *I am Malala*. Malala singlehandedly crosses the boundary set by patriarchy and attends schools. Malala emerges as the most trustworthy and pioneering figure in the history of those Islamic girls who runs the risk of countering Islamic patriarchy and patriarchy-friendly dictatorship of Taliban.

Malala's suppression is one of the models of hidden suppression and exploitation upon women in Islamic community. She shows a shocking situation of Muslim women, there struggle against the established traditional rules, and at last

freedom of them. It means, in future if they struggle for their right, they can achieve their rights equal to men. Islamic feminists demand the Muslim women's rights equal to men. Like Malala in this novel, they also encourage Muslim women to oppose the anti-female traditional rules loaded or imposed upon them in the name of religious rules of Islam by patriarchal socio-norms and values. They long to provide these Muslim women complete freedom as Malala has got at the end of the novel. Critics claim the feminism within the Islamic framework is Islamic Feminism.

Islam is one of the broad terms that provide room for a specific variety of feminism to grow in it. It has its own theoretical identity among other religions in worlds. Quran is the source of each customs, rules, and regulation of Muslims. These religious traditions are invariably complex and rich. The term Islamic Feminism is made from two terms; Islam and Feminism. These are the distinct terms. The term Islamic Feminism assumes that Islam and feminism are compatible. It means that the feminist ideas can be accommodated in the space of Islamic concepts and ideas.

In *I am Malala*, the positions of female characters are increasingly weak due to the restrictive measures of patriarchal society. The narrator's fervent passion for education clashes with the rigid patriarchal society, and the totalitarian restrictions of Taliban regime. Malala disobeys the decree of patriarchal regime being it political or cultural. Female characters in both the novel silently give jolt to the deep-rooted patriarchy. How can they live peacefully and creatively if they are beset with unexpected hazards and pitfalls?

In *I am Malala*, the subdued and subordinated position of women give rise to *vehement* and vigorous sense of resistance against the patriarchal Islamic society makes manifold forms. The anti-patriarchal spirit of Malala changes into female solidarity which ultimately poses challenge against the edict of Taliban regime in

Swat Valley and the rigid patriarchal structure of Afghan society. The patriarchal orthodoxy and deep-rooted Islamic belief connive at the degradation and subjugation of women in the Islamic society. In this research, this idea is probed critically within the broader textual framework of *I am Malala*. The possibility of improving and upgrading this world solely through activism is noticeably present in this memoir.

Intrusive and encroaching the effect of Islamic patriarchy and tyrannical regime is proverbial. The prospect of transforming this world under the grip of totalitarian regime by staging mass activism of women is efficacious throughout the novel. If rapid trend of women's empowerment and inclusion do not enter and interpenetrate the dark zone of Islam, it would be really tough and challenging for Islamic women to dream liberation. .

Malala Yousafzai is the prominent and awesome activist. A citizen of Pakistan, she resists strongly to the edict of Taliban regime that no girl is allowed to enter school in Swat valley. A fervent and rebellious girl in her teens, Malala openly defies this edict of Taliban forces. She rather unites other girls against this sort of oppressive and atrocious practice of Taliban regime. Several times, she is threatened by the cadres and troops of Taliban government. But she remains bold and audacious. Singlehandedly she stands on the way to censorship.

For the deprivation of girls' right to education, she fights against the intimidating regime, and the then patriarchal society of Swat valley. For this rash, and rebellious spirit, one of the Taliban troops shoots in her head. Wounded in her head, she is about to lose her life. But due to the aid and cooperation of foreign journalist and health-workers, she is taken to one of the hospitals of London and gets cured. She survives. Since then, she has been taken as the messiah of those women who are alienated in Islamic society rocked unstable by tyranny and patriarchal prejudice.

I am Malala is the most famous memoir of Yousafzai. Regarding to this memoir, Clara Zetkin opines her view in the following citation:

Until power is fairly shared among the four provinces, the threat of secession will be a cloud hanging over the country. Malala writes of her beloved father, Ziauddin, wearing a black armband on Pakistan's 50th anniversary. There was nothing to celebrate since Swat joined Pakistan, presciently foreshadowing a deepening ethnic imbalance. This imbalance is so profound that only an extraordinary common enemy could distract from it. (45)

As claimed by Clara, the threat of secession is the most blood-curdling threat of the time in which Malala had to stand against the tyranny and annihilation brought forth by Afghan Taliban regime. Its fatal effects trickle down to some of contiguous territory of Pakistan. The burgeoning power of the Taliban in today's Pakistan should not be much of a surprise to those who understand the need to redress this ethnic agony.

Stefanie Castelo contends that Malala represents different type of voice which is hardly heard in the history of Islamic women's struggle for freedom and basic rights to education. Malala is soft and harsh, progressive and constant. She is appropriate in the moment in which the whole history awaits such a messianic figure. Casteli makes the following remarks:

Malala's voice has the purity, but also the rigidity, of the principled. She is being a competitive teenager and keeping track of who she beat in or writing about the blog for the BBC that catapulted her on to the international stage. We were learning how to struggle. And we were

learning how powerful we are when we speak – or talking about
Pakistan's politicians. (57)

Malala is passionate and intense. Her faith and her duty to the cause of girls' education is unquestionable. Her adoration for her father, her role model and comrade in arms are moving. She is at pains to see violence carried out in the name of Islam palpable. She is truly a heroic figure who has achieved an iconic status in the history of female activism.

The oppressive nature of patriarchy and its fatal effects are explored in Malala's Memoir, *I am Malala*. The narrator is an exemplary female character in this memoir. She falls prey to the harmful forces of society in which she lives. She struggles to rise above the bondage of fatalistic forces. But the corrupt and ignominious forces of society cheat her Ernest J. Gaines discloses the following remarks about how patriarchy in Islamic society inflicts atrocity in women:

The first person narrator hopes to excel in the thing that tempts her naturally. She struggles to come out of the ambit of her dead mother's fatalistic influence. But the lingering traces of patriarchal society in Bangladesh put her on the path of deviation. She is deviated from the sacred tie of marriage. Swayed by nonconformist zeal, she leaves her private care and concern. Her allies and supporters in the campaign for education dump her down. Shocked by her wrong decision, she struggles to heighten the rhetoric of social justice. (37)

Patriarchal ideology is largely responsible for the narrator's moral strength and stamina. Malala's own inner passion and sense of commitment are accountable for her moral superiority. But the harsh pressures exerted by the patriarchal society of Pakistan lead Malala to the path of self-affirmation. In this regard, it can surely be

said that *I am Malala* is a bold commentary of Yousafzai on the detrimental effect of rigid patriarchy.

Yousafzai's *I am Malala* is written to make the concerned authority of Swat Valley practically aware of how Pakistan plunges into the vortex of insurmountable problems. If the state does not address these problems on time, country would become a failed state. Kamu Braithwaite makes the following explanatory remarks:

Major cities of Pakistan and Afghanistan are infested with troubles aplenty. These troubles consists of crime, urban robbery, gang rape, communal riot, domestic violence, Islamic fundamentalism, threat of terrorist attack, lack of nutrition to babies, increasing poverty, unemployment and various other troubles. National solidarity and individual's responsibility both are essential to the elimination of all these hurdles. In this situation, if anything becomes most fatal flaw, it is disinterestedness on the part of those who are morally, and politically responsible to address such crises. (57)

Crime infested cities of Pakistan as well Afghanistan is portrayed as the most disgraceful area where the vulnerable people struggle to live. Though the author proposes solution to the crises of Islamic society, it is really challenging and tough to put those agenda in practice.

