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Countering the Patriarchal Official History in Tahmima Anam *The Good Muslim*

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Letter of Recommendation

Jeebita Acharya has completed her thesis entitled "Countering the Official History: Tahmima Anam *The Good Muslim*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from July 2017 to April 2018. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The research paper entitled, " Countering the Patriarchal Official History in Tahmima Anam *The Good Muslim*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Jeebita Acharya has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Countering the Patriarchal Official History in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*

Abstract

This research paper examines how Anam counters the official history of Bangladesh in The Good Muslim. In the novel, Maya is the central character and she is projected as a very rebellious and dynamic character. She fights against the ideology of patriarchal society which imposes women even they have fought for the sake of state. Maya has challenged the absurd characteristics of soldiers as well as the state. She has countered the patriarchal norms and conventions practiced in the society. The major thrust of the thesis is to explore how Anam projects the idea of equal rights and justice for both male and female as they have equally participated in the war. The researcher in order to justify the claim mobilizes the theoretical insights of Margot Badran's Islamic Feminism. Islamic Feminism claims that Quran carries the principle of equality of all human beings but the patriarchal society hinders it and imposes its ideas and practice to subvert females. Therefore Anam raises questions to the state that why the state ignores the presence of female in the independence war of Bangladesh instead of honoring them as male. Anam opposes the trend of male centric history writing tradition in the past in this novel. She struggles for the position of women who were participated in the independence war of Bangladesh. Anam fights for both male and female for equal rights, justice and honor who were participated in the independence war of Bangladesh.

Key Words: Independence war of Bangladesh, Islamic Feminism, Ingrained

Patriarchy, Restriction, Justice, Equality,

This research entitled "Countering the Official History: Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*" probes into the problem of how the official history of Bangladesh is countered in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*. *The Good Muslim* is a story about the fragmented society after the independence war in Bangladesh. It deals with the story of Haque family. Rehana a Mother, Maya a daughter, Sohail a son are the major characters in the novel. They were born and grown up in Bangladesh. It portrays the contribution of women in the independence war of Bangladesh. Maya, Rehana and Sohail perform the action as freedom fighter. As Maya grew up in Muslim community has tackled many problems during and after the war. She is bound up with both religious and patriarchal conventions in the society. Maya as a representative character of many women reflects the realities they faced in the society. Maya not only battle between religion and modernity but also rejects and challenges patriarchal convention and religious beliefs.

During the liberation war of Bangladesh both male and female participated in the war and showed their bravery. They played the role as freedom fighter. However the state Bangladesh only honored males and ignored the role of females in the war. Women were tortured physically and mentally in the war. They were sexually exploited by the soldier during the war and bearded unwanted pregnancy. Almost all the victimized women want to get rid of those infant because the state does not want those children whose fathers are unknown. Maya and her mother work in women rehabilitation centre as volunteer. They work as counselor in order to console them because they are worried that how can they come back to their family. Most of the females lose their family members in the war. They also join the war and the society doesn't allow returning in the society because they break the religious beliefs and

social conventions. Maya works as abortionist to abort unwanted pregnancy of those violated women in the war because the state named the war children as bastard children. In Muslim community to abort child is not allowed but Maya performed the task without hesitation because she knows the sufferings of victimized women.

On the other hand, Sohail transformed into fundamentalist Muslim to get relief of sin where he is compelled to murder many innocent people. He doesn't like the task of Maya in Women Rehabilitation Centre when he knows it. The other female figure like Piya and Silvi also performed vital role in the war though they are not valorized by the state. The official history of Bangladesh, the contribution of female role in the war was not mentioned properly. The state only respects and honors male as well as they are financially supported. The followers of Muslim community always suppressed female and they cannot raise their voice. Women are not allowed to show their face and cover with Burka. In the very situation women counter the rules and beliefs and join the independence war of Bangladesh. The state instead of honoring, ignore their role. Many women were the victims of sexual violence. They were raped which led to the birth of thousands of war babies.

The battle was fought between East Pakistan and West Pakistan and after the liberation war East Pakistan is being independent Bangladesh. It was separated from West Pakistan. Pakistan army also kept numerous Bengali women as sex slaves. Many women were killed and those who survived had returned, but the community expelled them. The state did not give any importance to the baby those who are the product of raped women. The state has given the name as bastard children because their fathers are unknown.

