

Tribhuvan University

Hannah Shah's *The Imam's Daughter*: Critique of Patriarchy

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Abstract

Hannah's *The Imam's Daughter* embodies the encouraging and enriching ideas for Muslim women's struggle for emancipation from the horribly exploitative tendencies in patriarchal society. This thesis deals with exploitation, discrimination, humiliation, oppression, control and violence. The characters portrayed in the novel are symbolic and speak the voices of ruled and the ruler, in other words those of females and males respectively. Therefore, the study is done in the perspective of female. The female character Hannah Shah carries the narrator's view and attitude towards women and rest of the male dominated society. The author has tried her best to represent the contemporary Muslim society and its barriers to the women in general.

Hannah, the protagonist tries to break down the unjust and scary limits set by her orthodox and conservative family. Finally, she comes to the realization that freedom is there, where there is courage to do what one believes is right thing to do. Her determinism to liberate herself and self-assertion to fulfill her wishes and desires made her an independent human being. Leaving the house, changing the religion and choosing her life partner herself reflects her exceeding courage and endurance to be successful to represent herself as a role model in the then Muslim society.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Defining Patriarchy

Subordination of women to men is prevalent in large parts of the world. We come across experiences where women are not only treated as subordinate to men but are also subject to discriminations, humiliations, exploitations, oppressions, control and violence. Women experience discrimination and unequal treatment in terms of basic right to food, health care, education, employment, control over productive resources, decision-making and livelihood not because of their biological differences or sex, which is natural but because of their gender differences which is socially constructed. According to Geetha “Sex is considered a fact- one is born with either male or female genitalia. Gender is considered a social construction - it grants meaning to the fact of sex. Conversely, it could be said that only after specific meanings came to be attached to the sexes, did sex differences become pertinent”.

(105)

Gender based discriminations and exploitations are widespread and the socio-culturally defined characteristics, aptitudes, abilities, desires, personality traits, roles, responsibilities and behavioral patterns of men and women contribute to the inequalities and hierarchies in society. Gender differences are man-made and they get legitimized in a patriarchal society. This paper attempts to link the theoretical dimensions of patriarchy with its empirical experiences to engage in the ongoing debates and discussion on “patriarchy” which manifests itself in various forms of discriminations, inequalities, hierarchies, inferior status and position of women in society. Thus it is important to understand patriarchy in terms of its multiplicity, complexities and dynamics.

Patriarchy literally means rule of the father in a male-dominated family. It is a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women. Sylvia Walby calls it as “A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women”. (10) Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal where men control women’s production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations which are dynamic and complex, have changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices.

Patriarchy, tribal patriarchy and dalit patriarchy are different from each other. Patriarchy within a particular caste or class also differs in terms of their religious and regional variations. Similarly subordination of women in developed countries is different from what it is in developing countries. While subordination of women may differ in terms of its nature, certain characteristics such as control over women’s sexuality and her reproductive power cuts across class, caste, ethnicity, religions and regions and is common to all patriarchies. This control has developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by several ideologies, social practices and institutions such as family, religion, caste, education, media, law, state and society.

Patriarchal societies propagate the ideology of motherhood which restrict women’s mobility and burdens them with the responsibilities to nurture and rear children. The biological factor to bear children is linked to the social position of women’s responsibilities of motherhood: nurturing, educating and raising children by

devoting themselves to family. Heywood says, “Patriarchal ideas blur the distinction between sex and gender and assume that all socio-economic and political distinctions between men and women are rooted in biology or anatomy” (40).

Gender like social class, caste, race or religion is a significant social cleavage and it is important to analyze it to understand social inequalities, oppressions and unequal relationship between men and women. It has been explained by feminist scholars / thinkers/ writers who believe that the theory of ‘sexual politics’ and ‘sexism’ are conscious parallels with theory of ‘class politics’ and ‘racism’ to understand oppression of women. The traditionalist view accepts patriarchy as biologically determined and as the biological functions of men and women are different, the social roles and tasks assigned for women are also different.

Sigmund Freud stated that for women anatomy is destiny and it is women’s biology which primarily determines their psychology, their abilities and roles. Similarly the traditional notion of public-private divide which located politics in the public sphere and family and personal relationships in private sphere as non-political, believed that sexual inequality is natural and not political. While the political sphere was preserved for men the private sphere was reserved for women as housewives and mothers who were excluded from politics. These theories of male supremacy have been challenged and opposed by feminists as they lack historical or scientific evidence. Feminists argue that the biological difference might lead to some difference in their roles, but the former should not become the basis of a sexual hierarchy in which men are dominant. The dismantling of these theories enables us to acknowledge that patriarchy is man-made and has developed historically by the socio-economic and political processes in society.

Gerda Lerner in *The Creation of Patriarchy* has argued against single cause theories and against looking for one historical moment when patriarchy was established. Patriarchy has been conceptualized and analyzed by several feminist scholars in different ways. Despite a range of common themes within feminism, disagreements exist amongst the feminists in understanding patriarchy. All feminists do not like the term “patriarchy” for various reasons and prefer the term gender and gender oppression. Patriarchy has remained a relatively undefined concept and some feminist scholars are at unease with the use of the concept of patriarchy when it involves the notion of a general system of inequality. Michele Barrett and argues that

The use of the term patriarchy assumes that the relation between men and women is unchanging and universalistic. She suggests that it can only be appropriate if it is defined very narrowly and refers to specific aspects of ideological relations such as those of father-daughter relationship described in Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas*. The use of the term often involves confusion between ‘patriarchy’ as rule of the father and ‘patriarchy’ as men’s domination of women. (15-16)

However, Sylvia Walby critiques Barrett as the problem is not with the concept itself but with the way it is used in specific texts as “It involves problems of reductionism, biologism, universalism, and therefore the inconsistent definition of patriarchy needs be overcome in an adequate analysis of gender inequality.” (28) In a hierarchical society often gender oppression is linked with oppressions based on caste, class, community, tribe and religion, and in such multiple patriarchies men as the principal oppressors is not easily accepted. Thus feminist historiography made radical breakthroughs in redefining gender and patriarchies in the context of hierarchies of caste, class, community and ethnicity. Therefore it is pertinent to underline several

perspectives of feminism for a comprehensive understanding of patriarchy in terms of its origin, characteristics, nature, structures and persistence.

Role of Patriarchy in Hannah Shah's Life

Hannah Shah is a British woman of Pakistani Muslim parentage. She is a daughter of Muslim Priest (Imam, the leader of mosque). She has done post-graduation in Theology and religious study. The early years of her life were largely troublesome and she was like a caged butterfly inside her own house. She never felt the love, affection and warmth of her parents inside her home. She was very insecure inside the four walls of the house. She was treated as a slave by her brothers and other family members. There was the discrimination among male and female in her house. Male are supposed to do the work outside the house whereas female are supposed to do the household works as cooking, washing, cleaning and so on. The Imam would beat Mrs. Shah once or twice in a month for the silly reasons such as curry was not to his liking or he found a speck of dust. Her mother never raised her voice or questioned her husband because it is beyond the culture. It is the greatest sin to say or do something against the desire of the husband. Her sons would ignore this and she would pretend that nothing had happened.