Miriam Cooke conducted an extensive survey of most of the chauvinistic society of Afghanistan as well as certain territory of Pakistan. Her own practical experience of visiting Pakistan and witnessing perversions in chauvinistic society helped her to analyze Malala's Memoir. She takes the following stand as to the core convictions manifested in the doctrine of dominant religiosity:

The women sadly are unaware of their own rights, hence get deprived of many rightful things and the men get benefitted. Many times women are responsible for this discrimination and they have their own reasons for doing so. Isn't a daughter deprived of necessary things so that a son can have useless things he demands? The discrimination right from food, education, clothes and finally when it comes to choosing a life partner. (14)

Women are prone to endure what befalls them in the male dominated society. *I am Malala* is written with purpose of educating and enlightening docile women of Pakistan. To some extent, this novel turns out to be a mile stone in this direction. Though the narrator had a privileged background she was not free to do all the things that the men in her family could do. This story is about her fight to change the status of woman in her country. The women have a right to hold property and also a right to go in for annulment.

The beautiful aspect of *I Am Malala* is the author's strong rejection of Islamic attitude towards women. Additionally, Yousafzai's vehement rejection of polygamy is also equally convincing. Joseph Kellard is the widely recognized critic of Yousafzai. He looks into *I Am Malala* from different angles. His view is mentioned below:

In *I Am Malala*, Yousafzai shares the observations and emotional journey she has made since leaving Europe and arriving in America, even as radical Muslims continue to threaten her life for her uncompromising condemnation of Islam. In some respects *I Am Malala* demonstrates that Yousafzai has not only retained the intellectual independence and moral courage at the heart of her prior

book. In *I Am Malala* she elaborates on Enlightenment principles, including free inquiry, individual freedom, and property rights. (36)

Joseph Kellard is of the view that Yousafzai asserts the relevance and necessity of secular values in the countries governed by the ferocious doctrine of Islamism.

Kellard argues that Yousafzai has to pay a huge price for her vindication of the rights of Islamic women in the countries where the doctrine of Islamism is deep rooted. As claimed by Kellard, Yousafzai is highly subversive of the life denying philosophy of Islamism.

Richard Dawkins is immensely dissatisfied with Yousafzai's one sided emphasis upon the eradication of Islamic culture. It is good to enumerate some of the weak points of a culture. But it is not wholly acceptable to say that a culture should be eradicated because it has some of the notorious failing. But her wholesale condemnation of Islamism is not acceptable. Dawkins puts forward his view regarding to Yousafzai's *I Am Malala* in the following way:

Certainly Yousafzai is setting up a false dichotomy in many ways— Islamic culture, or Western culture. She herself falls into the exact same trap she accuses others of. The reality of the situation is that all cultures have failings, and we should pick up from each culture those things that are good. I particularly like the emphasis on family in Arabian Muslim culture, but again, sometimes this emphasis leads to things it should not. No one culture is so evil it needs to be completely eradicated. But certainly some things do. (16)

Dawkins is critical of the false dichotomy set up by Yousafzai. Her viewpoint mentioned in *I Am Malala* has increased the hostility between the western culture and the Islamic culture. Instead of creating cultural harmony and reconciliation,

Yousafzai's *I Am Malala* has ignited the possibility of cultural encounter and ideological clash. Dawkins is simply puzzled to know why Malala is extreme in condemning the doctrine of Islamism.

Claire Hopley brings into light some of the facts concerning Yousafzai's valorization of the enlightenment principle. In *I Am Malala*, Yousafzai makes an appeal to endorse the principle of enlightenment by those who desire reform in the Islamic culture. Hopley makes the following revelation about Yousafzai's extreme valorization and vindication of the western ethos of self-progress:

In *I Am Malala*, she particularly attacks the cultural relativism of Westerners who claim that cultures are equal; she asserts unequivocally that Western values are superior to Muslim values. In particular, she applauds the Enlightenment belief in individuality that encourages Westerners to pursue personal goals. She thinks that Muslims should recognize that Enlightenment values will improve their lives, and that Westerners can help by discouraging traditional practices that lock them into backward-looking behavior. (8)

Hopley maintains that Yousafzai is confused as to what she is going to achieve by writing this memoir. On the one hand she valorizes western principle of enlightenment. On the other she rejects the principle of relativism. Enlightenment supports the progressive idea. Concept of relativism is also progressive idea. But Yousafzai attacks western notion of relativism. Her endorsement of enlightenment is incompatible with the principle of her utter rejection of the notion of relativism.

Christopher Hitchens looks at *I Am Malala* from the perspective of estranged youths. He assumes that Yousafzai seems to have meted out progressive suggestions

to those immigrants who have been struggling to survive in the alien land. His view is mentioned below:

Writing about Muslim immigrants in the West, she says they should learn that where they live geographically, must change where they stand ideologically. *I Am Malala* is well-written: clear, full of the illuminating anecdotes and sharp commentary that make for quick reading. But its contentions range so widely that readers need time to evaluate them. The most cursory historical analysis of her remarks on violence will show that Muslim societies have no monopoly on it. (12)

Christopher Hitchens does not have the problem with Yousafzai's treatment of the burgeoning issue of immigration. Yousafzai makes strong suggestion to the south Asian immigrants in America. She contends that the possibility of emancipation of the immigrants lie in the philosophy of adaptation. The more immigrants cast off their traditions, the more comfortable they feel in the metropolitan land. The feeling of alienation and rootless can be the price which immigrants have to pay in order to survive nicely.

Charles Moore is highly appreciative of Yousafzai's attitude to Koran. Yousafzai appeals every devotee to be critical in professing the Islamic faith. Just because there are a few fanatical elements in *I Am Malala* does not mean it is far removed from the pragmatic things. Charles Moore delivers the following opinion about *I Am Malala*:

Yousafzai presumes that an uncritical attitude to the Koran is a direct threat to world peace. The other reason a reader might feel sad reading this book is the appalling scale of the problem the author discusses. There are hundreds of thousands of Muslims trapped in the appalling

politics of their own countries, or struggling to make new lives in a West which they are taught, even as they take its advantages, to detest.

(21)

The narrator of this novel is trapped between two different kinds of religious faiths. These different faiths are Islamic faiths and Christian faith. Similarly the narrator of this novel is torn between two different sorts of cultural upbringing. The confused and confounded narrator of this novel can hardly make sound decisions and opinions. That is why Yousafzai's viewpoint is not appealing and identifiable. Yousafzai's preference of the western individualism is the key aspect of the novel.

Although all these critics have examined this memoir *I am Malala*, none of them dwelt upon the issue of how the position of female characters is weakened by the deep-rooted Islamic patriarchy. The issue of Islamic patriarchy and the obstacles it has faced are numerous in this memoir. The researcher postulates that Malala is not running a risk to challenge Taliban regime's totalitarian edict but also the oppressive forces of patriarchal society of Islam. Her bold and strong initiative is directed towards the end of patriarchal society which is based on the rigid base of Koranic doctrine. The awareness of sisterhood in suffering and their emerging solidarity is explicitly mentioned in *I Am Malala*.

The researcher makes use of the theory of Islamic feminism. Many Islamic feminists are increasingly aware of their difficult situation. If they ask for and fight for gender equality, they are likely to be dubbed as betrayer of Islam. If they do not take this sort of decision, they are sure to be oppressed by men in the name of Islamic doctrine.

Islamic Feminism first appeared in Islamic patriarchal countries where educated and professional middle class women live. Earlier, it appeared as secular

feminisms, Islamic modernism, and humanitarian discourse. Later, all of them combined and became Islamic Feminism. After its arrival, it began to circulate globally with great speed via internet and satellite. It was greatly presented in cyberspace. Margot Badran says; “Word of the new Islamic Feminism and its compelling texts spread rapidly through cyberspace” (31). First, when it had been rooted as Islamic Feminism, it became a debatable issue among critics concerning its area, label etc. Later, it became widely discussed phenomenon among the critics.

