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Exploring Self Identity in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*

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By

Sanchu Lama

Roll No: 6150

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-364-74-2010

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Exploring Self Identity in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ms. Sanchu Lama has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Dr. Raj Kishor Singh

Internal Examiner

Mr. Raj Kumar Baral

External Examiner

Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Sanchu Lama

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Abstract

This research paper examines Mojha Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf, with a special attention to its representation of feministic revolt. It examines how Kahf shows a female's sense of loss, identity crisis and their attempts to fight against the patriarchal norms and values. For this, the paper uses concept of self-identity as well as feminist perspectives that how it play a significant role for breaking the stereotypes and challenges the patriarchal notions exist in the text. Paper focuses on the journey of exploring originality being Arab-American women and struggling to gain self-identity. This novel portrays how the females are under the shadow of patriarchy and are dominated by man and even by religious hierarchy. Central character Khadra revolts against the patriarchal values and proves herself as a self-dependent woman in her community. Due to the long history of patriarchal society, women were limited around their home only. They were compelled to hide themselves under the scarf due to social construction. So, to bring the issue of women suffering and explore the ideas of cultural hybridity along with quest for self-identity develops by Third wave of feminist into forefront, this paper highlight the isolated situation of women's in the text and then analyses thoroughly. The paper explores the sociopolitical circumstances and the author's standpoint to depict the real condition of society. My entry point is concept about female suffering and discrimination this took me to their revolt, patriarchal notion along with feminist wave and it's far reaching consequences. Thus, my central research concern is to examine how patriarchal notion creates the misbalance society as a result the wave of resistance evolves.

Key Words: Gender roles, Religion, Self-Identity, Patriarch and feminism.

This paper analyzes Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, that

projects the dynamic and courageous woman to resist the traditional gender roles, based on patriarchal ideology which is conventional biased. Kahf has demonstrated a strong woman who is versatile with daring and revolutionary spirit against the biased concepts of patriarchal ideology. Protagonist, Khadra Sharmy migrated along with her family from Syria to Indian, America. Her parents had taught her to follow all those norms and values of the Quran from a small age. In Muslims community, the conditions of women are so pathetic compared to the other. The women were dominated, restricted and marginalized more than men. Most of the norms and values are specially made for women to keep their family members happy (specially their man). Kahf tried to dismantle the stereotypical image of women created by religions and men. She shows how limited knowledge they have about females. They want the females under them in all aspects, the qualities the males lack are attributed to females. They are gentle, emotional, weak and beautiful for males. They are objects of play and pleasure for males. Kahf gives a suitable and perfect answer in this novel with the portrayal of Khadra who is beyond the stereotypical image of a woman having the quality that can be found only in many males. She is beautiful, bold, reasonable, independent, educated, outspoken and dominant. She deserves and maintains all these qualities with almost clarity and perfection.

This research focuses on two points. The Primary objective of this study is exploring originality being Arab-American women and a secondary objective is to analyze the emerging self-identity. Here, it examines how the religious Diaspora's hybrid identity is mobilized within the female protagonist Khadra, Similarly including how she struggles to find out her own self-identity in her society too.

This research paper works on the exploring the emerging female self and identity in "*The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*" reflecting upon the central character

Khadra, who dare to breaks down the conventional notion of Muslim women in society. While going through the text, we find out that Khadar is brought up in a typical Muslim family where she cannot go against the norms and values of Islam but she rebel from all those norms and values. She sets an example for the Muslim women. In the title she has mentioned "Tangerine scarf" which refers to bright, attention grabbing color and being free. Muslim women used to wear black scarf but she prefer to wear tangerine scarf from there we can find out her as a bold, daring and ambitious.

Different critics have discussed in this text Kahf from multiple perspectives. Here, a Hijab perspective by Carine Pereira Marques and Glaucia Renate Goncalvees explores the issues of dress code which differentiate between men and women in the novel. Furthermore, the review includes:

A woman should cover up and wear a hijab after she menstruates, and Khadra in effect was enraptured by this imposition: Hijab was a crown on her head. She went forth lightly and went forth heavily into the world, carrying the weight of a new grace, hijab soon grew to feel as natural to her as second skin, and without which if she ventured into the outside world she felt naked. (112-113)

Khadra tried to break down those entire conventional notion and goes against those stereotypical dress codes of Muslim women where she dares to wear clothes and scarves which are not the suitable one for Muslims women.