She was always scolded and abused as an unwanted child. Once Hannah tried to protect her mother from the abuse and torture of her father as a result it turned on her. From the age of six, she was punished regularly for her evil in tempting her father. His punishments included regular rape and periods locked in the cellar. If she were to tell of what he did he threatened to kill her, and then such an evil dirty little girl like her would go straight to hell.

Her mother dealt with it by pretending as it wasn't happening. She found nothing odd that Hannah had so many nosebleeds in such an odd part of the bed. She

seems to have been relieved that she was no longer being beaten and troubled so often by his husband. At the age of playing with toys, she was abused by her own father in a frequent time interval and is caged in the cellar and the entire family seems to be indifference about the matter. Nobody dare to go against the rule made by her father. He has to be treated as a god and whatever he does or says is the direct message from the god. His lecherous activity, the marks and scratches in the body of Hannah were given the name of punishment of god. She was not allowed to wear jeans shirt and take part in swimming class because her father didn't want her to show her flesh. It should be always covered with kutha sulwar.

When she found out that she was taken to Pakistan for her arranged marriage, she made her mind to escape from the house. Skip helped her escape and her teacher (a shrewd woman) took her in. This time the social worker allocated to her was a trustworthy Englishman. Her father came to the college with Mosque elders, weeping about his shame and begging her to come home but she could see his cold heart and lack of remorse so she stood firm. After she left her home in the north of England and finished her schooling, she earned a degree in Theology and Religious Studies. She now lives in the south of England, where she is increasingly in demand for speaking engagements to support others facing similar situations. She works with women's and young person's organizations. She has worked with the victims of forced marriages, girls at risk of honor killings and other converts from Islam.

Summary of The Imam's Daughter

Her name isn't Hannah as a Christian and was Hannan in childhood. She was grown up in Northern England in rigid Pakistani Muslim community. Hannah had the added burden of being the daughter of a wife beater and child molester. Her father gave up his factory job and became an Imam, the leader of his mosque. He lived on

benefits, which in his opinion were his by right, and whatever contributions his congregation gave. No training is required as an Imam, only an ability to control the flock is necessary.

Hannah was the middle child. She has three older brothers. As a daughter she was unwanted and ill-treated. The Imam hated anybody who was not a Pakistani Muslim. White people were “goray - Godless heathen fornicators”. Hannah was not allowed to visit her school friends and on the occasions they impulsively visited her. Mrs. Shah dare not let them into the house; they would play outside while the family listened in terror for the return of the Imam. The Imam would beat Mrs. Shah frequently for the silly causes. Her sons would ignore this and she would pretend that nothing had happened.

Hannah attended the local Church of England primary school which she loved. Then Mrs. Shah took the opportunity to take English lessons from one of Hannah's teachers in a home. One day the Imam came home early and found a gori infidel in his house and gave his wife a memorable beating. She was six years old. She tried to stop her father to beat her mother and from that day she was punished regularly for her evil activity of tempting her father.

Hannah began to escape into a world of Lavender fields where her friends, the loneliness birds gave her company. She had to do more and more of the housework. If she did not chop the onion to her mother's standards, she would get a beating from her. One afternoon when she was nearly seven years old, she was watching a children's cartoon called Button Moon Program. She laughed at one of the jokes when suddenly she heard Dad's voice from the doorway. “Shut up!” he snapped. “I don't *ever* want to hear you laughing. I don't even want to see you smile”. But in that instance she made a vow to herself. She is going to laugh and smile. She will never

stop no matter what he does to her. Laughing gave her strength and helped her to be brave. It was a part of my soul that he couldn't totally darken or destroy.

Hannah went to secondary school and sometimes she played truant and other times her teachers had difficulty persuading her to go home after lessons. They realized something was wrong and Hannah told them that she suspected a marriage was being arranged for her and that she was sometimes beaten. This is where the particular horror of being the daughter of an Islamic family comes in. Her teachers were sensitive to her "cultural needs". They got her a Pakistani Muslim social worker, Omer. He spoke to her father. Her father tied her up with cord and beat her. She was locked in the cellar for several days. She contemplated suicide but didn't.

Hannah made friends with another rebellious Pakistani girl called Skip and she moved on to Sixth Form College where she grew to know and trust Mrs. Jones (the Religious Studies teacher). When she found out that she was being taken to Pakistan for her arranged marriage Skip helped her escape and Mrs. Jones (a shrewd woman) took her in. This time the social worker allocated to her was a trustworthy Englishman named Barry. Her father came to the college with Mosque elders, weeping about his shame and begging her to come home but she could see his cold heart and lack of remorse so she stood firm. Then while living at Mrs. Jones house she started to attend church.

Her parent's god was one of punishment and damnation – a god she could never be good enough for. The time where she cooked a fundraising curry lunch which was enjoyed thoroughly by hundred people was a contrast to her punishments for thick cut onion or misshapen chapattis. Barry helped her talk to the police and child protection team. She wouldn't press charges against her father but the child protection teams were able to check that her sisters were not being abused in their

turn. She continued to telephone her brothers from time to time. Eventually Hannah became a Christian and passed her A-levels well enough to get admission to university. Then she invited her family to her baptism.

At this stage she had never heard of the word 'apostasy'. She didn't know that it says in the Hadiths that anyone who converts out of Islam and refuses to return should be killed. She didn't know that converting out of Islam was considered one of the greatest sins of all. But even had she known this, she would probably still have invited her family. She wanted them to see where her life was going and where freedom's journey was taking her.

She phoned her favorite brother who put the phone down on her. A few days later the Imam turned up with mob of forty men armed with hammers and knives. Hannah feared that if they succeeded in breaking down the door she would die. She doesn't know how they found her in a white working class area and what made them suddenly go away again. Skip warned her that she was now in serious danger and that Skip was under pressure herself. So she had to move house again and again. While she was studying Theology at Lancaster University she began to read the Koran in English.

She entered into discussions about Islam with Muslim students. That chapter is particularly interesting for its insights into how they thought and what they were getting out of their study. Their resistance to knowing what the Koran really says. One of these girls told Hannah's family where she was living and she had to move again, this time to the South of England which she hoped would be far enough away.

Then she became ill through post traumatic shock. Once she recovered she met a young man, of all romantic situations, on Christmas Eve at midnight communion. They fell in love and married in a beautiful wedding with lavender

butterflies and balloons. She works with women's and young person's organizations. She has worked with the victims of forced marriages, girls at risk of honor killings and other converts from Islam.

Critics on *The Imam's Daughter*

The traditional women had a dream for their equal rights and freedom but this dream has come true in the present context. Hannah was so determined so she was out of suppression and oppression. She shouldn't have to shed tears and sob silently in the corner room, she wrote poems to heal the wounds. This was a type of freedom in the conventional society where she could fly in her poems and writing. Commenting upon the novel *The Imam's Daughter* Anthony Smith asserts her view as follows:

Hannan had to overcome the abuse, dysfunctionality of her family and the rules of the religion she was brought up in. *The Imam's Daughter* is beautiful story of her courage to face her past and move beyond that to live in freedom and free to her past. The subtlety of the presentation is really admirable. Its direct projection of anglophile mentality is somewhat unpalatable. (17)

The Islamic uneducated community is guided by the misconception of superiority where females are in much more pathetic condition. In this kind of family the male members compare and treat themselves equal to god. Males dominate their wives and treat them as a slave or the animal kept in their home. There is no significance or the importance of the likes, dislikes, interest, desire and happiness of the female members. Her novel had tried to put light on the trauma and pain of the abuses done by her own father in the name of punishment. She got the courage to struggle and cope with the difficult situation.