Anitta Kynsilehto states:

Islamic Feminism has been widely discussing phenomenon since the emergence of the term in 1990. Oftentimes subject to be a heated debate. One the one hand this debate is due to the ways in which it is embedded in the wider discourses concerning women’s rights and Islam, and the position of women in Muslim majorities’ societies as well as of Muslim women in societies where Muslim populations constitute a minority. On the other hand, the debate entangles to the controversies between the labeling practices and the position of those who seek to resist the given labels. (1)

In the emergence of the term, it was widely discussed by different writers concerning its issues; form, label etc. How to shape it among other discourses was the major purpose of that discussion. It has been made from two distinct broad terms. So, the writers of its emergence time debate about it deeply and formulate it as an Islamic Feminism.

Islamic Feminism is related with the role of women in Islamic community. The women in Islamic community are not admirable or equal to men. Therefore, it aims for the full equality of all Muslim women in their daily life. Islamic feminist

longs to ground the social justice, women's right and gender equality in Islamic community. Before appearing Islamic Feminism, there are other feminism and movements concerned with the issue of Muslim women. After that, all of the discourses integrated and formed Islamic Feminism. Advocates of the movement begin to discourage the patriarchal teaching of religion, traditionally rooted patriarchal dead concept of people, and encourage re-reading, and re-interpret the Quran and demands to establish the notion of equality according to the Quran itself.

It is one of the latest perspectives emerged in the world by different Muslim and non-Muslim writers. First, some Muslim women demanding gender equality and social justice in their community basing on religious rules began it. Margot Badran states:

Engaging with Islamic Feminism as a historian, I would like to do what historians do: look at what has come before and at how, in complicated ways, past and present intersect. In early 1990 when Muslim secular feminists-scholars, journalists, and writers-from various countries in Africa and Asia observed the process begun by some Muslim women to explicate gender equality and social justice grounded in re-readings of the Quran and other religious texts, they immediately recognized this as a new form of feminism and called it "Islamic Feminism." (28)

The formulation of this new feminism emerges through not debate but Muslim women for explication gender equality and social justice basing on re-reading of Quran that was inspected by Muslim secular feminist scholars, journalist, and writers from various countries in world in early 1990. Thus, they recognized it as a new form of feminism and labeled it as Islamic Feminism. Therefore, the Islamic Feminism is

germinated with the view of gender equality, especially in Islamic community. It offers the re-reading of Quran and other religious texts. The social norms are considered to be based on the religious texts.

The term Islamic Feminism is born from Feminism. Both of the terms advocate women's right, liberation, and equality. Islamic Feminism, especially engages with the issues of Muslim women's right, liberation, and gender equality among Islamic community. It deals with the problems of Muslim women. The existing rules and values of Islamic community are thought to be formed by Islam religion. The holy book Quran is first studied and analyzed by men and formed different biased rules against women.

Women did not acquire profound knowledge of Islam especially of the classical sciences of Islam in past and they obediently followed the norms and values formed by men. The social rules of Muslim in patriarchal ways dominate women from different sides. Now, in late 20th century and beginning of 21st century, Muslim women have become conscious to their rights. They are aware of domination of men and patriarchal norms and values. They have started to study the Islamic values, norms in Quran and other holy books. They have started to analyze the rules in women ways. They found vast difference between norms, values and grass-root works or its implementation. They have unified to establish their rights in society. They neither get chance to study the Quran nor they thought about their rights in past.

Now the global environment is also supportive for them. Women's participation in Islamic rework has increased. Their combined efforts in studying Islamic sciences and analyzing it in female ways are admirable. All sorts of motives of Muslim women for establishment of their rights engendered the seeds of Islamic Feminism Moazami states:

In principle, it is obvious that acquiring profound religious knowledge, especially of the classical Islamic sciences, might enable women to produce and disseminate especially feminized Islamic thought. We witness today that in different countries around the globe, in Muslim majority countries as much as in the Muslim Diaspora, where women's participation in Islamic networks, their combined efforts in studying Islamic sciences and conducting grass-roots work with other women, has engendered a trend that has been called "Islamic Feminism." (76)

Mostly Muslims are orthodox to their religion. After acquiring profound knowledge of classical Islamic sciences, they become conscious to their right. It enables them to be united and take part in Islamic networks. All sorts of right seeking motives of Muslim women in their community germinate the seeds of a new trend "Islamic Feminism."

Islamic Feminism is an inter-Islamic global phenomenon created by Muslims from different places of world. It is not a single product of east or west. Where is Muslim community, we can find Islamic Feminism there whether it is minority communities or majorities. Even the non-Muslim women and men speak their support on Islamic Feminism. But, especially it relates with Muslim women and their status in Islamic community. Muslim has been living in different parts or countries of world. Renata Peppiceli states "Islamic Feminism is a global phenomenon" (98).

Hisham tried to unmask the patriarchy and condition of gender equality. Matar presents the clear vision of sexual inequality in Libya during civil war. He shows the slight struggle of women against patriarchy. At the end of the novel, it is seen that Nazwa has freedom from social rules and regulation. But, at the beginning of novel, there is inequality, suppression, oppression, exploitation on female which creates

dreadful or animalistic condition of female. The major character of that exploitation is so called religious rules and regulation of Quran defined by male, patriarchy, and tyrannical government. All sources of exploitation are torching women physically, psychologically, socially, politically and culturally. Margot Bardon's view is cited below:

Feminism as a phenomenon engaging with issues of women's rights, women liberation and gender equality as part and parcel of the rights, liberation and equality of all was constructed and shaped concurrently by Muslims and others in the east (I use this term in contradiction to the west, referring to countries of Africa and Asia) and by westerners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (25)

Feminism advocates women's right, liberation, gender equality etc. All sorts of theme of feminism is followed by Islamic Feminism. But it especially deals with Muslim women issues. It is a global current trend.

When women became conscious to their right they started to search their status in their community. It is thought that the Muslim community's norms and values are founded basing on Quran. They themselves began to read the holy book Quran. They should have better knowledge of Quran to find out whether the existing social biased norms are based on Quran or not. They have to find out distinction between tradition and religion because there is difference between tradition and religion. The existing rules are traditions. The religious rules are not biased like tradition. Mozami states:

. . . it is through their capacity to distinguish between "tradition" and "religion" that the women claimed Islam as a source for reinterpreting certain elements within the family tradition, which they perceived and

experience as being too strict. The defense of Islam is then situated on a critique of custom or as the women put it, of tradition. (70)

To analyze anything, the better knowledge of the subject matter is needed. Muslim women also should have the proper knowledge of Islamic sciences to analyze whether the established custom is from the Quran or male made tradition. The better knowledge of Quran is able enough to interpret it for Muslim women.

Islam is not same to all interpreters and feminism is not same to all those who advocate it. There is a wide range of understandings in both fields of meanings.

Within such variation of meanings between two terms to seek a room for Islamic Feminism is difficult but we can find out a possible meeting place for people who want to argue for women's rights within an Islamic framework of thought as well as people who are prepared to view religion from a gender sensitive point of view which can be taken as Islamic Feminism.

In spite of many interpretation and definition by many critics of Islamic Feminism, it explicates the idea of gender equality for men and women as part of Quranic notion of equality of all human beings. It is one of the feminist discourse and practice. It brings its understanding, standard, agenda and mandate from the holy book Quran searching and demanding their rights and justice within the framework of gender equality in the totality of existence. It is a call for implementation of gender equality in the country, society, and everyday life. It is not simply a feminism which is born from Muslim culture but it engages with Islamic theology too. The women's issues i.e. wearing veils, shaking hands with men outside their family, domestic violence, marriage and marriage age, education, equal opportunity in each national major organs, employment etc. are taken excessively by women as their rights.