During the periods of nineteenth and twentieth century the role of the females were never recorded in the history of 1970s. The writer encapsulates the pain and

sufferings of women through the means of fiction. In the then period their pain and sufferings didn't get any space in mainstream history. There were not any medium to reveal their truth and their role and contribution. Even though they performed heroically, and patriotically their action was shadowed. They challenged the social norms and values practiced in the society in which they are expected to be silent, chaste and obedient. They discarded for the submissive role of women. They split the role of women as passive, docile, silence and obedient to active and revolutionary. But they were not noticed in the society. By the very time women were aware of literature and used it as the medium to express their sorrows and sufferings. So that, some women begin to write their role and contribution through the means of novel, article and autobiography. However their literary works were not much popular and noticed by only few people.

Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer confronts the issue on why the state ignores the role of women even if they are ready to sacrifice their life for the nation. She counters the Bangladeshi male centric history writing tradition with the help of fictional story of Haque family. Maya, as a central character in the novel seeks to find out the equal justice for male and female. She raises the voice for women those who are ignored and the state didn't notice their contribution in the independence war of Bangladesh.

Muslim religion restricts female in most of the sectors in the society. Thus, to be participated in the war for the female is a very risky job in the community. They are ready to handle the risk themselves which is beyond their society and religious conventions. They are eager to show their bravery in the battlefield. They show their power but instead of getting honor they are ashamed of having unwanted pregnancy of soldier. They are not only raped by enemies but also by the country soldier. They

are tortured during the war and after the war. Finally the state doesn't want to give proper name to those unknown children and women are ready to abort the infant which is very challenging against the religious beliefs and conventions of Muslim Community. In Muslim Community having children is a holy work and a child is a gift of Allah. After the independence war of Bangladesh male were honored and financially supported by the state but female are given name as "Birongana", the word which lies very close to the word "Barangona" in Bengali which means prostitute. So in the novel *The Good Muslim*, the women who were participated in the war blamed the title and demand the name war heroine and wanted to accept their presence in the society. Tahmima Anam in her novel *The Good Muslim* questions the official history of Bangladesh in order to give equal justice and honor for male and female.

The major contention of the research is that both male and female participated in the war but only the bravery and contribution of males praised but the role of women was ignored. There is no any care about the contribution of female. The state didn't look back to honor and financially support to the male but it neglects for the support of female in the war. Here in the novel *The Good Muslim*, confronts on why the state ignores the role of female though they are ready to sacrifice their life for the nation. She questions both the state as well as for the Muslim religious beliefs norms and values because the values and beliefs exist in the society has major role to humiliate the presence of war women in the society. In her novel, Maya ignores her religious tradition and norms practiced in the society. She breaks the superstitious convention practicing in Muslim religion. She valorizes the women's participation and contribution in the war as well as trying to give justice for female for their patriotic work.

The Good Muslim is written in the context of independence war of Bangladesh. It portrays the annoying realities of women in liberation war of Bangladesh in 1972. The coverage of story is about two decades after the independence war of Bangladesh. It is trying to reflect the condition of women after the war. They were ashamed of being raped by soldier and there is no proper environment to be back into their families. Their pain and worries are not noticed by the authorities. Being a Muslim and being a female have to face many difficulties. They are oppressed by the both patriarchal and religious beliefs and values and they cannot uplift by their position in the society. She tries to depict the double subjugating state of female in the Muslim community. To be born in a Muslim community and participate in the war is not an easy thing but they are ready to tackle the difficulties. To join the war by women in Bangladesh is to break the norms and values in the society. They do not want any discrimination between male and female. So they do not hesitate to hold up the risk to sacrifice their life.

The trend of writing women's story has begun since 1920s. The civil war, Migration of people and other various reasons are the reasons that the female started their writings. At first female's writing were not noticed and not popular because the society believes that female writes on the trifling issues and they do not have any contribution in the society. Women have their own stories. They had contributed as equal as male in the society. But their sacrifice is not counted as equal as male. So they do not have proper medium to express their experiences, feelings and sufferings. That is why women literary figures started their writings in order to notice female experiences and sufferings in the war. Here in the novel *The Good Muslim*, Anam demonstrates the women condition after the independence war of Bangladesh. Women difficulties and troubles in the war cannot be observed if Anam has not raised the

issues in the novel. Anam tries to reflect the horrible condition of female after the independence war of Bangladesh by bringing the different female character in the novel.