Jennifer Lawrence interprets *The Imam's Daughter* as the crystal clear reflection of Hannah's autobiographical self and subjectivity. Lawrence opines that:

In *The Imam's Daughter* Hannah has projected her autobiographical self. Her self-core exists sovereign at the center of his book. Hannah Shah is an Imam's daughter. She lived in a devout Muslim in the family of Pakistani Muslims in England, but behind the front door, she was a caged butterfly. For many years, her father abused her in the cellar of their home. At sixteen, she discovered a plan to send her to Pakistan for an arranged marriage, and she gathered the courage to run away. (76)

The Imam's Daughter deals with the sophisticated family of Pakistani parentage. It seems Imam is sophisticated by his nature. He is mostly found worshipping the Prophet Mohammad and reading the lines of Quran. He talks about self-control but he doesn't have the control of his lust desire. He fulfills his lust impulses by raping her own daughter, so it can be said he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Every day she wants to escape from her house, she doesn't feel secure and free inside her house. She was hunted by her past, terrified by her present and fearful of the future.

Depending upon their criticism and many others, we can understand that Hannah Shah is a novelist who presents the real picture of Islamic society, culture, norms, values, lives of female, social environment lives of values and so on. Moreover Hannah Shah is highly influenced by patriarchal society and boundaries made by male and tries to prove her novel as true image of social environment where new generation women are conscious and they have understood the way to cope with the situation and the way to get freedom in the traditional society. *The Imam's daughter* is one of the representative novel of Asian Islamic immigrants of the British

society and proves females as a brave and courageous character and is equally capable to raise voice, to stand on its own and wage war against the so called norms and values.

Chapter Two: Female Consciousness in Literature

Historical Background of Feminism

The word 'feminist' or 'feminism' has political term indicating support for the aims of women's movement emerged in the late 1990s. It is a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. 'Feminism', is a belief in the principle that women should have same right and opportunities (legal, political, social, economic etc.) as men. 'Feminist' is defined by various critics in different ways, as it is originated from the political movement of women. Toril Moi, the British feminist critic of 1980s has used the term 'feminist' or 'feminism in political sense. With regard to feminist criticism, she classifies the word 'feminist', 'female' and 'feminine' differently:

I will suggest that we distinguish between 'feminism' as political position, 'femaleness' as a matter of biology and 'femininity' as a set of culturally defined characteristics..... The word 'feminist' or 'feminism' is political level indicating support for the new women's movement which emerged in late 1960s. (204)

Since Moi is motivated from the feminist political movements and weighs feminism with the machine of politics, her feminist concept has come into existence as a reaction to the patriarchy and male misogyny. She further defines the feminist criticism and says: "Feminist criticism then is specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply it concern for gender in literature". (204)

Feminism is not only a political word but also a literary movement and trend in modern era. The 'Feminist' concept, which refers to the 'supporter' of the feminism, and that, is relevant to the women's sensibility originates from the

Women's Liberation Movement of 1960s in America. Analyzing the participation of women and their commitment to this movement Jane Sherrom De Hart says. "The Feminist revolution of the 1960s... was begun largely by educated middle class women whose diverse experience had sharpen their sensibility to the fundamental inequality between the sexes... stepped in a commitment to equality and technique of protest" (34).

The study of feminist theories begins with the eighteenth century and continues until the present times. Feminist theories try to identify such biases and then by sensitizing renders to their existence. Feminism is a political perception based on two fundamental premises. Gender difference is the foundation of a structural inequality between women and men by which women suffers systematic social injustice. The inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender difference. Sex refers to the determining of identity on the basis of biological category while gender connotes the cultural meaning attached to sexual identity. In other word gender is the product of cultural conditioning. Feminist theories range themselves against various structures and interrelationships of power-the state, the church, law and the academy which they see as patriarchal. Socialism and feminism at the beginning of the nineteenth century emphasized the ways in which discrimination against women is manifested and how this can be resisted.

Actually this movement was launched by two active feminist groups of women in America:(a) women's rights advocates consisting of experienced professional women demanding for women's equal rights outside the home.(b) women liberations consisting of less experienced young women motivated by politics and violence. Though both of these feminist groups were organized with two different

purposes, their main objectives were to protect women from the male domination and provide them equal social, political, and legal rights. But the 'Feminist' got worldwide popularity only after the International Women's Year 1975. In the historical development of feminist theories, Virginia Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own* (1929), Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), Elaine Showalter's *A literature of Their Own* (1977) Toril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985) have heralded a new era in women's literature raising their voices for women.

These feminist critics view on women are different, but the aim of each critic is to awaken women and support them by attacking men. Even Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* is based on Sartre's existentialist philosophy. Here main argument is that women have always been thought of and treated as an object for man-as man's other relegated to secondary roles and denied individuality and responsibility. These assumptions dominates social, political and cultural lives to such extent that women have come to believe in them, accept them and enact them in real life.

Literary criticism and literary theory have traditionally been taken as male dominated areas. It was taken for granted that representative reader, writer or critic of literature was male. The feminist critics protested against this exclusion of women, this misogyny and the movement provided the impetus. The radical feminist, Elaine Showalter's appeared with the reinterpretation of gender study. She in her text writes:

It was through the women's liberation movement that began to draw connection between our own work and our own lives to note the disparities between the identification and ambitions that had attracted us along with thousands of other women to study and teaching of literature, and limited secondary roles granted to frictional heroines, women writers, or female scholars. Feminism spoke to you lived and

our literary experiences with the fierce urgency of a revelation of Great awakening. (5)

Elaine Showalter says, that feminism is male oriented. It studies in general, how men have depicted women in their literary works and how men have evaluated women writers from this what women have felt and experienced cannot be learnt since it is the writing of men. Therefore, she divides the female phase into three phases. She breaks down the movement into three stages — the Feminine, a period beginning with the use of the male pseudonym in the 1840s until 1880 with George Eliot's death; the Feminist, from 1880 till the winning of the vote in 1920; and the Female, from 1920 till the present-day, including a "new stage of self-awareness about 1960."

Feminine Phase (1840-1880)

It is the first phase which indicates the primitive concept of the women. This feminine phase includes women writers such as the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, and the later generation of Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton. The writer of this phase only imitated the males writing. Their works deals with the domestic and social background. But they couldn't express their works. They wrote the novels within the criteria of male because there was no place for female in the literary tradition. This phase exposes the literary practice reflected in distorted and stereotyped image of women in literary works. Women are rarely presented as women realistically.

Traditionally women are portrayed as a selfless, self-denying and sacrificing creature, as a symbol of purity and beauty; or she is presented as a monster, the villain, victimizer, devourer, predator like 'Eve' who ultimately ruins man. Thus women characters are given no positive roles in traditional literary works. Such

misinterpretation, literary and textual harassment of women in literature is exposed by feminist critics.