From the above mentioned reviews, Islamic Feminism is one of the forms of feminism born in Islamic community concerning with female role in Islam. It wants to establish full equality of all Muslims, not basing on gender, public and private life. Islamic feminists are advocating women's rights, gender equality and social justice under the Islamic community. They are working to replace the pre-established biased rules of society in the name of religion and establish the social rules of equality with the liberation of women.

The terms Islam and feminism are different. It is shown to have new meaning combining two broad terms by Islamic feminists. The term Islam is related to religion and feminism is related to women issues. By combining the two terms, we can understand dealing with women issues in Islamic community as the meaning of Islamic Feminism. But Islamic feminists claim that Islamic Feminism is not simply a feminism born in Muslim cultures but it is one that engages Islamic theology through the text and canonical tradition. Islamic feminist or movement advocates take the Quranic concept of equality of all human being and demand strongly the application of this theology to everyday life. Different interpretation, movements, projects, meetings and seminars create the different faces of Islamic Feminism but all the faces of Islamic Feminism are dealing with women issues such as marriage divorce, inheritance, wearing veil, domestic violence and so on.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text by applying the tool of Islamic feminism. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. Critique of Islamic Patriarchy in Yousafzai's *I Am Malala*

This research aims at examining and exploring how Islamic patriarchy restricts the progressive and freedom-oriented initiatives of Muslim women. In the memoir, *I Am Malala*, the narrator recounts how she has to face several hardships and horrible hurdles on her way to the getting education and freedom. Malala, the narrator of this memoir, tells many things about how instable politics and deep rooted Islamic patriarchy confine and cripple women. The narrator narrates the challenges Islamic women had to encounter in Swat valley and how she asserts her rights to get educated. She is opposed to the way girls are treated in Swat valley. She holds many things responsible for the declining and debilitating position of women in the entire Islamic zone. The following extract presents her assertive stand in fostering girls' right to education:

I am very proud to be a Pashtun but sometimes I think our code of conduct has a lot to answer for, particularly where the treatment of women is concerned. A woman named Shahida who worked for us and had three small daughters, told me that when she was only ten years old her father had sold her to an old man who already had a wife but wanted a younger one. When girls disappeared it was not always because they had been married off. There was a beautiful fifteen-year-old girl called Seema. (38)

Malala comes to hear that Shahida is married to an old man when she is ten years old. Her father might have taken some money for getting her married to an old man. This sort of callous practice existed in Swat Valley. The narrator does not tolerate such a practice. Instead of compelling a girl of ten to get married to an old man, she says it would be better if she is encouraged to get education. When girls are absent for a

week, it used to be guessed that she is either killed or married off to a man old enough to be her father. Girls are married to old men against their will.

Girls are prevented from experiencing even the common joy like befriending classmates and neighboring boys. The narrator adds “Everyone knew she was in love with a boy, and sometimes he would pass by and she would look at him from under her long dark lashes, which all the girls envied” (38). In Swat valley, for a girl to flirt with any man brings shame on the family. Those girls who do not comply with their parents’ decisions are poisoned to death. In the public, their parents tell that their daughters committed suicide. Girls are oppressed in such a way that they have lost any spirit to live optimistically and meaningfully.

Girls are used in Swat Valley as objects to mitigate the hostility and antagonism between two different tribes. Soraya is a girl who is given to a widow from different tribe so that the hostility between separate clans can come to an end. The following extract describes how girls are subjected to the whim and fancy of selfish and insensitive men:

We have a custom called *swara* by which a girl can be given to another tribe to resolve a feud. It is officially banned but still continues. In our village there was a widow called Soraya who married a widower from another clan which had a feud with her family. Nobody can marry a widow without the permission of her family. When Soraya’s family found out about the union they were furious. They threatened the widower’s family until a *jirga* was called off village elders to resolve the dispute. (38)

The *jirga* decided that the widower’s family should be punished by handing over their most beautiful girl to be married to the least eligible man of the rival clan. The boy

must be a good-for-nothing, so poor that the girl's father had to pay all their expenses. Girls are treated as commodities which can be traded and transacted with anybody. Shoraya does not have any fault and flaw of her own. But she is used as a scapegoat that is used to achieve resolution and rapprochement between two hostile tribes. The narrator says that this sort of practice is on the wane. It is officially abolished. But in society, it has been practised widely

The trend to encourage boys only and discourage girls is critically detected and then described by Malala in this memoir. Sometimes even uncle can hatch conspiracy against his nephews so that he would inherit his brother's properties in case all of his nephews are killed. Many families live in walled compounds with watchtowers so they can keep an eye out for their enemies. They know many victims of feuds. One was Sher Zaman, a man who had been in my father's class and always got better grades than him. My grandfather and uncle used to drive my father mad, teasing him, "You're not as good as Sher Zaman, so much he once wished that rocks would come down the mountain and flatten him" (43). But Sher Zaman did not go to college and ended up becoming a dispenser in the village pharmacy. His family became embroiled in a dispute with their cousins over a small plot of forest. One day, as Sher Zaman and two of his brothers are on their way to the land. They are ambushed by his uncle and some of his men. All three brothers are killed. Malala does not hesitate to talk about how inequality lingers even in the relationship between her father and mother. The following extract reveals some of the elements of inequality between the narrator's father and mother:

Though my mother was not educated, she was the practical one in the family, the doer while my father was the talker. She was always out helping people. My father would get angry sometimes – he would

arrive home at lunchtime and call out, 'Tor Pekai, I'm home!' only to find she was out and there was no lunch for him. Then he would find she was at the hospital visiting someone who was ill, or had gone to help a family, so he could not stay cross. Sometimes, she would be out because she was shopping for clothes in the Cheena Bazaar. (44)

In the family of the narrator, her own mother is supposed to go to bazaar with her uncle. A married woman is not supposed to go for shopping alone. She has to go with one of her relatives. She is, by custom, supposed to go to bazaar with her husband's brother. But due to the pressures of time, the narrator's mother often goes alone. She does not like to be accompanied. The narrator's father allows this stroke of freedom. The narrator confesses that her mother does a lot of works while her father talks about external matters. But overall, her father is liberal and kindhearted. He is not restrictive like the fathers of the narrator are other friends.

The narrator reveals how many Islamic women fall prey to domestic violence and volatile sexual whims of men. The narrator says that Khalida is sold into marriage to an old man who beats her mercilessly. The following extract points out how women are subjected to the unspeakable and merciless cases of domestic violence:

There was also Nooria, whose mother Kharoo did some of our washing and cleaning, and Alishpa, one of the daughters of Khalida, the woman who helped my mother with the cooking. Khalida had been sold into marriage to an old man who used to beat her, and eventually she ran away with her three daughters. Her own family would not take her back because it is believed that a woman who has left her husband has brought shame on her family. For a while her daughters also had to collect rubbish to survive. (45)

The sufferings and pathos of a woman is not heard .If her husband gives lots of troubles and suffering to her, her voice is not heard by her parents and brother. On the contrary, it is believed that if a married daughter comes back to her parents' house, there would be shame on the family. Insensitivity to the pain and pathos of girls and married women is on the rise incredible. Domestic violence is the vicious problem of Islamic region of Swat valley. This problem, as pointed out by the narrator, is the common problem of the Islamic countries.

Many factors are at work in the deprivation of education to girls. Rich parents take their children from the school where the children of cleaners and washer men join. The narrator says “Giving places to poor children didn’t just mean my father lost their fees. Some of the richer parents took their children out of the school when they realized they were sharing classrooms with the sons and daughters of people who cleaned their houses or stitched their clothes”(45). The rich parents think that it is shameful for their children to mix with those from poor families. The narrator adds “My mother said it was hard for the poor children to learn when they were not getting enough food at home so some of the girls would come to our house for breakfast” (45). The huge disparity obstructs children from getting necessary level of education.