Areen Khalifeh in "International Journal of Humanities and Social sciences" argues Kahf's novel with very positive attitudes where we can find out the veil as a symbol to symbolize religion, faith, revolution, love, forgiveness etc. The way Muslim women presented with veil as oppressed by western Medias is not the reality

but veil has its own prominent role which not only convey the message of Islamic identity but stands for revolution itself. He further adds:

In its extreme, Khadra's political and revolutionary. For example, the black veil which she wore during her teenage years was a revolution against traditional Islamic scholarship, with its tedious, plodding chapters on categories of water purity and how to determine the exact end of mines. (150)

At the time of wearing the black scarf, she and her friends started to applaud assassinations, cheer the Iranian Revolution, and hell the ideas of martyrdom. It seemed that Khadra wanted to be like this "one scarf wearing woman "who took, with other men, some American and a willingness to attack it. Here, Khadra tried to revolt against those political issues by wearing the tangerine scarf. From here we can see that Khadra steps out from those notions too.

Similarly Abbasali Borhan and Alireza Anushiravani in *Journal of Alternative Perspectives* in the social science argues, Kahf's novel with very positive attitudes where we can find out the Resistance and Uncanny moments of between in Mojh Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. The nativity predisposition of the Muslim characters aside, the way they are received as "enemies" by the host community also reinforces their anti- Americanism. Being constantly threatened by the Lott boys, the American kids living across the street, Khadra, still a kid comes to realize that she does not belong to where she is living. Ganging up on her, the Lott boys always call her racist names such as "rag head" (53) and even threaten her to death.

Foreshadowing the merciless slaying of Zuhura, an active member of the Islamic Center. And, more importantly, Muslims are shown to have no place to go in order to legally sue such harassments. When Khadra's parents complain to the bullying kids' parents, they receive that same response. "Back where you people came

from" (8) This imperative reverberates throughout the whole story especially at the moments Khadra encounters native Americans. Another instance of such encounters occurs when she has just started wearing hijab at school. Corned to take off her scarf and when she shows resistance, it is violently torn off her head.

Similarly, Ruzy Suliza Hashim Nor and Faridah Abdal Manaf in *European Journal of Social Science* have reflected in Notions of Home for Diasporic Muslim Women writers where Mohja Kahf's protagonist is quite unsettled regarding the issue of home because they migrated from Syria to America. They argue Mojha Kahf portrays a realistic world in her novel. While acknowledging it is not easy for first and second generation migrates to fit in a new place. She is also saying it is impossible to adapt and integrate without scarifying one's belief and customs.(69). Here, we can find out how the protagonist is trying to maintain a relationship in between exploration of Kahf herself who is a diasporic writer.

Hansul Insani Djhor writes about the novel's protagonist Khadra as a cultural translator who plays a very significant role in between American and Muslim culture. She added. "The protagonist, Khadra, fails to adapt to mainstream American society. Although she is American she feels different from the mainstream society because of her Islamic culture and faith" (24). She makes clear in her review of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* Khadra's struggle for her rights. How she is bullied, insulted and one of her friends is killed by American extremist. Though Khadra suffers a lot, she is portrayed as a cultural translator who challenges both Americans and Muslims and she is able to understand both cultures and equally which we find in Dyer's review of the Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*.

According to Lin Ling the term "New Woman" is also applicable to the reading of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. The protagonist Khadra becomes a "New

Woman" as she recognizes herself as an individual and chooses a strategy to overcome the pressure to conform to the role others want to see her enact. The strategy used by the protagonist as a "New Woman" includes a journey into her, within a psychological and geographical context, questioning convention and tradition. As a Diasporas religious individual moreover, Khadra's quest for self - identity entails negotiating difference across culture and an exploration of her religious faith in the changing cultural contexts.

Like in mentioning above this research tries to deal with the exploring self identity of the protagonist Khadra throughout the novel. The major goal of this research paper is to find out the self identity and theoretical analysis on the basis of Judith Butler's Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of Identity which deals with the concept of male or female. She describes that gender roles are not natural but it has been naturalized by society. So it is not something we get by sexes rather it is constructed by the community who are in the power. Society has created some stereotypical concepts that females are weaker, emotional and she needs to depend upon her husband or male figure. Likewise, this research is also applying the theoretical tools from Feminist perspective.