Feminist Phase (1880-1920)

This is the second phase in which women writers show their awareness. They started to revolt against male domination. They won the right to vote. They did not hesitate to disclose the pathetic condition of women. They raised the voice of gender equality to protest the male domination. In the second stage, the minority — or rather, the subordinate — lashes out against the traditional standards and values, demanding their rights and sovereignty to be recognized. In this feminist phase, women's literature had varying angles of attack. Some women wrote social commentaries, translating their own sufferings to those of the poor, the laboring class, slaves, and prostitutes, thereby venting their sense of injustice in an acceptable manner. They expanded their sphere of influence by making inroads into social work. In a completely different direction, the 1870s sensational novels of Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, and Florence Marryat, explored genuinely radical female protest against marriage and women's economic oppression, although still in the framework of feminine conventions that demanded the erring heroine's destruction. Their golden-haired doll-like paradigms of womanhood mock contemporary expectations of angels in the house by turning out to be mad bigamists and would be murderesses.

Militant Suffragists also wrote prolifically during this protest phase of literature. Women such as Sarah Grand, George Egerton, Mona Caird, Elizabeth Robins, and Olive Schreiner made fiction the vehicle for a dramatization of wronged womanhood. They were demanding changes in the social and political systems that would grant women privileges, require chastity and fidelity from men. Their projects concerned themselves more with a message than the creation of art, though their

rejection of male-imposed definitions and self-imposed oppression they opened the doors for the exploration of female identity, feminist theory, and the female aesthetic.

Female Phase (1920-Present time)

The third period is characterized by a self-discovery and freedom from some of the dependency of opposition as a means for self-definition. Some writers end up turning inward during the subsequent search for identity. Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf worked towards a female aesthetic, elevating sexuality to a world-polarizing determination. Moreover, the female experience and its creative processes held mystic implications both transcendental and self-destructive vulnerability. These women applied the cultural analysis of the feminists to words, sentences, and structures of language in the novel. For all its concern with sexual connotations and sexuality, the writing avoids actual contact with the body, disengaging from people.

With twentieth-century Freudian and Marxist analysis and two centuries of female tradition, writers such as Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, A.S. Byatt, and Beryl Bainbridge access women's experiences by using taboo language and situations. Anger and sexuality are accepted as sources of female creative power that expresses all the conflicts and struggles of women's literature.

Feminist critics believe that women have some mental capacity as their male counter-parts and should be given the same opportunities in political, economical and social spheres. So they want to bring changes by counteracting conventional or traditional ideology to empower women. They reject the idea that biology predetermines gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private sphere.

Types of Feminism

Feminism emerges as a concept that is based on a critical analysis of male privilege and women's subordinates within any given society. It opposes women's subordination to men in the family and society. Feminism is a global and revolutionary ideology that is political because it is concerned with the question of power. A feminist is one who is awakened and conscious about women's life and problems. The feminist apprehends certain features of social reality as intolerable as to be rejected if one is to transform the society for a better future. The concept of women is of central importance in the formation of feminist theory. Themes explored in feminism and feminist theory include patriarchy sexual objectification and oppression. In literary theory feminism means challenging the patriarchal canons feminist theory studies a structural inequality of women caused by systematic social injustice. The major traditions of feminism till date are the broadly categorized terms of feminism.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists have championed equal legal and political rights for women to enable them to compete with men in the public realm on equal terms. The philosophical basis of liberal feminism lies in the principle of individualism and they campaigned for all individuals to participate in public and political life. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* was the first text of modern feminism which campaigned for women's right to vote/ female suffrage. Wollstonecraft claimed that if women gained access to education as rational creatures in their own right the distinction of sex would become unimportant in political and social life. John Stuart Mill in collaboration with Harriet Taylor in *The Subjection of Women* proposed that women should be entitled to the citizenship and political rights

and liberties enjoyed by men. Thus, liberal feminists believed that female suffrage would do away with all forms of sexual discrimination and prejudice. Liberal feminism is the most widely known form of feminism thought. It is certainly the moderate or mainstream face of feminism. In this approach the explanation for women's position in society is seen in terms of unequal rights or artificial barriers to women's participation in the public world, beyond the family and household.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminists believe that society must be changed at its core in order to dissolve patriarchy, not just through acts of legislation. Radical feminists believe that the domination of women is the oldest and worst kind of oppression in the world. They believe this because it spans across the world oppressing women of different races, ethnicities, classes and cultures. Radical feminists want to free both men and women from the rigid gender roles that society has imposed upon them. It is this sex-gender system that has created oppression and radical feminist's mission is to overthrow this system by any possible means. Sometimes radical feminists believe that they must wage a war against men, patriarchy, and the gender system which confines them to rigid social roles. They completely reject these roles, all aspects of patriarchy, and in some cases, they reject men as well. Radical feminists emphasize their difference from men. They form groups that exclude males completely. This type of feminist highlights the importance of individual feelings, experiences and relationships. Culler represents a distinctively French brand of radical feminist which centers on the concept of feminine writing. She emphasizes on the language and text. She thinks that a source in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* as:

---Feminine writing which is the source in the mother, in the stage of the mother-child relation before the child acquires the male centered

verbal language...this pre-linguistic potentiality in the unconscious manifests itself in those written texts which abolish all repression undermine and subvert the fixed signification, the logic and the closure of our phallus-centric language and open out into a joyous free play of meaning. (89)

Marxist/Socialist Feminism

The third major feminist tradition is Marxist/socialist feminism. Marxist feminism was an influential school of western feminist thought in the 1960s and 1970s. While the impact of this thought remains in a number of contemporary approaches such as psychoanalytic and postmodern/poststructuralist feminism as well as those concerned with race/ethnicity. The significances of Marxism/socialism and class analysis for feminism have now largely been overtaken by a range of socialist feminisms.

Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism deals with labor and economics when exploring women's positioning. Since labor is viewed as fundamental to all economic activity, analysis of the organization of labor is crucial to Marxist feminist approaches. Marxist feminism, in common with other Marxists, generally accept some version of what is called the base superstructure model of society, that is, social relations-including those related to sexual inequality- are conceived as crucially shaped by the economics base of society, rather than by ideas and attitudes. Abrams mentions "The Marxist feminist approach tends, like liberal feminism, to be oriented towards the public sphere and, given its concern with the organization of labor, generally pays particular attention to women's position in relation to waged labor." (61)

In this model the earliest form of class division historically aroused male dominance: class oppression pre-dates sex oppression. The emerging organization of the first forms of private wealth, and of class hierarchy led to the treatment of women as property.

Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism along with radical feminists opines that women's subordination pre-dates the development of class-based societies and hence that women's oppression couldn't be caused by class division. Socialist feminist attempts to maintain some elements of Marxism regarding the significances of class distinctions and labor while incorporating the radical feminist view that sexual oppression is not historically a consequence of class division. Deriving from the debates between radical and Marxist feminism there can be three major socialist feminist traditions. The first strand involves a concern with the social construction of sex/gender which was largely seen in terms of Freudian psycho analysis. This approach tends not to perceive sexual oppression through the lens of women's on equal socio-economic position-in Marxist terms so-called 'material' organization of social life-but rather conceives that oppression as the effect of psychological functions. At the same time the approach continues to make use of a Marxian understanding of class relation.

Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminism has also great influence upon the theoretical works of feminists. The more important manifestation of cultural feminism is the conceptual distribution between 'gender' and 'sex'. It was first developed by Vendler Helen.

Sex with connected with biology is "concerned to be based on hormones, gonads, genitalia, whereas the gender identity of men and

women in any given society is considered as psychologically and socially, and that means historically and culturally determined. In order to avoid the confusion about sex as being biologically determined, the concept gender was introduced to denote the socially and culturally determined difference between men and women. (57)

The hidden reality of women's private lives became a public issue and many women realized their 'unique' problems with their men, their child, their boss etc. Their enemies were not only the state, the church, the luck, the male doctor, but that each woman also had the 'enemy' in her bed. Violence seemed to be the main mechanism by which the unequal power relation in the area of body politics was maintained. Women discovered more and more that their own bodies had been alienated from them and had been turned into objects for other, had become 'occupied' territory: many began to understand that male dominance or patriarchy as it then began to be called, had its origin not in the realm of public politics only but in men's control over women's bodies, particularly their sexuality and their generative capacities.

The stark fact that all the women are potential victims of such male violence, and that modern democratic states with all their might and sophistication are not capable of implementing these basic rights for women raised serious doubts in the minds of many feminists about the state as an ally in their struggle for women's liberations. In the German peace movement the feminists coined the slogan: 'peace in patriarchy is war against women' Men everywhere and at all times had tried to build their own power of subordination of women.

Psychoanalytic Feminism

In broad terms the influence of psychoanalysis has raised two major variants. This is Freudian feminism and the second grouping is the work of Jacques Lacanian feminism.

Freudian Feminist

The Freudian feminism gives the significance of psychology and the formation of sexually specific personalities in the framing of male dominance by analyzing the impact of women's responsibilities for mothering. The group of feminists paid special attention to the impact of women's primary care giving responsibilities on personalities and social relations. These psychoanalytic feminists draw on the work of Sigmund Freud in their discussions of how is it that women become feminine and thus come to mother, but also offer re-interpretation of his account of how the (sexed) self is formed. It clearly shows his focus on a male ordering principle in the formation of the self. Emphasis on Freudian psychoanalysis feminist writing was on the positive conception of feminine sexual identity. Hence by contrast with Freud's approach, in Freudian feminist writings the psychological and cultural influence of women in the formation of subjective and social relations is largely viewed as active and positive. They are regarded as positively contributing an alternative psychological order. Women are viewed as having much to offer to a program for political change.

Freud stresses the significance of 'the father' in shaping psychic (unconscious) life. The father is understood here as generalized cultural symbol of male authority partially recognizable in specific fathers/men- that is, recognizable in those marked as possessing penises. However, Freudian feminist are inclined to stress the prior (pre-linguistic) importance of the mother. (67)

Instead of convincing women as unconsciously shaped by envy for what appears to men and against these women must appear deficient, they are viewed as positively contributing for the change in psychological order.

Lacanian Feminist

A mix of influences such as marxism, socialism, radical feminism and psychoanalysis has produced different kinds of psychoanalytic feminist thought that is they have concentrated upon a reworking of Freudian psychoanalysis which employs the approach of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

Lacan's writing describe the development of the (sexed) self in linguistic or symbolic cultural terms rather than in the more concentrate, literal, even biological terms' sometimes favored by Freud. Lacan refers to the 'phallus' rather than the penis. The phallus is not so much a thing as a symbol of that which is not-the-mother. While the child initially doesn't distinguish its self as distinct and exists in a symbolic relationship with mother, the phallus enables the child to discover sexual difference, and its sexual positioning in relation to that difference. In this way the child learns difference, and enters into the cultural society. All children thus become 'subjects' that is they develop a self through the operation of a masculine regulatory principle.

The overall view is that feminist literature in particular patriarchal society is to empower and free women. Feminist critics believe that only a feminist struggle will significantly change relations between men and women that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence control of women's body by men the cultural politics of dress and other representation of gender and so on. They claim for their men folk to grant similar rights that they have been enjoying for a long time. In these terms revolutionary men too have spoken of the need for equality in women in the history.

Still half of the population in the world has yet to be developed in the sense of humanity.

Chapter Three: *The Imam's Daughter* is a Critique of Feminism

Patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. Despite differences in levels of domination the broad principles remain the same, i.e. men are controlling women. The nature of this control may differ. So it is necessary to understand the system, which keeps women dominated and subordinate, and to unravel its workings in order to work for women's development in a systematic way. In the modern world where women go ahead by their merit, patriarchy there creates obstacles for women to go forward in society. Patriarchal institutions and social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women. Patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and to some extent limits women's human rights also. Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres. In this way, feminists use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power relationship between men and women as well as to find out the root cause of women's subordination.

The Imam's Daughter is an autobiographical work through which Hannah tries to show the hypocrisy of the Imam by wearing the coat of the culture and religion in the Muslim society in Britain. It deals with the story of the woman named Hannah Shah. The story revolves round the issue of women. It is craved with philosophic insights. It is an experimental work through which she seeks reform in the Muslim tradition and culture. The story deals with the issue of oppressed Middle East English women in 21st century. The restriction of the society, power and greed of her father ruins her childhood.

The narrator Hannah Shah is the protagonist, who is just recovering from abuses and torture of her childhood days. Shah has subtly created conflict; her protagonist confronts and resolves experience, acceptance in the process of becoming

self-affirmation that leads to self-ownership for the existence. It is originated from women's encounter with self. The loneliness, emptiness, determinism of women's life is presented through the protagonists 'of the novel.

For centuries, biological difference has been the starting point and justification for creation of different social roles for women and men. Not only was women's biological capacity for child birth and breast feeding and their generally lesser physical strength seen as determining their social roles in home ,occupying themselves with domestic chores and bringing up children, but it was also claimed that these biological difference made them unfit to participate in the public sphere. Women were judged to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotion, and thus incapable of political decision- making. In the past women were forced to lead such a life but the time has changed everything. The modern women are educated, self-dependent, careful having judgmental power, more opportunities than those traditional women who had no option.

Females are dominated in the societies from the centuries ago. The voice is unheard in patriarchal society. The cruel society mercilessly cursed her freedom and choice. Because of Hannah's father's behavior, it is proved that females are made puppet in the father's hand in the beginning. The domination over females begins from their own father.

Human being suffers due to lack of freedom. The main purpose of human life is to establish the individuality of human being. The very individuality is attain when one is free to do whatever he/she likes. Even a single moment signifies a sound value in human life. The struggle of human is to attain pleasure, satisfaction, and these things are attain if one is free. Nothing and no one can completely liberate personal feelings. Feminists see each and every social political and administrative system as

enemies if they are only in favor of males. Females are free creature to make self-decision and to unfold the idea she likes rather than a mere servitude of society, politics, economics and morality.

The Imam's Daughter deals with the issue of oppressed and suppressed Islamic women in 21st century. It gives a bitter reality of male's behavior in the society. In the name of religion culture, tradition behavior and social rules, women are suppressed and dominated in the society for centuries. For feminist all the cultural behavior, social rules political and administrative system is enemy, if they curtail or limit females' right in the society.