The narrator feels proud in the sense that her family is free from all such evils. Her mother gets freedom a lot in comparison to other married women. The narrator’s father gives a lot of freedom to her mother. This situation helps her to develop critical awareness and assertive stand. The following extract throws light on this aspect of assertiveness of the narrator:

We too were proud, but his higher profile meant we didn’t see him very much. It was always our mother who shopped for our clothes and took us to hospital if we were ill, even though in our culture,

particularly for those of us from villages, a woman is not supposed to do these things alone. When my father was at home, he and his friends sat on the roof at dusk and talked politics endlessly. There was really only one subject – 9/11. It might have changed the whole world but we were living right in the epicenter of everything. (46)

The decent level of equality is detected by the narrator in her own home. That is why she feels assertive and argumentative. She tends to develop awareness about what is right and what is wrong right from her childhood. The prevailing terror in the outside reminds her terror that lies in every house. A daughter is not free and safe in her father's house. At any time, her father can sell her into marriage to an old man. At her husband's home, she hardly feels secure. Her husband can subject her to domestic violence.

As claimed by Fazaeli, feminism has always been discredited in the patriarchal mainstream as Western and a project of cultural colonialism and therefore were stigmatized as antithetical to Islam. However, she asserts, the newly emerged movement of Islamic feminism offers a new path, a middle ground, a “middle space of an independent site in secular feminism.

Girls like the narrator are eager to go to school to attend classes. They want to be aware of the importance of being educated. They seek to cultivate individualities. They no longer like to get confined in the domestic world full of wretchedness and horror. But the rise of the Taliban regime demolishes all the centers of culture, learning and education. Girls are robbed of their rights to education. The following extract dramatizes how Taliban cadres and soldiers demolished all the moments and towers of cultural pride and social glory:

We were not fans of the Taliban as we had heard they destroyed girls' schools and blew up giant Buddha statues – we had many Buddhas of our own that we were proud of. But many Pashtuns did not like the bombing of Afghanistan or the way Pakistan was helping the Americans, even if it was only by allowing them to cross our airspace and stopping weapons supplies to the Taliban. We did not know then that Musharraf was also letting the Americans use our airfields. (46)

Taliban destroys all the statues of Buddha. Schools are also made the targets. Terror prevails everywhere in Swat Valley. Though Swat valley belongs to Pakistan, Taliban captures it as it is joined with Afghanistan. The Pakistani ruler does not do anything to safeguard the lives of the people who live in this area. The narrator is critical of policy taken by the military dictator of Pakistan.

Nayereh Tohidi regards Islamic feminism as an inevitable and necessary step toward secularization of the Islamic states. First of all, she claims that, just like Jewish and Christian feminisms, “Islamic feminism as a name is more appropriate when used and conceived of as an analytical concept in feminist research and feminist theology. Islamic feminism is a relatively new, still fluid, undefined, more contested and more politicized trend”(86). Feminisms could serve more flexibility in terms of building a discourse and a movement. Although it is new, its theoretical and political grounds can be explained in three points according to Tohidi:

Islamic feminism can be seen as responding to traditional patriarchy sanctioned by religious authorities, or as responding to modernity, modernization, and globalization, or as responding to the recent surge of patriarchal Islamism. It is possible to argue that modernity essentially is inseparable from patriarchy especially in the realm of the

religion since patriarchal sex and gender binaries are the constructs of western modernity which is also utilized by the patriarchal readings of Islam and in fact of any religion. Islamic feminism is an inevitable and positive component of the ongoing change, reform, and development of Muslim societies as they face modernity. (117)

As contended by Tohidi, Islamic feminism may serve the Islamization of feminism. Islamic feminists can serve as agents of the modernization of Islamic societies and states. In the text the narrator says "i wore more fashionable clothes and did not cover my face even when i became a teenager one of my male cousins was angry and asked my father 'why isn't she covered?'"(54) In the Islamic society females are not allowed to show their face they have to wear burquas but in this text narrator herself started to revolt against the dead habits and Islamic patriarchy by wearing fashionable clothes and showing her face in public places. In that sense, Islamic feminism is a part of the reform driven movement which challenges patriarchal gender notions fuelled by the Islamic state.

Mufti is a die-hard follower of Islam. He wants to compel everyone to follow Islamic doctrine to a letter. He is never in a mood to promote the status of women in Islamic society. He lives in an impressive building but his outlook is so insular and parochial that everyone hates him. He is driven by ugly thoughts and deformed feeling. He gets angry and arrogant if girls come out to learn in school. The narrator informs "just in front of the school on Khushal Street, where I was born, was the house of a tall handsome mullah and his family. His name was Ghulamullah and he called himself a mufti, which means he is an Islamic scholar and authority on Islamic law" (49). The following extract indicates several facts about how misery arises due to Mufti's inventionist activity:

The school was doing well, and my father was building an impressive reception with an arched entrance in the boy's high school. For the first time my mother could buy nice clothes and even send out for food as she had dreamed of doing back in the village. But all this time the Mufti was watching. He watched the girls going in and out of our school every day and became angry, particularly as some of the girls were teenagers. (49)

Mufti thinks that he is the most legitimate and responsible figurehead of Islamic institutions. He is charged with the task of maintaining Islamic status quo. He does not like to invite any kind of progressive change in the existing structure of Islamic society. The society moves ahead with the passage of time. But he wants to impose the same rigid Islamic code and conduct.

Mir Hosseini raises the question of 'double exploitation' of feminist women in the Muslim world. She claims that women in Iran, as in other Muslim communities have always been subjects of argument in terms of different parts of their identities. Their identity is often questioned by secular fundamentalist and the feminism is viewed as suspicious by Muslim traditionalists and Islamic fundamentalists.

Mufti is intolerant of any attempt to educate girls. The establishment of schools for the education of girls irritates Mufti. He does not like to see the liberalization of social codes and Islamic approach to the education and didacticism of women. Mufti's harsh and dictatorial outlook is clearly revealed in the following extract:

Shortly afterwards the mufti went to the woman who owned the school premises and said, Ziauddin is running a haram school in your building and bringing shame on the mohalla. These girls should be in purdah.

He told her, take this building back from him and I will rent it for my madrasa. If you do this you will get paid now and also receive a reward in the next world.’ She refused and her son came to my father in secret. ‘This maulana is starting a campaign against you,’ he warned. ‘We won’t give him the building but be careful. (49)

By all indications, Mufti wants to maintain the Islamic order and status quo. He is of the opinion that girls should be kept under Purdha. To bring girls from the veil of Prudah to the open public is to defame and desecrate Islamic doctrine. Mufti acts on this principle. The emerging tendency to educate girl and liberalize them are the twin targets of Mufti’s anger, irritation and vengeance. To talk about educating women and liberalizing girls with Mufti is incur the sporadic outburst of his anger and retaliation. His parochialism knows no bound. Everyone fears him.

Malala’s father is liberal; he wants to send all the girls to school. He does not cling to the orthodox Islamic doctrine like Mufti. Mufti is in hostile relationship with Malala’s father due to the modernist and feminist attitude of Malala’s father. The mullah “looked down embarrassed because greeting someone properly is important in Islam. You run the Haram School, he said. That’s why I don’t want to greet you. Then one of the other men spoke up. I’d heard you were an infidel, he said to my father”(51). The narrator’s father does not like to intensify hostility. He gives a shrewd answer and tries to mollify the irritation. From every side schools and other institutes that exist to foster the rights and awareness of women dwindle down due to the aggressive, intolerant and patriarchal mentality of Mufti.