Feminism is a general term covering a range of ideologies and theories which pay special attention to women's issues. It is a discourse that involves various movements and theories which are concerned with the issues of gender difference, advocate equality for women and campaign for women's rights and interest. The term tends to be used for the women's movement, which began in the late 18th century and continues to campaign for complete political, social and economic equality between men and women.

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines feminism "The belief and aim

that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” (466).

Feminism is further defined in *Feminist Theory*: As a movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of; sexuality in all human relation; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (7)

The above lines clear, women seek for equal rights and position in society. Feminists are united by the idea that a woman's position in society should be equal to man and that society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social and economic detriment of women. However feminist have used different theories to explain these inequalities and have advocated different ways of read dressing inequalities and there are marked geography historical varieties in nature of feminism. From the ancient time, it has been recorded that civilization had been overtaken by the male deity worshipping patriarchal cultures in which men were political leaders and women were kept in subordination. In classical times and early Christian era women were excluded from public and were made subordination to men. For example, Aristotle in politics argued that women were inferior to men and must be ruled by men. He says “the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities”. St.Paul told Christian wives to obey their husband and not to speak in church. Thomas Aquinas believed that a woman is an imperfect man. Canon law regards her, the devil's doorway'. Throughout most of the second millennium in most societies women were deprived of property, education and legal status. They were made the responsibility for the husband if married or their father's of male relatives if not. So,

feminist criticism arouses to counter such patriarchal notion. There are many women who protested against discrimination, inequality prevailed in the patriarchal society.

There are various categorizations of feminism. For instance liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, black feminism, third world feminism, postcolonial feminism and so on. Among them Radical feminism is a current feminism that emphasizes the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women or more specifically social domination of women by men. Radical feminism was first fully articulated in the late 1960s, and it argues, “ Men's patriarchal power over women is the primary power relationship in human society”(). Radical Feminists argue that this power is not confined to the public world of economic and political activity, but that it characterizes all relationships between the sexes, including the most intimate. Radical feminist such as Kate Millett focuses, “patriarchy as a system of power politics that organizes society into complex of relationship producing what is a, male supremacy“ that oppresses women”(). It challenges and overthrows patriarchy by opposing gender roles and male oppression of women and calls for a radical reordering of society. Radical feminists believed that eliminating patriarchy and other systems which perpetuated the domination of one group over another will liberate everyone from an unjust society. They also believe that the main rival of women is patriarchy, which guarantees male supremacy and the subordination of women at work and home. So, they advocate lesbian relationship to free themselves from men. They argue further that differences in behavior and attributes between men and women are biologically determined rather than socially acquired, and that women embody superior qualities.

Radical feminism locates the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations, as opposed to legal systems (as in liberal feminism) or class conflict

(as in socialist feminism and Marxist feminism). Radical feminism views roots of patriarchy as dividing rights, privileges and power primarily by gender, and as a result oppressing women and privileging men. Radical feminism tends to be more militant in their approach.

Furthermore, this type of Radical feminism too appeared in Elaine Showalter's writing. Elaine Showalter for example, describes the change in the 1970s as a shift of attention from andro-text to gyno text. She coined the term gynocriticism, meaning the study of gynotext. In other words, it's a mode of criticism done by women, of the text written by women. The subject of gynocriticism as, she says "themes, genres and structure of writing by women: psychodynamics of female creativity: the trajectory of the individual or collective female career: and the evolution or laws of female literary tradition" (155). She divides feminist criticism in two types, which is concerned with woman as reader and woman as a writer. Radical feminism opposes existing political and social organization in general because it is inherently tied to patriarchy. Virginia Woolf for example advocated for freedom and economic equality in the society. Moreover she also talks about the freedom of creativity and women should have their own room in her groundbreaking book *A Room of One's Own* (1929). She says: "All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point- a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem unsolved". Here, Woolf clears that women need to own their own room and money to write fiction of a life and develop her creativity. She also writes numerous other essays on women authors and on the cultural, economic and educational disabilities within what she called a patriarchal society dominated by men that have hindered or prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities.

Radical feminism also believes that the way to deal with patriarchy and oppression of all kinds is to address the underlying causes of this problem through revolution. While early radical feminism posited that the root cause of all other inequalities is the oppressing of women, some radical feminist acknowledge the simultaneous and intersecting effect of other independent categories of oppression may include, but yet not limited to, oppression based on gender identity, race, social class, perceived attractiveness, sexual orientation and ability.