Economic Domination of Patriarchy

Patriarchy, in its wider definition, means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that "men hold power in all the important institutions of society" and that "women are deprived of access to such power". However, it does not imply that "women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources.

The family as a social institution is a brewery for patriarchal practices by socializing the young to accept sexually differentiated roles. According to the culture, from a tender age, the socialization process differentiates the girl child from the boy child. Males are socialized to view themselves as breadwinners and heads of households whilst females are taught to be obedient and submissive housekeepers. The cause of such differentiation and discrimination is the fact that society views women as sexual beings and not as human beings. Women are not only constantly defined in relation to men, but are defined as dependent and subordinate to them as well. As a result, women are socialized to acquire those qualities, which fit them into

a relationship of dependence on men. These qualities include gentleness, passivity, submission and striving to please men always. She mentions,

My brothers were going to a fine school just outside the town. It took an hour to get them there every morning by bus and an hour back again. But my parents couldn't be bothered to send me there. I was sent to the local comprehensive, commonly known as 'Bermford Comp'. It was famous for being the worst school in town. (86)

The low levels of female enrolment in secondary schools means that fewer women make it into the corporate world, however for those who do so, they soon realize that men control the economy. Patriarchal attitudes also exist in the corporate world and few women are allowed to occupy leadership positions. Most women occupy less challenging positions like secretarial or clerical positions. In public ministry, there are more males than females occupying ministerial positions. Moreover, the females occupy less challenging positions for instance Gender, Culture or Education.

Patriarchy, which pre-supposes the natural superiority of male over female, shamelessly upholds women's dependence on, and subordination to, man in all spheres of life. Consequently, all the power and authority within the family, the society and the state remain entirely in the hands of men. So, due to patriarchy, women were deprived of their legal rights and opportunities patriarchal values restrict women's mobility, reject their freedom over themselves as well as their property. She reveals the economic crisis of the forced marriages. She further says,

The three sisters lived together in a house with their husband because they couldn't afford to buy their own place. The three husbands were fit for with no education and no English, but it was badly paid work. Each of the three sisters had completed their secretarial studies, and

they were infinitely more employable than their men. They had worked before marriage but their husband would not allow them to do so now. They were regularly beaten by their husbands. They were treated as domestic slaves, waiting on them hand and foot and answering to their every need. (200)

All the answers given by these women spelled out how patriarchy creates dependence on males to the extent that in the absence of males, many women cannot manage to support themselves financially as they were socialized to believe that, that role should be played by males.

Biological Domination of Patriarchy

Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant or masculine roles and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. This ideology is so powerful that men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress. They do this through institutions such as the academy, the church and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men. The patriarchal system is characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition. So patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Her resistance of the unwritten rules of the house has troubled and traumatized her life. "Her life became similar to hell with the punishment of her father. He beat me about once a month. But gradually it became more often. Worse still, Mum didn't try to intervene" (46).

For centuries, biological difference has been the starting point and justification for creation of different social roles for women and men. Not only was women's biological capacity for child birth and breast feeding and their generally lesser

physical strength seen as determining their social roles in home ,occupying themselves with domestic chores and bringing up children, but it was also claimed that these biological difference made them unfit to participate in the public sphere. Women were judged to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotion, and thus incapable of political decision- making. In the past women were forced to lead such a life but the time has changed everything. The modern women are educated, self-dependent, careful having judgmental power, more opportunities than those traditional women who had no option.

The term women's subordination refers to the inferior position of women, their lack of access to resources and decision making etc. and to the patriarchal domination that women are subjected to in most societies. So, women's subordination means the inferior position of women to men. The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence jointly contribute to the subordination of women. Thus, women's subordination is a situation, where a power relationship exists and men dominate women. The subordination of women is a central feature of all structures of interpersonal domination, but feminists choose different locations and causes of subordination. Contemporary feminist theory begins with Simone de Beauvoir's argument that because men view women as fundamentally different from themselves, women are reduced to the status of the second sex and hence subordinate. She says,

I could do nothing to stop my father, and did as he demanded no matter how sick and revolting it made me feel. The more the abuse went on the more dirty and deserving of such punishment I felt. Within many Islamic societies a victim of rape is often seem as the guilty party,

having somehow tempted the men into sexual excess. Likewise my father blamed me for tempting him to the abuse. (55)

In this system, different kinds of violence may be used to control and subjugate women, such violence by men may even be considered legitimate and women are always routinely experienced by male violence. Male violence is systematically condoned and legitimated by the states refusal to intervene against it except in exceptional instance. Due to such violence (rape and other forms of sexual abuse, female feticide, dowry murders, wife-beating) and the continued sense of insecurity that is instilled in women as a result keeps them bound to the home, economically exploited and socially suppressed. Her father's lecherous attitude increases her death wish. She only wants to escape from the house of her father she reveals,

He forced me to take off my clothes, watching me in the deep cellar lamp light. By the time I had removed every last item, he would be panting heavily, his breath coming in gasp, His eyes will be full of that terrifying, crazed animal lust that I had seen soften before. He would hitch up his robe and force me to touch him. (114)

Woman is stripped of all freedom and rights. She is even further reduced to the level of acquired property. She is used as a wish of the honor of the house. Patriarchal norms that naturalize domestic violence are not freestanding; they are embedded in a larger culture of discipline. By the 21st century only a small minority of people still holds to the view that women should be subordinated to men. While all sorts of gender inequalities continue to exist, and some of these seem resistant to change, they exist in a completely different context of cultural norms, political and social rights, and institutionalized rules. Male domination has not disappeared, but it is on the defensive and its foundations are crumbling.

Socio-Cultural Domination of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways. The subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, in society. For instance, a few examples are illustrated here to represent a specific form of discrimination and a particular aspect of patriarchy. Such as, son preference, discrimination against girls in food distribution, burden of household work on women and young girls, lack of educational opportunities for girls, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, wife battering, male control over women and girls, sexual harassment at workplace, lack of inheritance or property rights for women, male control over women's bodies and sexuality, no control over fertility or reproductive rights. Hannah says,

In our culture girls are less welcome than boys. We are presumed to be in need of constant protection. This wasn't just for our own good; it was for the sake of family honor. If a daughter goes off the rails, it brings shame on your family than if a son does. (23)

Gender ideology appears to be constrained by patriarchal ideology that gives priority to the masculine over the feminine in almost all environments, that is to say school, household, labor market and community. Muslim community of Britain has been portrayed as a typical example of patriarchy, where male superiority is accepted as part of the natural order of things and women are relatively powerless in the public sphere.

Dad grabbed me and threw me across the room. I was only a little girl and I was not very heavy. Luckily the couch broke with my fall.

Without another word ,he stormed off into the men’s room in a towering rage. I was left alone in the couch, in tears. I stayed there for a quite a while. I was so scared of what I had done. It was the sound of my brothers watching TV that had brought me back to the land of living. No one paid the slightest attention to me and asked if I was all right. (45-46)

Men are considered to be economic producers while women are regarded as reproducers who are dependent on men. Like other patriarchal societies, in Pakistani Muslim society of Britain, men have greater power and authority, simply by virtue of being men and therefore head of the family. Thus, women’s gender ideology is viewed against the backdrop of ‘patriarchy’, which enables men to dominate women.