When Mufti’s plan and conspiracy to close all the schools are about to be operated, the narrator’s father assumes the air of resentment and openly doubts the

sanity of Mufti. The following extract describes how Malala's father audaciously challenges and questions Mufti's aggression and interventionist hardihood:

My father told the clerk to call him next time he saw the *maulana*.
When the call came, my father and the Islamic studies teacher went out to confront him. Maulana, you have driven me to the wall! My FATHER said. Who are you? You are crazy! You need to go to a doctor. You think I enter the school and take my clothes off? When you see a boy and a girl you see a scandal. They are schoolchildren. I think you should go and see Dr. Haider Ali!' Dr. Haider Ali was a well-known psychiatrist in our area. (52)

Mufti feels greatly mortified and humiliated. He feels ashamed of talking about closing schools. He puts off his turban and scampers away. Before the power of the narrator's father, even the Mufti has to feel ashamed. As far as possible, the narrator's father tries to convince representatives and figureheads of Islamic doctrine. When the injustice reaches climax, he gives vent to his disagreement in a logically sound way. Before the reasonable and sensible grounds from which the narrator's father disagrees, even the rigid Mufti has to surrender.

Amaney locates the long struggle for reform of family law in the context of the perennial lack of democracy in the region. She points in particular to the low participation of women in parliamentary life as explaining the lack of serious headway in the reform of family laws. She reveals the following hard-hitting remarks with respect to this issue:

Contests between reactionary forces of both secular and religious stripes and liberals keep reform of family laws held hostage. Jamal, like others, reiterates the necessity to demonstrate the compatibility of

gender equality with Islam in order to achieve a fundamental overhaul of existing family laws. This is precisely the task that feminists, starting in the Arab world early in the twentieth century, have taken upon themselves and persist to this day with intensified efforts. (67)

Activist women have been re-enforced in their struggles by the compelling arguments of Islamic feminism. Traditional interpretive communities continue to exert their influence to the detriment of reform efforts. The overall lack of democracy in the Arab world and absence of political will reinforces a patriarchal interpretation of Islam in the service of secular and religious political elites.

The cadres and agents of Taliban enter Swat valley and spy the activities of the inhabitants. They are informed that some girls are too obstinate to go to school. That is why they come in the disguised form. But the clever and intelligent girls easily identify them. With a view to terrorize and intimidate those girls, some cadres and agents of Taliban regime enter clandestinely into Swat valley and prevent them from attending school.

Malala herself says “I was ten when the Taliban came to our valley. Moniba and I had been reading the Twilight books and longed to be vampires. It seemed to us that the Taliban arrived in the night just like vampires(59).”They appeared in groups, armed with knives and Kalashnikovs. They emerge in Upper Swat, in the hilly areas of Matta. They didn’t call themselves Taliban to start with and didn’t look like the Afghan Taliban. Furthermore, Malala says “we’d seen in pictures with their turbans and black-rimmed eyes. These were strange looking men with long straggly hair and beards and camouflage vests over their Shalwarkamiz, which they wore with the trousers well above the ankle(59).” They had jogging shoes or cheap plastic sandals

on their feet. They blow their noses dirtily into the ends of their turbans. They look so dark and dirty that my friends describe them as ‘people deprived of baths and barbers.

Censorship is the biggest problem faced by all the characters including Malala and her friends. TVs, DVDs and CDs are banned. Citizens are prevented from getting access to the daily events and happenings. Means of information are all blocked.

Youths, middle-aged men and even the critical mass are dulled and rendered lethargic due to the imposition of fatal censorship. The following extract describes how harmful the censorship is:

Within six months people were getting rid of their TVs, DVDs and CDs. Fazlullah’s men collected them into huge heaps on the streets and set them on fire, creating clouds of thick black smoke that reached high into the sky. Hundreds of CD and DVD shops closed voluntarily and their owners were paid compensation by the Taliban. My brothers and I were worried as we loved our TV, but my father reassured us that we were not getting rid of it. To be safe we moved it into a cupboard and watched it with the volume low. (60)

Censorship is so strict that even Taliban used to send some spies to the doors of people to check if TVs and other means of entertainment. The Taliban are known to listen at people’s doors then force their way in, take the TVs and smash them to pieces on the street. Fazlullah hated the Bollywood movies the narrator and her friends so loved. Those who love Bollywood movies are dubbed un-Islamic. Only the radio is allowed, and all music except for Taliban songs is declared haram.

Feminism as a phenomenon engages with issues of women’s rights, women’s liberation, and gender equality as part and parcel of the rights, liberation, and equality. Bulbeck adds that “History attests that feminism is the creation of both easterners and

westerners, of Muslims and those of other religions, of the colonized and colonizers, and of women of different races and ethnicities” (151). Those who claim that feminism is western and white do not know their history and perpetuate the circulation of myths. It is worthwhile to quote Bulbeck for the sake of lucid illustration:

Muslims’ foundational secular feminism which argued for full gender equality in the public sphere, excepting the religious part of the public sphere, while acquiescing in the notion of gender complementarity or gender equity in the private sphere and in so doing accepted a patriarchal model of the family. Early secular feminists, like Muslims in general, had been led to believe that the patriarchal family was Islamic and strove to make the regime of gender roles function optimally. (112)

Muslim secular feminists later questioned the notion of the patriarchal family. Islamic feminists not only connected the public and private as the indivisible terrain of gender equality but also elucidated the necessary linkage of gender equality and social justice. Gender equality is integral to the Islamic feminist notion of equality of all. Polygamy is made virtually impossible. Women are able to initiate divorce. While the moment must be politically ripe for such a change to occur, the ideological framework must also be in place.

The narrator valorizes the actual power of women in Islamic society. Though men claim to have possessed tremendous power, they actually do not hold that power. The real power lies in the hand of woman. In terms of diligence, and painstaking nature, men are far more behind. The narrator reveals this kind of mysterious reality regarding to the actual position of women in Islamic society in the following extract:

Man goes out to work, he earns a wage, he comes back home, he eats, he sleeps. That's what he does. Our men think earning money and ordering around others is where power lies. They don't think power is in the hands of the woman who takes care of everyone all day long, and gives birth to their children. In our house my mother managed everything because my father was so busy. It was my mother who would wake up early in the morning, iron our school clothes, make our breakfast and teach us how to behave. It was my mother who would go to the market, shop for us and cook. (62)

Lots of women are so moved by what Fazlullah said that they gave him gold and money. The religious frauds do not leave no stone unturned in cheating and robbing innocent women. Influenced by the impressive words of Fazlullah, women donate whatever they have to the fake and fraud religious clerics. Tables are set up for the women to hand over their wedding bangles and necklaces. Every village has to take turns sending their men for a day to help build it.

It is interesting to note that Islamist women who enter the arena of gender debates typically call for gender equality in the secular part public sphere. They do not seek equality in the religious domain. They uphold the notion of the patriarchal family promoting an optimal performance of differential gender roles. They do not hesitate in replicating the foundational secular feminist approach first articulated a century ago. Women move beyond the confines of the family to assume new functions in the domain of public activism. Such women do not challenge the idea of a patriarchal family as religiously ordained. Thus to place them within the circumference of Islamic feminism would be in the eyes of many Islamic feminists to

call into question Islamic feminism's core notion of full gender equality. Such women might be more appropriately seen as incipient Islamic feminists:

The position of women in Islamic Society is very worst. The narrator cites her father's statement "I assumed women could give birth without going to hospital, as my mother and my sisters had in the village, my mother gave birth to Ten children in this way."(43)

In Islamic society the position of women is so miserable where they do not get hospital during their pregnancy, she herself gives the example of her mother and grandmother's delivery at home without seeing hospital. Furthermore women are taken as child bearing machine without own will. They are forced to bear the children without considering their health. Abortion and use of contraceptive is strictly prohibited in the Islamic society, she also gives the reference of her grandmother bearing ten children.