Radical feminist believe that men use social system and other methods of control to keep dominant men and women suppressed. In this regard Kate Millett in her book *Sexual Politics*, she says, "Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole" (33).

Radical feminist also believe that eliminating patriarchy, and other systems which perpetuated the domination of one group over another, will set free everyone from an unjust society. They helped to make the connection that translated radical protest for a radical equality over to the struggle for women's right; by witnessing the discrimination and oppression to which the black population was subjected, they were able to gain strength and advocated for a variety of women's issues, including abortion, the Equal Right Amendment, access to credit, and equal pay.

In the same way, the primary focus of the research is to show the quest for freedom of individuality and responsibility to the self in Mohja Kahl's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* from a feminist perspective through the main character. Khadra where different shades are reflected regarding the struggle of maintaining her position and identity. Khadra's instructions of leading her life and the atmosphere around her are different from her own principle of living life. She is different than many other

Muslim women in her community. Islamic communities do not support the idea of abortion whereas Khadra being Muslim women clearly supports the idea of abortion. She says: "Yeah, well, Islamic law allows abortion up to four months", Khadra called out pedaling harder to keep with Joy. Passerby looked up at the word abortion, their faces reflecting the strong and various emotions it stirred. "All the school of thought allows it. The only thing they differ on is how long it's allowed. Four weeks to four months. That's the range" (225). The girl who is brought up in Muslim devout family clearly arguing for abortion is quite unexpected to be familiar with. Whether a woman wants to give birth or not, the decision should be taken by her not by the other people in the family. Similarly, When her maternal house and in-laws every time encourages her to have babies which she does not want without achieving her certain goals in her life.

In our society women have to depend upon men for their identity. i.e. the social definition of , who they are and what they need to do? Every woman's life decision has been constructed by the patriarchal society. When she is born, all her decisions are made by her father or the family members. Similarly after getting married, all decisions are taken by her husband and children. So we cannot find out her identity or we can say lifelong she needs to depend on man. According to the Butler in *Gender trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* write:

The masculine / feminine binary constitutes not only the exclusive framework in which that specificity can be recognized, but in every other way the 'specificity' of the feminine is once again fully deconstructed and separated of analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race , ethnicity, and other sexes of power relations. (6)

In Mohja kahf *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, the protagonist Khadra is

representative of all females in a quest of self under the suppression and exploitation. Male dominated society has always suppressed the feelings, desires and dreams of the females. Here, the protagonist Khadra was so passionate to do the work like boys Photography, riding bike , working outside house, travelling, engaging with the boys etc but in Muslim community girls are not allowed to go outside of the house without the permission of her father or family members. Her mother used to tell her that she needed to learn to cook food, to clean house , to read the Quran for the better health of her future husband and children etc.

According to the modern feminist was Simone de Beauvoir who wrote well known book *The Second Sex* in 1949. In this book she finds out that women have been always relegated to secondary positions to men. Always women are being injustice. A mark of otherness is: one's instability to shape one's psychological, social and the cultural self. Beauvoir says:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society. It is the civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch which are described as feminine. (295)

Always when a child is born there are different kinds of criteria for boy and girl. Firstly, when a girl child is born they think that they are physically weak. we need to support them every time. They are weaker. These kinds of mentality are developing in society. So girl children need to protect that why most of the family members start to be protective. In the same way, Kahf writes in her novel too, "Before they go to Khadra's street her brother Eyad skidded to halt and said, 'Get off Hakim's bike and get on mine.' 'Cause he's a boy and mama might see you. Hakim used to her handlebar rides all the time, but she was getting older now, and her mother said she should not

ride with boys anymore" (5)

If a female is provided opportunities and puts the situations as the same as that of male, she can think like male. That is there is no difference in terms of mental capacity. But in patriarchal society women are considered to do household activities, bear children, serve the family and remain away from outside affairs like decision making, understanding politics, working for earning money and getting an education. Similarly, Khadra grows in Muslim society where they believe that if she pray properly to Allah than she can get wonderful husband and happy life.