This can be viewed in household relations. Women’s ideology is affected by the patriarchal ideology. Therefore, they prefer son’s education over daughter’s education. Daughter should not pursue higher education, but son should do so. Daughter’s education is less important than son as son contribute family income. Access to basic education is human rights for boys only. Education is more important for boys than the girls. The role and duty of women is to taking care of the children and the household only.

I absolutely wasn’t allowed to go for swimming. Swimming means showing forbidden flesh- bare ankles, arms and thighs. Dad wouldn’t allow that even though I was small child. Swimming lessons had started at school but my parents had written a note saying I couldn’t go. (50)

Parents give high value to sons because they are potential providers and perpetrators of family names. Girls are given priority on training the domestic chores rather than to

their education. Parents' gives less priority on daughters' education because they will go away to another house after marriage. This reveals that the majority of the women believed that the role and duty of women is to taking care of children and household only. These results are not surprising in a patriarchal society, where men's superior status leading to power over women and have dominant status by religious, traditional, moral or pseudo-scientific ideologies and beliefs. After marriage a girl goes to her husband's house. So our families think that girls are burden for them. Sons will earn and will look after their parents. So the oppression of a girl starts from her family. As a wife, a girl comes to her husband's house after marriage, so her husband thinks that she is in a subordinate position and he is more powerful than her. The experience of subordination destroys women's self-respect and self-esteem and sets limits on their aspirations.

The presence of woman, even one fully shrouded in a burkha, was thought to be unbearably exciting and off putting. Any hints of femininity might distract from men's ability to concentrate on the Quran recital, so lessening their spiritual experience. But it was never said that woman might be distracted by the sight of the men. The man never had to be excluded from the mosque, whilst the pir gave a lesson to holly female congregation. (67)

Traditionally, the roles of women are considered to be as a daughter, wife and a mother. It is considered that women's function is to give birth to the babies, nurse them up and manage the household. Women's work and lives take place within the sheltered confines of the extended household and compound.

Most of the time, Hannah remains silent observer at her home in the story. Hannah seems standing alone, standing a bit far from others. She has to take tea and

toast to back lounge serve cream biscuit and arrange them on a plate and take position by the sink, doing the washing up from the night before. Then only she would get herself ready for the school. But for the male members of her family it is deep insulting to do household chores. She says,

“I had to hide all the female underwear- the bras and panties – so that men of the house couldn’t see them. Dad would fly in rage if any women’s underwear was visible. Of course it was fine to see his dirty underwear, or my brothers,’ for we had to wash it by hand.” (76-77)

It is also clear that most of mothers tended to traditional ideology about daughter are brought up. They always preferred their sons in education. Women’s education is largely determined by patriarchal control which reflects gender-based inequalities in the society. Due to patriarchal ideology less attention is paid to and less emphasis is placed on the education of girls and females than on that of boys and males. As a result, daughters do not get the opportunity to acquire the same marketable skill and knowledge as the sons. Due to patriarchal ideology, a woman discriminates against another woman which limits women’s education opportunity. “Sunday was ironing day. I would spend the whole day in the bedroom, ironing the clothes of our family of eight whilst Mum was downstairs cooking and cleaning but brothers can chat or watch television in the lounge.” (79)

Arranged marriages are familiar within the traditions and elsewhere in and beyond. These can be based on religion such as in the apostolic sect where young girls are married off to older male members of the sect based on prophetic revelations. These girls cannot deny getting married to these men who in some cases are old enough to be their fathers for fear of being cut off from their families. In most cases, women have no rights to choose their husbands; rather the male members of their

families impose decisions on them. After marriage, women are traditionally not allowed to provide support to their own relatives. She says,

I know personally of too many who are imprisoned in marriage to men over from rural Pakistan who drink, and beat and rape them. Their husbands believe that the Quran justifies all of this abuse. They believe that their wives are their property, to be used as they fit. I use the phrase the forced marriage against arrange marriage to denote a girl married by force and against her will. (259)

The patriarchal nature of our society has shaped and perpetuated gender inequality to the extent of allowing male domination and female subordination. In the marriage ceremony of the bride and bridegroom the bias culture is reflected. She mentions,

The bride was not supposed to smile or in any way happy. If ever a bride looked even remotely joyful, Dad would scold her. She was supposed to show sorrow at leaving her parents. Often this wasn't difficult. All the marriages were strange ones; invariably the bride was nervous as to what lay ahead, if not downright terrified. So naturally the bride would sit there with long face. As for the groom he was allowed to be happy if he felt like it. (70)

This sad state of affairs has been fuelled by socialization process, therefore to amend the situation this calls for re-socialization. All those who are involved in mass teaching or any form of public lecturing should aim at highlighting how culture has created a huge gap between men and women. Lectures and seminars addressing the impact of culture should be encouraged. Furthermore, men should also be involved in these lectures so as to make great impact.

Psychological /Emotional Domination of Patriarchy

Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse that is emotional rather than physical in nature. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as intimidation, manipulation, and refusal to ever be pleased. Hannah Shah has suffered from severe psychological abuse from her family. She mentions “whenever he hit me, dad would abuse me verbally: You are stupid, lazy and useless! You are ugly, worthless daughter!” (47)

Emotional abuse can take many forms. Three general patterns of abusive behavior include aggressing, denying, and minimizing. Even though there is no established definition for emotional abuse, emotional abuse can possess a definition beyond verbal and psychological abuse. Blaming, shaming, and name calling are a few identifiers of verbal abuse which can affect a victim emotionally. Hannah would be verbally abused and tortured from her childhood. Her father scolds her by saying “you –you are evil, he announced quietly. You will surely burn in hell. But for now, your evil must be punished, driven out of you. Beating is not enough...” (51).

The victim's self-worth and emotional well-being is altered and even diminished by the verbal abuse and the result is an emotionally abused victim. The victim may experience severe psychological effects, this would involve the tactics of brainwashing, which can fall under psychological abuse as well but emotional abuse consists of the manipulation of the victim's emotions.

Each time he raped me, I felt more and more disgusting and dirty. I was spending more and more time away in the world make –believe, but not even that could shield me from the horror and shame of it all. I felt dirty and worthless and sick to the core of my soul. I believed that I deserved my ‘punishment’. (54)

Domestic abuse defined as chronic mistreatment in marriage, families, dating and other intimate relationships can include emotionally abusive behavior. Psychological abuse does not always lead to physical abuse, but physical abuse in domestic relationships is nearly always preceded and Emotional abuse of a child is commonly defined as a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development accompanied by psychological abuse.

Children whose families are characterized by interpersonal violence, including psychological aggression and verbal aggression, may exhibit a range of serious disorders, including chronic depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociation and anger. Additionally, the impact of emotional abuse did not differ significantly from that of physical abuse. She mentions that, because of her father's physical and psychological abuse she suffers from post-traumatic stress she was unable to handle herself.