Nukhet Sirman produces the following impression in her view concerning the position of women in Muslim zone:

It is difficult and perhaps futile to put the emerging feminist voices in Islam into neat categories and to try to generate a definition that reflects the diversity of positions and approaches of Islamic feminists. As with other feminists, their positions are local, diverse, multiple, and evolving. Many of them have difficulty with the label and object to being called either Islamic or feminist. They all seek gender justice and equality for women, though they do not always agree on what constitutes justice or equality or the best ways of attaining them. (97)

Opponents of the feminist project in Islam fall into several categories. Muslim traditionalists resist any changes to what they hold to be eternally valid ways sanctioned by an unchanging sharia. Islamic fundamentalists are those who seek to change current practices by a return to an earlier, purer version of the sharia. Secular fundamentalists deny that any religious law or social practice can be just or equal. All these opponents of the feminist project in Islam share one thing—an essentialist and non-historical understanding of Islam and Islamic law. They fail to recognize that assumptions and laws about gender in Islam are socially constructed.

Not only Mufti but Sufi Mohammad talks about preventing girls from getting educating. Sufi Mohammad does not feel ashamed of quoting Quran to defend his insistence that it is morally inadmissible to educate girls. The tension between the viewpoint of the narrator's father and Sufi Mohammad gets heightened as the Sufi cleric's gets support from local Taliban administration. My father tries to change his mind. Malala's father says "I agree that female teachers should educate girls," he said. "But first we need to educate our girls so they can become teachers" (62). One day Sufi Mohammad proclaims from jail that there should be no education for women even at girls' madrasas. He adds that "If someone can show any example in history where Islam allows a female madrasa, they can come and piss on my beard" (62). He begins speaking against school administrators and congratulating girls by name who left school.

Aggressive and insular Taliban depends to condition of cultural heritage. All the symbols and monuments of civilization, culture and arts are destroyed. To build up the strong possibility of monolithic Islamic culture, every other non-Islamic objects of cultural achievement are destroyed. The following extract highlights the process of destruction of non-Islamic cultural objects:

First the Taliban took our music, then our Buddhas, then our history. One of our favorite things was going on school trips. We were lucky to live in a paradise like Swat with so many beautiful places to visit – waterfalls, lakes, the ski resort, the wali’s palace, the Buddha statues, the tomb of Akhund of Swat. All these places told our special story. We would talk about the trips for weeks beforehand, then, when the day finally came, we dressed up in our best clothes and piled into buses along with pots of chicken and rice for a picnic. (65)

Music, statues, centers of learning and the trend to sightsee natural sceneries are banned. Youths suffer a lot from this sort of restriction. Some of the friends of the narrators have cameras and take photographs. Camera and photos are all taken away by Taliban soldiers. When Fazlullah come there are no more school trips. Girls are not supposed to be seen outside. The Taliban destroys the Buddhist statues and stupas where the narrator and her friends play. They believe any statue or painting is haram, sinful and therefore prohibited.

Secular feminists in Muslim societies are heirs to feminism that is articulated earlier in the 20th century. It was a feminism that emerged in territorial nation-states whose citizens were bounded by a secular covenant guaranteeing the equality of all citizens irrespective of religion and at the same time was equally protective of all religions within the polity. Muslims’ feminisms are secular. Secular feminism rethinks religion while the secular state regulates religion and determined the limits of religious freedom. Muslims shapes their secular feminism/s together with compatriots of other religions. The Islamic modernist strand of foundational secular feminism aimed at activating rights accorded to women in the Qur’an.

It would help Muslims shape the dynamics of change within a renewed understanding of Islam. For Muslim women under the dominion of patriarchal restrictions imposed in the name of religious prescription, “the insights of Islamic modernism helped them to expose the patriarchal intrusions into Islam and their own lives. The early feminists were not equipped by education and training to engage in direct examination of religious sources, themselves”(Sirman 152). To argue their cases more persuasively women needed to draw upon deeper knowledge of the Islamic sciences. “With the onslaught against women and their already won rights mounted by Islamists from the latter decades of the 20th century, advocates of women’s rights felt the urgent need for a powerful gender-sensitive Islamic discourse to counteract the patriarchal resurgence imposed in the name of religion”(Sirman 171). Muslim women acquire a feminist position under pressure to conform to anti-colonialist and nationalist priorities. The narrator says "I'd started at events with my father to campaign for girls' education and against those like Taliban who want to hide us, journalists often came, even foreigners, though not like this in the road" (6). Despite the continuous threatened Malala did not stop to campaign for girl education. At last she had to bear the physical attack from Taliban troops. Her education toward muslim girls was highly appreciated by foreign journalist and the whole world.

One black day Taliban even “dynamited the face of the Jehanabad Buddha, which was carved into a hillside just half an hour’s drive from Mingora and towered twenty-three feet into the sky” (65). This moment of destruction exemplifies the worst cultural catastrophe. The more censorship continues, the more turmoil and violence occur. The narrator concludes that the entire country plunges into insanity. What strikes the narrator most is the indifference on the part of Pakistan. She is amazed at the disparity between what Pakistani ruler claims and what really takes

place in Swat valley. The following extract reflects the narrator's vacuous feelings when she sees tribulation of censorship:

It felt as though the whole country was going mad. The rest of Pakistan was preoccupied with something else – the Taliban had moved right into the heart of our nation's capital, Islamabad. We saw pictures on the news of what people were calling the Burqa Brigade – young women and girls like us in burqas with sticks, attacking CD and DVD shops in bazaars in the centre of Islamabad. The women were from Jamia Hafsa, the biggest female madrasa in our country and part of Lal Masjid – the Red Mosque in Islamabad. (65)

The narrator sees increasing insanity on the part of those who are involved in the process of ruling over the county. The military ruler of Pakistan talks about defending its neighboring territory from the aggression territorial annexation of Taliban. But he does not take any initiative even in the wake of the conquest of Swat valley by Taliban soldiers. The pressures imposed on the narrator and her friends who go to school are unendurable. The lingering patriarchal status quo does not pay heed to the pathos and terror faced by girls.

Malalasays, "Islam has given us this right and says that every girl and boy should go to school. The Quran says we should seek knowledge, study hard and learn the mysteries of our world,"(129)The holy book Quran does not contain any specific roles for male and female. It was first read and analyzed by male and they formed biased rules against women. In this context, Anita Kynsilehto contends that "at the start of the twentieth century the boundary between Islam and feminism is not so clearly marked. Women often try to change traditional laws by acquiring knowledge of Islamic science and Islam's sacred texts(77)." But it is in this period too that

women become symbols of cultural authenticity and carriers of a religious tradition and way of life. Contemporary Western feminists could criticize the patriarchal elements of their own cultures and religions in the name of modernity, liberalism, and democracy.

The narrator tells that a religious Islamic teacher, who always comes to teach her how to read Koran, justifies the assassination of Benazir. No matter what be the fault of a person, his death is not justifiable. But the narrator is painfully shocked to hear the accusation of the religious master. Malala's own words clarify the point:

We used to have Islamic studies teachers – Qari sahibs– who came to our home to teach the Quran to me and other local children. By the time the Taliban came I had finished my recitation of the complete Quran, what we call Khatamul-Quran, much to the delight of *Baba*, my grandfather the cleric. To my horror one *Qari sahib* tried to justify Benazir's assassination. 'It was a very good job she was killed,' he said. 'When she was alive she was useless. She was not following Islam properly. If she had lived there would have been anarchy. (70)

No murder is justifiable. Even if a recidivist criminal is murdered, his or her death is not justifiable. Being the religious cleric, Quari sahib says that the assassination of Benazir is justifiable. Religious gurus are supposed to talk about nonviolence, peace, forgiveness and humbleness. Religious figures ought to oppose violence. But Quari gives emphasis to violence as a means to affirm vindictive ego.