Khadra, as a young girl, wants to explore her self identity. She knows that there are lots of obstractule in the path but she focus on what she wanted in her life. In the pratractial society it not easy to do the work where she is interested. Similar Khadra wants to fulfil her dreams of being photographer But her mother and her family want her to be controlled in every sector. In muslim community if women are being controled that they can make perfect women on the definition. Kalf writes:

What happened? Jihad asked. He'd missed the glance in the judge's chambers and the whole drama. "Nothing", Khadra answered angrily. 'Just me practicing my first Amendment right to freedom of expression! She added , under her breath, 'What?' Jihad pressed. 'Shut up'. Khadra said, Don't tell your brother to shut up. Ebtehaj said. And Blew her nose again. (123)

Here, the khadra was expressing herself. She was so bold and expressed her point of view. She goes against those norms and values which society has created for the feminine gender. Similarly Khadra Mother and his brother didn't like Khadra being vocal about any topic. Always they try to explain Khadra to be quiet and calm. If she won't be then they give the examples of how god will punish in her life.

Similarly Khadra mother Ebtehaj herself is greatly affected by the events of

her own upbringing. Her mother passes away when she is young and her father remarries. Ebtehaj's mother was a very religious woman who tried to get her daughters to be like her, but Ebtehaj is rebellious as a teen until she goes to France and is raped by her professor. This incident changes Ebtehaj, she becomes religious, which also may be caused by the fact that her stepmother is ashamed of Ebtehaj's religious practices. This causes Ebtehaj to be overprotective when it comes to her children and careful who they befriend. For example, when Khadra asks her mother to go sleep over at friend's house, her mother refuses. Always she think that if we won't follow the rules of Islam than god will punish my daughter like me and her life will be destory. In the Ebtehaj mentality her life has been destroyed because of not following the Quran properly .So she imposes on her daughter to follow the rules of Quran.

Kahf's, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* represents the bitter reality of muslim community. Without the permission she can't do any kinds of work. Here the protagonist Khadra left America and went to her host country Mecca, saudi Arabia, her grandmother's home alone. When she went there lots of questions arose, like Why she came here without the parents? How could she travel without the permission of her father and husband? her grandmother was not happy to see her alone so here. Women are not just allow to travel from one even they are not allow to go in Mosque to pray too, Kahf explain here:

How could you leave the house without permission from your parents, your hosts? without telling anybody? Ebtehaj asked in an angry whisper behind the closed door. I- just - wanted - to - pray -fajr, khadra hiccupped between sobs. 'You can pray in the house,' Wajdy said. "But I didn't want to pray in the house, Baba. The mosque is so near-- the adhan was so beautiful - and it was calling to me, to - me! (164)

In the Quran, there is no mention that women can not go to pray in mosques but the men had made such kind of stereotypical belief that women can not go to pray. Well, women are not allowed to pray in the mosque here, Khadra's father replied. (165). From childhood , Khadra was taught that women should pray at home, just as the male can go and pray at a mosque. Khadra was so innocent that she believes her father. When she finds out the reality that women are restricted to pray in the mosque. Khadra become shock and she started to find out more reality of Muslim world and she question how could God makes different rules for their prayer?

Wajdy said, 'In most of the muslim world, it has not been the custom for hundreds of year' But you said you said she whirled here to include her mother, 'You always said it was a part of a Islam. What about the Prophet saying 'You must never prevent the female servants of God from attending the house of God? I told the mattawa that hadith and he laughed at me, and said 'listen to the woman quoting scriptures at us." (167-168)

Here, Khadra find out her parents always lied about the reality of muslim world. She was in illusion.Finally she find out that it is so inhuman that the women are even today prohibited to worship in mosque.So, now she started to raise the voice against this discrimination on the basis of religions. She found out that God never discriminated but this society itself started to make different kinds of rules and regulation for men and women. Always from the begining, men were in the power so they make all rules for their benifit, and women are treated like a popet.She finds the Quran clearly mentions about the equality among men and women but muslim countries are still ingoring about the justic, which should treat everyone equally. Judith Butler also mentions in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*:

Gender is not something that one is. it is something one does, an act..... a 'doing' rather than a 'being'. There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results. If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.

(26)

As Butler argues, gender is not divided by our birth but later on gender has been constructed by society and culture. Khadra Shamy, here she is facing lots of challenges in the name of gender. Khadra represents the strong character in this novel who fights for her right. When she was unknown about the fact that the Quran never discriminated between men and women she started to raise the voice about her own identity and all women's identity too.