In order to justify the claim of the researcher this research mobilizes the theatrical concept of Margot Badran's Islamic feminism. Islamic Feminism Projects the issue of gender and religiosity. Islamic Feminism also counters the patriarchal and religious convention exists in the society. It rejects the restrictions which is imposes on women. It seeks for equal rights and justice for male and female. According to Margot Badran, Islamic Feminism transcends and destroys old binaries that have been constructed. It is about the feminist discourse and practice exists in Islam. It seeks rights and justice women and men equally. Maya in the novel fights for the equal rights and justice as man. She made the government to punish the war criminals and to accept the warrior women as they were before. Maya breaks the social practice in the society and encourages women not to tolerate male threat which is religiously guided.

Various critiques have examined *The Good Muslim* in the light of religion and the reconciliation of the family. Only the few critiques including Mohammad Salim and Mandira Sen raise the issue of women struggles in the independence war of Bangladesh in *The Good Muslim* by the writer Tahmima Anam. Mandira Sen Mentions,

Maya wants a war tribunal, she cannot accept What Bangabandhu Mujibar Rahaman, Rahaman, the revere revolt against who has return as Prime Minister has offered the nations reverence towards the raped women as Birangonas, heroines, who have paid with their bodies, just as dead male soldiers have for liberation"(30).

In Mandira Sen's point of view, the nation does not evaluate the significance of woman deeds. The name given them as "Birangonas" and "Heroins" does not give justice to the war wounded women and the struggle of women in war has taken simply and lightly by the society and the nation as well. In the novel *The Good Muslim*, through the central character Maya Insists on the equal role of Male and female in the war. She argues that the both the male and female should get justice. There should not be any limitation for rewarding the role of male and female in the independence war of Bangladesh.

Muslim community is such a community that has restricted to raise voice against oppression, miseries and difficulties faced by the female. Even though, Maya the character in the novel speaks against the nation that the nation doesn't value the vital presence of the women in the war. The novel *The Good Muslim* represents the independence war of Bangladesh. In the official history, the role of female was ignored and no one could speak against it but in the novel Maya challenges the patriarchal norms and conventions and speak against the society and nation which disvalue the role of female in the war.

Furthermore, through the spectacles of Mohammad Saleem, the novel able to gives human sufferings and traumatic experiences of innocent people in the independence war of Bangladesh. He states;

The novel gives human face to a nation's tumultuous history. The theme, the legacy of war and how individual lives are affected, opens a window to human psychology and behavior in different and contrasting hues. The war with Pakistan, then west Pakistan, that led to the formation of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation was a traumatic experiences that played havoc with the lives of many in the newly-formed country.(1)

Saleem highlights over the real pain that the countries involved in war felt. War had badly traumatized the people there. Furthermore he states, "Maya is liberal minded 'village Doctor' helps women victims of war... she witness misery all the time, everywhere"(1). Maya testimonies the whole picture of war and the sufferings of women but the credit only goes to male and the participation of female has taken loosely by the nation.

The contribution of male was respected and honored by the state. However, the contribution of female was ignored by the government of Bangladesh. Women have feeling of shame after they returned from the war and male have feeling of proud instead of war. Male hegemony towards female is appearance even in the war, though they perform heroic deeds and endure unbearable pain and sufferings. This is why my argument on the novel *The Good Muslim* is different than Mohhamad Saleem.

Likewise, Elizabeth Fussell mentions "women typically suffer higher mortality rates than men"(29). In the novel, Silvi loose her husband and Piya is pregnant of unknown Pakistani soldier and she have to abort her child because there is no place for the children of unknown father in the society as well as in the nation. All of them, Maya, Piya, and Silvi suffered their own. Maya has responsibility to get rid of unwanted child though it is the crime. In the one hand Maya performed social work and the other hand in the same time she commits crime. It is very difficult to commit crime by knowing. Many women lose their family because they were neglected by the community and also lose their family members in the war. In this way, in one way or another, women suffer a lot and their sufferings do not appropriately addressed by the nation. Fussel states about the sentiments and emotions of women which they felt after the war. However she doesn't talk about gender equality in the independence war of Bangladesh. So as a researcher my concern here is about equality of both gender

male and female participation in the war.

In the same line, Concerning Anam's interview Amy Finnerty comments "With her 2011 follow-up novel, *The Good Muslim*, Anam continued to lead readers through that tumult, ... Remarkably from one after these consequential events she is able to her fiction, to bring them to life and even make them feel contemporary"(2). Tahmima Anam depicts the real picture of the contemporary time. The merciful pain and event of people caused by the colonial war is perfectly presents in her novel *The Good Muslim*.