The rigid and die hard Taliban soldiers are fiercely opposed to aesthetical activity. There is a girl named Shabana who is popular for her elegant style of dance. She instructs several youths to learn how to dance. But she becomes the target of die-hard Taliban regime. She is threatened by Taliban soldiers. But as she pursues her

aesthetical pursuit despite the threat of Taliban soldiers, she is killed mercilessly. Her merciless murder turns out to be a source of terror and danger for those who chose such profession. The following extract describes how tragically Shabana is killed by Taliban soldiers:

They killed Shabana on a bitterly cold night in January 2009. She lived in Banr Bazaar, a narrow street in our town of Mingora which is famous for its dancers and musicians. She went to put on her dancing clothes, and when she returned to dance for them, they pulled out their guns and threatened to slit her throat. This happened after the 9 p.m. curfew and people heard her screaming, 'I promise I'll stop! I promise I won't sing and dance again. Leave me, for God's sake! I am a woman, a Muslim. Don't kill me!' Then shots rang out and her bullet-ridden body was dragged to Green Chowk. (77)

Not only education but various other means of aesthetical entertainment are blocked and banned by Taliban regime. Those who assert their right to such pursuit, they are at first intimidated and then later on killed. Sabana falls prey to the callousness and insanity of Taliban soldiers. She is killed in a cruel way. Due to the murder of Sabana, women lose the power to resist the tyranny of Taliban regime. The pathetic plea and pleading of Sabana is unheard by her murderer. It shows the harsh effect of censorship and tyranny.

Of all the bans initiated by Taliban regime, the ban on education is the worst and controversial. When the ban on girls' education takes widespread form, protest arises nationwide. Even Fazlullah has to admit that it is impossible to impose hundred percent restrictions on the rights of girls to education. Voices are heard against the

total ban on the rights of girls. The following extract illustrates how voices of protest are raised against the tyrant's attempt to impose complete ban on girls' education:

Listen, Maulana, he told Fazlullah. You killed people, you slaughtered people, you beheaded people, you destroyed schools and still there was no protest in Pakistan. But when you banned girls' education people spoke out. The pressure from the whole country worked, and Fazlullah agreed to lift the ban for girls up to ten years old – Year 4. I was in Year 5 and some of us pretended we were younger than we were. We started going to school again, dressed in ordinary clothes and hiding our books under our shawls. (85)

Almost all the members of the society in Swat valley believe that deprivation of girls' right to education leads to the regression, and entropy of freedom as well as awareness. In Swat girls begin to see more signs that the Taliban had never really left. Two more schools are blown up and three foreign aid workers from a Christian group are kidnapped as they returned to their base in Mingora and then murdered. The vice chancellor of Swat University is killed by two gunmen who burst into his office. Finally, in the condition of extreme terror and threat, the narrator, Malala raises her finger against the ban imposed by the Taliban regime on girls. She has to pay a huge price for it. One Taliban soldier shoots in her head and she hovers on the verge of death. Journalists and many other important persons decide to take her to one of the famous hospital in London. Luckily, she survives. To keep the ban and restriction at bay, she has to take a formidable risk and hazard. The following extract highlights tragic case of Malala:

When I was put in the ambulance my father was afraid the Taliban would attack again. It seemed to him that everyone must know who

was inside. The helipad was only a mile away, a five-minute drive, but he was scared the whole way. When we got there the helicopter had not arrived, and we waited for what to him felt like hours inside the ambulance. Finally it landed and I was taken on board with my father, my cousin Khanjee, Ahmad Shah and Maryam. None of them had ever been on a helicopter. As it took off we flew over an army sports gala with patriotic music pounding from speakers. (123)

Malala is the heroic figure who goes against the ban on the education of girls. She singlehandedly fights against the tyranny. The dictatorship of Taliban and the harsh Islamic patriarchy are the chief sources of hardships and hurdles in the life of the narrator. The sort of life she chooses to live is radical and subversive. She is intolerant of any injustice to which girls are subjected. When the injustice and atrocity against women reach climax, she runs a great risk of her life.

Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the narrator is extremely bold enough to fight against the Islamic patriarchy. She holds Islam as the most responsible for the subjugation and subordination of women. In addition, she does not lag behind in protesting against the prevention of girls from education. No matter how much price she has to pay, she continues to resist against the Islamic patriarchy and political tyranny.

III. Malala's Concern with Gender Equality and Individual Freedom

The core finding of this research is that the narrator of the *I Am Malala* is bold enough to critique the rigidity and harshness of Islamic doctrine. The narrator's resistance is directed towards the ban imposed by Taliban regime on the education of girls and the limitations of Islamic patriarchy. To establish the rights of women, she takes the biggest risk of being assaulted by regime. One Taliban soldier shoots on her head. Due to the help of journalists working in Swat valley, she is luckily saved. Malala is acutely aware of the dwindling position of women in the Islamic society. The series of violence and bloodshed that the Taliban regime committed are vehemently opposed by the narrator singlehandedly at her risk.

The socio-cultural practices of Islamic doctrine are not conducive to the dissemination of feminist ideas, materialistic conception of life, modernist mentality, secular thought and other pragmatic principles of the post-enlightenment society of the west. Another additional finding of this research is that the author-narrator has to demonstrate a great deal of masculine characteristics though she is relegated at her family in Somalia to the enfeebled and enervated girl. To subvert and challenge the rigid and oppressive traps set by Islamic patriarchy, Malala has to get through a lot of hassles and ordeals.

What shocks the narrator of *I Am Malala* at most is socio-religious compulsion of women to remain within family. Any effort of a woman to cross the narrow and suffocating line family domesticity is surely condemned and checked mercilessly by adopting harsh measures. Malala lists down entire gamut of her sufferings from Swat Valley, and Pakistan to Western Europe and America. She begins to critique Islam and the vicious practices. She launches frontal attack on Islam. She argues that

polygamy and sexual rigor are the darker sides of Islam. Another drawback of Islam is that it dehumanizes and debilitates women.

Muslim obsession with virginity is its worst and disastrous aspect. Such an obsession will surely harm the progressive movement of women. Unless and until such repressive trends and conventions are eliminated, it would be really harmful to install modernity and feminism in the Islamic countries. She holds Islam responsible for the theocratic structure of Islamic countries. What prevents democracy from coming to the darker zones and territories of Islamic continent is the indestructible bond between politics and religion. Due to this bond between politics and religion, progressive notions like human rights, liberty, and individual freedom and materialistic conception have not flourished in almost all the Islamic countries. After abandoning her Islamic faith and Islamic country, Malala's eyes are opened. She begins to see the limitations and faults of Islamic faith.

Malala requests the western authority not to treat Islamic culture and religion as an equal partner. Her contentious view is that Islam deserves subordination. It is the oppressive and coercive system which is no longer applicable in the contemporary world. Her pro-western stand is clearly and straightforwardly mentioned. Far from being the religion of emancipation, Islam is just the breeder of misery and malaises.

Malala furnishes plenty of evidences about the backwardness and poverty of Islamic thought. It is instinctively prone to inculcate violence. On this ground, Malala condemns Islamic doctrine and Quranic convention. It is in complicity with Violence. Professing western belief in secular pattern is far better than doggedly following the defunct faith of Islam. Following, the September eleven terrorist attack, her tone of condemning Islam increased dramatically. She cautions the west to be aware of the latent potentiality of violence inherent in the Quranic doctrine. Casting aside the cloak

of Islamic femininity, Malala cultivates to sabotage the loopholes of Islam and trumpets the rhetoric of western superiority. Malala acquires masculine traits and characteristics on her journey to the new world and attacks the loopholes of the Islamic convention and culture.

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