Here the protagonist is not just fighting with her family to restore her self identity, also she is finding out muslim identity too. Every Muslim in US always be careful with the condition around. Islamic lifestyle which is the background of Muslims makes them safe. Khadra Shamy as Muslim, she cannot eat things contained pork or related under the name because it is *haram*. God is just allowing Muslim hunting or slaughtering animal for food which is halal. When animals are being hunted or slaughtered for food, Islam set regulations which protect animals and ensure the minimum level of pain the process of slaughtering and these regulations which are in conformity with mercy makes the meat of these animals "halal". "But for heaven's sake, she's black as coal. (139)

Then Khadra's desire in finding out about being racist is haram. Khadra starts

to unravel the truth about her parents and their hypocrisy, as when her parents tell her that being racist is haram. Islam set rules for dealing with human beings under the divine umbrella of mercy with which the muslim's perspective towards life is shaped. We human being are all God's creation who shares the distinguishing feature of having the mind to think and heart to love. So God always wanted to teach humanity equally but this society and her own family members always try to discriminate on the basis of power.

Khadra further insists that women can exist and establish their self identity in the society in absence of men's identity. Women do have capability, abilities and strong will power in order to architect their own fate as well as to establish their self identity. But misfortune to them is that their capabilities, abilities and deeds are not valorized and praised by society. Similarly when Khadra recited the Quran her own brother Eyad was not happy and satisfied with her activities. He further says:

'It's not that a woman's voice is awrah normally'. It's just well, you have to admit, Khadra, your voice when you're reading the Quran with all the tajwid stuff is pretty awesome. I heard some guys talking about it. Talking about you. It's almost like, is some girl's singing in a sultry voice. You would not want to do that, would you? And I do not want to be put in that position, with guys listening to my own sister and getting well, almost turned on. Do you want me to have to be in such an uncomfortable position?' 'Of course she didn't want to be seen as a vamp. A Quran reciting vamp. She quit doing the recitation. In fact, she stopped going to the CMC meetings altogether for a while, in disgust'. (204)

From the above lines it clearly mentions that not just the old generation, today's youth also can't tolerate women moving forward. Here, Khadra's brother Eyad did not like

her reciting the Quran in front of youths strongly. He spreads negative comments and demotivates Khadra for reading the Quran. He stops her and tells her not to recite the Quran in front of mass. He further says, people are not liking her voice. It can be understood vividly her own brother is insecure of the remarkable position he holds by her own sister Khadra in Muslim community.

Even today men feel threatened when there is a woman as a strong and competitive one. Here her own brother is scared of her. He thought, if she will take over his place then it won't be good so he started to give her negative comments and demotivates her self confidence. In the muslim community its too difficult to go against the norms and values of their society but Khadra emphasises that one should struggle and fight against the restrictions and constraints of the society in order to live the life of freedom and satisfactions. For it, one should be patient and honest then no doubt, one day she would stand on her feet. Similarly, self- confidences, self - motivation and self - determinations should be there in each person for their achievement of independent identity. So, Khadra dares to do that confidently but her own family members try to stop her but she never pauses herself. This is the first step of her to revolt against the family and she moves further.

Khadra learned that in the paths she needed to face lots of obstacles in the patriarchal ideology and its evil habits, but every woman should tackle all those difficulties and throw such dead habits with our strong resisting voice and behaviours then it is sure that we will be successful in our life. In such a way, Khadra becomes the source of inspiration to all of us who focus on the values and empowerment by ignoring the male constructed history.

Here, Khadra can be recognized as the source of strength and the source of inspiration for all the women because of her good deeds and strong will power which

encourage us to find our path of honesty in order to establish our own identity in the society. When Khadra is much conscious about her self identity, and then she first wants to complete her studies. For it she asks her husband but her husband and her own family members deny her go for further studies. Khadra's father said, 'You have a stable home, and your husband's not poor even if he is a student' (226). The concept of patriarchal society is that women need to just concentrate on their family and especially husbands like and dislike, if she has married a rich guy then she will be the luckiest girl in the world. She needs to care just for his interest. This is the patriarchal hypocrisy towards the women, they didn't give the value of women interest and talent. Similarly, Khadra's family and husband denies her talent, activeness and freedom of her choice or as a whole independent identity in the society. In this regard Kate Millett in her book *Sexual Politics* she says:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the large society: a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. (33) The Relationship between the sexes has been based on power and that they are therefore political. This power takes forms of male domination over women that is so universal, so ubiquitous and complete that it appears natural and hence becomes invisible so universal do that it is perhaps the most fundamental concept of power. (25)