Tahmima Anam follows the line of Arabic women literature which dealt on the issue of female writing. Before 1970s there was no trend of writing literature by female. There were no any medium to explore women experiences to the society. Gradually women considering as second sex by the society started to write on the issue of war in which they were participated physically and mentally. They reveal their contribution in the war through the means of literature and it is the best medium to evoke their sufferings in the society. Tahmima Anam raises the issue of independence war of Bangladesh and revolt against the response given to the male and female by the state and fought for the equality and justice for both male and female. Thus this research work explores the women struggle against an ingrained patriarchy, colonial oppression and trauma of war in *The Good Muslim*. Anam focuses on Bangladeshi war women reality that they are under hegemony not only from local and social context rather they also suffer from nation.

The novel, *The Good Muslim* has been analyzed and reviewed from different perspectives since the day of its publication. The novelist has presented the suffering of a family which is badly affected by war. Valerie Miner in "Book Review: *The Good Muslim* by TahmimaAnam " published in Los Angeles Times writes about the

novel in this line:

The Good Muslim brims with gripping narrative, absorbing history and Shakespearean moral conundrums [...] Anam asks how the wounds of war shape us, all of us. She troubles the arbitrary distinctions of warrior, victim and bystander; she protests a discourse in which the pain of women raped by enemy soldiers is expunged by the mantle of war heroine. (2)

Anam shows gratitude towards those female in the war who were physically participated and showed their bravery in any ways. They not only fought in the war but also they fulfill the soldier's sexual desire in the war. As a result she bears an infant in her belly and the state restricted to give birth for those war babies. Here Valerie instead of valorizing the participation in the war he only probes onto the history of independence war of Bangladesh and the condition of the sufferer in the war. My focus here is that there is a huge contribution of people to make stand Bangladesh as independent state. Both, male and female sacrifice to achieve the state as the sovereign state. But only the male is honored and financially supported and the role of female is ignored. There is no any doubt about the courageous work of female but the state disregard the position of female in the war.

Moreover, *The Good Muslim* challenges the trend of writing through the perspectives of male with the help of fictional story of Haque family. The author as a female writer valorizes the women's participation in the war as well as she seeks to find out the equal justice for both male and female. In the novel the author sets the story after the independence war of Bangladesh. Both the male and female participated in the war although only the male was honored and financially supported by the state. Here the researcher investigates into why the author Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer confronts on why the state ignores the role of women whether

they are ready to sacrifice their life for the war. The researcher also investigates on why Tahmima Anam writes about the independence war of Bangladesh. Again the researcher seeks to find out the original history of Bangladesh.

This research paper analyses Tahmima Anam's literary work *The Good Muslim* through the theoretical insights from Margot Badran's *Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious convergence*. Islamic Feminism projects on the issue of Muslim women. It rejects and challenges the notion and hegemony of patriarchal conventions. Islamic Feminism has different concepts than other Feminism. Other Feminist always seeks for their identity in the society. They claim that they have their own identity and they don't want any hegemony of patriarchal conventions. Ziba Mir Hosseini in her article "Muslim women quest for equality: Between Islamic law and Feminism" includes, "As with other feminists their positions are local diverse multiple and evolving. They all seek gender justice and equality for women though they don't always agree on what constitutes justice or equality or the best ways of attaining them" (13). In the context of other community women are hegemonies by patriarchal conventions in the society and they want to fight against it for their identity in the society but in the context of Muslim community is exploited by both patriarchal conventions and religious conventions of Muslim.

Islamic Feminism attempts to dismantle the hierarchy which is practicing within the gender of Muslim community. It also rejects the restriction imposes on women by the Muslim community. Margot Badran's idea is applicable to this text *The Good Muslim* in a sense that Islamic Feminism always seeks for equal justice and rights for both male and female. Badran in her text *Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious Convergences* mentions,

However, even though I believe deeply in Islamic Feminisms advocacy of

sexual equality and I recognize the very real political necessity of certain feminisms, I am troubled by the extent to which feminism as a discourse has foreclosed the possibility of theorizing sexual equality from within alternative paradigms. 20

Islamic feminism focuses on equality of both male and female. Tahmima Anam a female writer represents the historical time in the text *The Good Muslim*. Before the period of 1960s there were hard to find female writer in the society because they are ignorant about life literature which reflects the contemporary society. By the time some female writer exists in the time but they were shadowed because there was no trend of female writing in the society. Mariam Cooke in her essay "Arab Women's literary History" states that;

The First serious attempt to categorize and take stock of the productivity of Arab women writers came in 1986, when Joshep Zeidan published a bibliography of 486 women who wrote in Arabic between the 1880s. Almost half of these women had published two or more books where as during the first half of this century there were few women writing anywhere outside the literary centers of Cairo and Beirut but the 1970s in every single Arab country women began to write. (711)

Until the women's writing emerged in certain society people cannot think about women's suffering, their experiences and their contribution in the society and the country. So they started to make published, to make known their sufferings and contributions.