One day I went to Fernham town centre to do some shopping. All of sudden I found myself in an area that I had never seen before, wandering around lost and confused. I was lost three hours or more. It was terrifying, but over the time it started happening to me more and more often. It was the dark depression that had taken me into psychiatric hospital coming back to haunt me again. (241-242)

Growth of Awareness among Women

“The abuse starts at the age of 5, lasts till 16 or so, at which age she escapes with the help of her university teacher and social workers.” (85). Educated women don't want to lead passive married life of a sacrificial and nothing but just a shadowy creature. She was always against the arranged marriage with an uneducated man of

Pakistan. She confesses to social worker “I was scared that I would sent back to Pakistan and forced into marriage with the illiterate and conservative Pakistani cousin” (147).

As for it was shocking revelation that everyone was carefree about the matter of forced arrange marriage with Pakistani man. Even the social worker whose job was to understand the victim and punish and warn the culprit prefers to hush up the matter: “Hannah, I have told your father what you said”, ‘He says there is no truth to it. He’s assured me that he will discuss with you openly your options for marriage. And he’s told that he would never dream of striking any of his daughters” (149). It was only Hannah who rages at the indignity, her protest made her father realize it was not her fault to be raped and punished.

A classic feminist work on rape is Susan Brownmiller’s book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* she argues:

...it is sexual violence, and specially rape and the threat of rape which gives men control over women.... all women suffer from this, even if they are all victims of the threat of rape. It is this fear generated by the threat of rape that keeps women subordinated. Conversely, all men benefit from the fact of rape themselves because the system of rape keeps all women fearful and subordinated to men. (66)

The general attitude of people makes the rapist feel free. “It was a lonely time. No one was defending me. Each time he beat me she acted as if nothing had happened. It was my mother’s lack of care or concern for me that really broke my heart.” (46-47)

Hannah clarifies that there is no difference between man and woman and their goal. Only one important factor is human being’s life which is furnished with the bright thread of love. All of us are struggling to get it and everybody wants to live

freely and happily. She says, “Perhaps because of finding Tom, and finding love, I felt strong enough within myself to try to make contact with my family who has ravished me.” (251)

Hannah is able to see the contrast between traditional women and the women of her time. Women like Hannah and Skip had the potentiality to struggle but they were scared of the society and followed a different way out of freedom which can be called a silent protest or a secret protest she was preparing for one of the school assignment: “Asian girl in Britain”. (159)

She was unhappy with her life and her family because she can never feel love and affection from her parent, brothers and sisters. They always treat her like a slave to do the household works and her father search the mistakes and faults to fulfill his satisfy his evil and sick sexual desires. Her poems which were the reflection of her real life and feeling were kept inside her room in the school bag. “My parents never went through my school stuff, so my stickers were safe in there. In fact they rarely if ever showed any interest in my schooling.” (110)

Silence in women has been viewed as the place of oppression, the mark of women’s exclusion from representation as speaker in the text. In certain times and places women were unable to speak openly and presented themselves as a silent listener or observer in conventional framework in life and text. Lawrence remarks, “The silence represents women’s different ways of feeling and knowing – perhaps silence hiding fear, anger taboo, thought – as well as representing the available means of expression among the particular, historical and cultural circumstances.” (157)

For centuries, biological difference has been the starting point and justification for creation of different social roles for women and men. Not only was women’s biological capacity for child birth and breast feeding and their generally lesser

physical strength seen as determining their social roles in home ,occupying themselves with domestic chores and bringing up children, but it was also claimed that these biological difference made them unfit to participate in the public sphere. Women were judged to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotion, and thus incapable of political decision- making. In the past women were forced to lead such a life but the time has changed everything. The modern women are educated, self-dependent, careful having judgmental power, more opportunities than those traditional women who had no option.

Her creativity was not recognized at the time instead they were ‘pushed under the carpet’ in spite of these obligation she managed to write brilliant and beautiful poems. Hannah strongly believes that women should have courage to express themselves and expose the evils of the society. Hannah has strong sense of protest towards the patriarchal values of the society. She never wants to spend her life like her mother marrying to illiterate Muslim man.

The creativity of Hannah which ensures her to be bold and courageous was her poems It’s the poem of the quest of her freedom which she named ‘Free’”

I have got to be free.

I have got to be free again,

Free from the world of fear and pain,

Free like the wind,

I have got to be free.

Free to be whoever I want to be,

Free to discover the real me,

I have got to be free. (255)

The poem strongly protests and reflects her rebellion attitude to free herself from the torture, abuse and violence against her inside the four walls of her own house. Her quest for freedom reveals her determinism to break the boundary made by patriarchal society. It seems she is highly traumatized and troubled by the male members of her family and she is very angry with her family. Her loneliness and her anguish, her broken dream for the love and affection of her parent all find expression in her writings. She tried her best to raise voice against the norms and values of traditional society. She challenged the traditional conservative norms and values marked by the patriarchy and revolt against it.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Patriarchy: Curb on Female Choices

The Imam's Daughter emerges as a reaction to male dominated theories and philosophies that are totally Phallus Centric. Hannah sympathetically describes women in her native Muslim society as the victim of despotic patriarchal and chattel marriage and upbringing system of female being. They are prisoners of social expectation and are treated as a commodity to be purchase. Inspired by her husband Tom to share about her life and become a source of inspiration for the millions of the victims of the society, she shares her bitter experience of abuse and punishment with the taste of bitterness and pain. It is an alive and profound story characterized by beautiful prose and evocative imagery, a tale of passion for freedom doomed by restrictions of the society and power and greed of her father, Imam.

In *The Imam's Daughter*, Hannah, whose function was to be abused punished and tortured by her father in her childhood and destiny to be abuses, tortures and physical assaults by her husband in the name of religion and culture was unconventional to her. She was not ready to accept the destiny formed by her father. She finds her identity and freedom of life in crisis. Though she hates her father and family and his abusive manners, she cannot announce to the society. Thus she becomes the victim of male domination. Though she knows that to follow her father's word is to lose her freedom, she couldn't reveal the truth to anyone. Hannah even loses her identity in her father's house. She was horribly tortured by her father and is kept in the pathetic condition as a slave of the house. Her father had decided to take her to Pakistan to have a force arrange marriage without any clue to her. This forceful decision is the product of male domination. Her father, Imam is depicted as an oppressive, brutal and sophisticated man in the society. She is supposed to be the

victim of male dominated society to revolt against it. She breaks the social image of a good daughter by leaving her father's house. She finds extreme pressure on her rebellious spirit. The support of her University teacher and social worker strengthen her rebellious zeal.

The Imam's Daughter has shown the hypocrisy of religion, culture and male dominated Muslim society, which consider females are deviant or out of normal. Society is depicted as a destructive force with fiery fingers in the forms of religion, culture, traditions, social rules and behaviors. These are the thing that put women into trap from centuries ago. The creative potentials are confined within themselves. Society has tried to put Hannah into trap. But her endeavor to break up the social norms and behaviors is value worth.

Hannah is beautiful, honest and good spirited girl. She is rebellious too. She keeps friendship with the Christians and westerners too and visits their house frequently. Hannah is the daughter of Imam, the powerful man of the community. She challenged the orthodox and the rules of the house by breaking the unwritten rules of the house. Hannah cannot accept the force marriage because the very important element of attaining freedom is right to 'Choice'. If there is no right there is no exercise of feminism. If all women want to be free they should break up themselves from male tutelage. They must possess courage to choose whatever they like. If they accept anything blindly they become the victim of male domination.

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