In the patriarchal society, the relationship between the sexes has been of power. Male always have power over females and they dominate females. In this novel also the relationship between male and female is based on power. Mostly the muslim community tries to suppress the women. Likewise Khadra's father tries to impose his decision towards her. But we know that Khadra does not easily accept her defect, so without her husband and parents' permission too, she decides to go for her further

studies and interest. We can find out that Khadra is quite strict towards her determination so anything cannot stop her even if it is a patriarchal hurricane. This is the proposal of a woman to stand on her own feet.... due to her strong will power and self determination she is able to move on the right path of her destination. She goes against those patriarchy norms of being a complete woman. Her parents even her mother said that, "You can have babies and finish college too. You can do it all. Look at me. I did" (226). Even her mother forgot her wishes and all desires after giving birth to two babies. She stopped going to college. She had many dreams but she forgot all those dreams and wishes because of caring for her children and husband. Now Her whole life revolves against her husband and children. There aren't any interesting things in her life. All life decisions are done by her husband. Her self identity has lost somewhere. Similarly she is a woman and she tries to impose all those thing in daughter Khadra. How could women do this to women?

Mostly in the muslim community women life is tough. Similarly, after getting married Khadra life is getting really tough. She finds out everything really tough in her maternal home. When she knows that she is going to be a mother. Then she decided to do abortion but her family members said it's against the Quran. Her father further said:

Khadra's father said, "My mother died having me. They told her it was risky, but she went ahead and had me". He paused. He seemed to lose his train of thought. "She died having me. A woman who dies in childbirth is considered a martyr---- goes straight to heaven".

"Well, I don't want to die in childbirth," Khadra said sarcastically. (245)

Khadra strongly opposes the traditional social structure that brings unequal gender behaviour between women and men, though both are human beings. How easily they

can define that if the woman dies in childbirth is considered a martyr. A baby is that much more important than her health. Noone cares whether she will be alive or dies. Just they wanted to promote their new generation and wanted to become a masculine. She further aggressively expresses the male ego inside them which makes them proud of being men but it has a negative impact on them. Because of their ego inside them, men become blind and feel themselves as powerful and superior creatures on the earth. So, Khadra opposes such male ego centric nature of aggressiveness by raising a big question against it. She didn't want to give birth to a baby and forget her destination. In such a way, Khadra is presented as a powerful woman having masculine qualities. Both the misfortune is that her activities and boldness is not easily accepted in the muslim society. We can clearly see in this novel:

"I'm not suggesting you do so," he said quietly. "I'm saying, my mother sacrificed everything for a child. Sacrificed her own self."

"Well, I am not your mother," Khadra shot back. "I don't want to be your mother."

"I didn't raise you to speak to me in that tone," he snapped, as he rarely ever did.

Yeah, you did, Khadra thought sullenly. You raised me to go out and learn, but deep down you still want me to be like your mother. So where did you think all these contradictions would lead me if not to this frustration, this tone of voice? But I am not going to kill myself to fit into the life you have all mapped out for me. (246)

In these lines Khadra expresses her frustration against the patriarchal society and unjust behaviours towards the women. They sacrifice their life and give the birth of the child but also she is not valued or respected in society. These unnecessary social

restrictions spoiled women's lives. She didn't like to be her grandmother. We can find out Khadra is quite conscious about the position and equal status of women in the society. For it, she wanted the independent identity and their equal social status in the muslim community. From this novel Khadra tries to explain that we should live our life with full dignity. As she said not just being a mother is full of life. She further said that women are not baby bearing machines to birth just children. She had other desires too and the meaning of life.

Similarly, Simone De Beauvoir who is the 20th century existentialist feminist in her book *The Second Sex* argues:

[. . .] humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. Mechelet writes: women relatives being, 'And Benda is most positive in his Rapport de Uriel: The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting insignificance by itself' [.....] Man can think of himself without man; and she is simple what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is a sex- absolute sex no less. She is defined and differentialist with reference to men and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he the absolute-- she is the other.