As we know that, Muslim community always restricts women to perform tasks according to their intention. Patriarchal conventions in the society could not give an opportunity to boost their talent and their capacity and also there is an obligation to

arouse their voice in the society. As women are marginalized in the society and if they are always restrict by the society they would be always back in the society and there is no any chance for their up liftmen of their status in the community. However, Tahmima Anam as a Muslim female writer raises her voice against the exploitation of women by the state. As male, female also contribute physically and mentally in the independence war of Bangladesh, but the state rather giving honor and respect, given the name as war Birongana means prostitute in Bengali. So, Tahmima Anam by the fictional character in the novel attempts to give justice for both male and female equally.

Islamic Feminism always seeks for equal justice and rights for both genders. The state tries to ignore the heroic deeds of women even though they were suffered a lot. Only the male were considered as 'Freedom Fighter' and respected by the state. Until the contribution is not highlighted by the state, women would have endured a lot. Many women got pregnant of unknown Pakistani soldier and soldier of the own country and they were restrict to give the birth to those infant by the state. The war babies, children of raped were not allowed to borne out in the state. Maya the central character in the novel states;

I started working at the women's Rehabilitation centre. Ammoo too, we went to the office together, to volunteer and they gave her a job of talking to the war widows, sorting out their pensions their property, negotiating with their husbands families. She took a deep breath, steadying herself for the next part. And Bhaiya, because I had medical experiences, you know from the camps, they assigned me to the wards. I performed abortions. You remember what Sheikh Mujib Said? That he didn't want those bastard children in our country.

(242)

Maya performed abortions in the novel to get rid of those growing seeds from unknown soldiers. The state ignores the role of female in the war as well as the growing infants of war fighter. Maya a Muslim girl counter the patriarchal and religious conventions practiced in the society. Ziba Mir-Hosseni explains;

Women often tried to change traditional laws by involving and relying on Islamic sacred texts. Their attempt to translate into policy the patriarchal gender notions inherent in traditional Islamic law provoked many women to increasing criticism of these notions and spurred them to greater activism. (12)

During the time when women are confined in the four walls, they cannot share their feelings and sufferings to the society. There was no any source to express their troubles and many more experiences because there is no any tendency to writing literature. Tahmima Anam represents the struggle and experiences of women in the independence war of Bangladesh through the literary text *The Good Muslim*.

Anam attempts to raise against the history of Bangladesh in which male were honored and financially supported and the sacrifice of women was neglected . According to the official history of Bangladesh, both the male and female fought as a freedom fighter to make the state independent. After the battle between Pakistan and Bangladesh the state is secured as independent state. However the state doesn't glorify the role of women. Harrington in her thesis "Women and Resistance in west Bengal and Bangladesh: 1967-1970 "mentions, "Yet rather than being an equivalent to the mode title, this charged term appeared after the war in a Bangladeshi state-sponsored effort to evaluate the tens of thousands of females who were sexually victimized in the war for this secession of Bangladesh"(2). The state has only given the name that is Birongona and it doesn't support women financially and also not honored. So there is a question raised by Tahmima Anam that why the state only glorify male for the

contribution in independence war of Bangladesh. There is equal participation of female in the war even though their contribution is shadowed by the state. There is not a great problem for them that the state ignored their role but they are suffering from unwanted pregnancy and the state also ignored war babies. To abort the child in Muslim community is not a trifle matter.

The religious conventions of Muslim community not allow them to abort child. They accept every child as a gift of Allaha. They are in dilemma that if they don't want abortion they are not accepted by their family. After abortions also there are minimum chances to return back in the family. Anam in her novel *The Good Muslim* mentions, "Another woman spoke up. We don't want to be heroines. We are ashamed. We want to leave our shame behind, start again"(70). Instead of name as 'war Heroines' they want to regain their status in the society as before they had. To live a life as raped is not much easier to handle in the society. Religion also doesn't accept them because they have to abort the child and there is no other option. The state also threatens them that there is no reason to give the birth of babies whose father was unknown. Maya the central character of the novel has performed abortions which are beyond the religious conventions. Even though she attempts to perform abortion to get rid of those war children and want to erase the shame stocked in their life. However her brother was traditional Muslim fundamentalist and denied her sisters work in Rehabilitation centre. Maya in the novel replied to her brother,