(288)

Paternalism regards women as others. They treat women as weaker sex or second sex. Patriarchal notion expects women to be others and objects. Male is considered as a subject who is assumed to represent humanity in general. Similarly in this novel, also female character is regarded as weaker or second sex. Khadra's father tries to oppose all decisions of his wife and similar, he is teaching his son in law to control her

daughter. He never talks about the side of Khadra, he tells that women should be devoted toward her man and then they will go to heaven after death.

No one thinks about the present moment, how women are facing the problem in the present time, how they are killing their desire in the name of culture. Always they need to think about their husband and this patriarchy society. Like Khadra, there are other characters too sacrificing their desire but they think this is their fate. But in the context of Khadra is never concerned about the values of patriarchy society. As she says that one should not be afraid of the society in order to overcome the constraints of patriarchy; instead she should move ahead for her separate identity in the society. She further comments:

I don't care about society. I always think what has society given to me? In the name of religion, this society has questioned me. Even while praying to Allah there are different rules for man and female. How could I accept this kind of bias and how could I feel secure that God will protect me? (342)

In these lines khadra expresses her pain and suffocation towards the god. In the name of God, Allah, women are mistreated and they need to suffer. Khadra pinpoints the biased attitudes of male authority and intervention in every aspect of women's life. So violently raises the question, "Joy? Do you think God will punish me by not letting me have babies later, when I want them?" (250) By raising such issues, Khadra tries to revolt against the existing gender inequalities of Patriarchal ideology. In this way, Khadra marks well to the evil and unjust patriarchal social norms and values in order to get emancipation from it and try to establish equal statues of women in the society.

Thus, after getting divorce Khadra identifies herself as a good career woman who believes in the dignity of life and struggles for the achievement of self identity in the society. Moreover, She became the source of inspiration to all women in order to

get the way from this society. After getting divorce she started her career by joining the photography and continuing her studies. She started to find out the truth of their subject, to see beyond first appearance through her photographs. She did her most favourite thing, riding a bike freely. She started to set the example leading women. If we start to think about ourselves then no one can stop us to catch our dreams. We women are not just born to stay in the kitchen or home. We can see Khadra as a strong character who revolts all those norms and values which have been set in our society. She proves that we are not just born to cook, clean, sew, babysitter and so on. Khadra rejects all those notions which are always expected to be performed only by women. As we can see that muslim women take their husband as a God but Khadra oppose the stereotypical notion. She questions her husband too . ‘Well, it didn’t come with my BOOBs!’ Khadra shouted bach, ‘You can LEARN it! Here, I will show you! How to cook (241). Here, she denies cooking and challenges her husband to learn about cooking by mentioning that cooking skill doesn’t come with her Boobs but she learns about it and he needs to learn too.

The role of male and female is differently defined by society. Women are confined inside the four walls but here, khadra tried to break down all those patriarchal norms and values by daring sprite. As most of the radical feminist argues, roles are not something from our birth rather it is repeatedly followed by the men and women in society and it becomes the culture. Khadra has realizes the boundaries and discrimination between men and women in the society. Khadra tries to take a stand against all of the people who always try to control women in the name of religion, culture and community. The discrimination which makes her more strong and rebellious to change the mentality of the society and khadra proves herself beyond the limited definition of women in society. Beside being the muslim community she

tried to fulfill her dreams with daring spirit. Whenever she finds out anything wrong then she revolutes without anyone's fear. She proves that if we have will then obviously it will be fulfilled. Similarly Khadra's life was not that easy, but time on again she tries to prove herself in every sector. We know that it is not acceptable for women who come from her comfort zone. In each and every sector she has been discriminated against either in home or in a working place but she faces it and grabs her dreams being one of the best photographers.

To sum up, Khadra is a rebellious lady with feminist sensibility who subverts and disapproves the binarism of traditional gender roles based on patriarchal ideology by showing her resistance against it. In such a way, on the one hand she is raising the questions and revolutionary attitudes towards the traditional gender constructions of masculine and feminine gender roles whereas at the same time, she encourages all women towards their liberation and autonomous identity. Therefore, Khadra is the symbol of women's emancipation and source of inspiration to all of us. If we want to change society then women should have to raise their voice by themselves and they need to work hard to achieve their goals. Similarly, Khadra also challenges the image of Muslim women. She didn't spend her whole life just caring for her husband and children. She portrays that women can do any work like men if they have guts and courage. Khadra stands in her words and proves herself as a well-educated woman and professional photographer. She got successful in exploring her self-identity in her own society as a professional photographer.

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