I thought about bringing her home but I remember what she said that it had to be that day or she would lose her nerve. I knew what to do; I did it all the time, persuading the girls they were doing right thing, for their families, for the country. If you have the operation you can go home, I said to her. Your family will take you back. You are a Birangona , I told her, a war hero. (249)

Maya wants to console those suffered women and make them ready for the abortions in order to return them with their family and society. She proved herself as a courageous female. Maya dares to abort those war raped women by ignoring the very strict Muslim religious belief. Ziba Mir-Hosseni defines "secular fundamentalist who can be just as dogmatic and ideological as religious fundamentalist- deny that any religious fundamentalist law or social practice can be just or equal"(13). Maya as a Muslim girl revolt against religious conventions and want to give justice to the women as they has contributed a lot as male in the independence war of Bangladesh. She has a great role to console women who were sexually and physically tortured in the war. But the women are not ready to accept term given by the state. Aditi a character in a novel states; "yes the Birongonas. But calling them heroines erase what really happened to them. They didn't charge into the battlefield and ask to be given medals. They were just the damage the war trophies. They deserve for us to remember"(223). The name given by they cannot give justice and it is not equivalent as respect and honored. They think that the name Birongana is not sufficient for them and they wants that state must respect them and able to give space in the society again as before.

If a single person dares to change a society having the great commitment with in him or her that would be the effective milestone for the progress of society. The present achievements in the 21st century in any sectors are being possible from the initiation of single person. Yusuf Malala breaks the traditional concept in terms of providing education in Muslim community. A sixteen years old lady is being able to accomplish her purpose of providing education to all Muslim children. This is possible due to her courage and her strong commitments. Malala in her novel I am Malala mentions;

Malala was the daughter of a shepherd in Maiwand, a small town on the dusty plains west of Kandahar. When she was teenager, both her father and the man she was supposed to marry were among thousands of Afghans fighting against the British occupation of their country. Malalai went to the battlefield with other women from the village to tend the wounded and take them water. She saw their men were losing and when the flag bearer fell she lifted her white veil up high and marched onto battlefield in front of troops.' Young love!' she shouted.' If you do not fall in the battle of Maiwand then, by God, someone is saving you as a symbol of shame. (13)

Malalai being a muslim girl encouraged fighters in Anglo-Afghan war. A small girl participated herself in the war and killed under fire. She seems very courageous women that she involved in the war with other women in villages. She shows her bravery towards the nation.

Tahmima Anam revolts against the trends of history writing tradition. Instead of glorifying the role of male in war, Anam is glorifying the contribution of female in the independence war of Bangladesh in this novel *The Good Muslim*. There is the trend of backgrounding the role of female and foregrounding the role of male even there is the great role of female in history. In post modern feminism the trends of valorizing only the role of male is strongly opposed. In this novel too, Anam opposed the old trend of creating history. By foregrounding the role of Maya in war Anam stands in favor of Muslim feminism. Mariam Cooke argues;

These women are writing with the increased awareness that the information age has enabled a transnational literary project. To become an international writer means to become part of a community other than the one into which one was born, to write for it as much, if not more, than for one's birth community.

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Some may find the international readership more neutral and less inhibiting, allowing them to write in a way not otherwise possible. Others may welcome the new readers who allow them to frame their issues more broadly. (28)

During 1980s many women were suffered, exploited and sexually violated from their enemies in the war. No one was ready to listen their voice and they are ready to write weather they can attract the reader or not. It doesn't matter them that their stories conveys any awareness. They just write their experiences and want to convey their sufferings in their community. However Tahmima Anam here by writing this novel want to revolt against the official history of Bangladesh where male were valorized as they are participated in the war but there is no care for the contribution of male in the independence war of Bangladesh.

Tahmima Anam deftly captures the humiliating behavior of the state which depicts the unconditional brutality for the contribution of female in the independence war of Bangladesh. Going through the official history of Bangladesh there is no good treatment towards female.

There is everywhere objections for the term offered to the female. There is no way for satisfaction because the word doesn't give justice to the struggle which make state able to be stood as sovereign country. They want equality in the title given to the both male and female by the state. Sakaranaho Tula in her journal "Women's movement and ideologies in Turkey " argues;

We do not talk about women's rights but prefer to speak about human rights. If you give rights to human beings then also women and men will gain their rights. What is human being? This is most important questions. First we must know what being a human means and then we can give rights to everybody,

whether they are men or women. (14)

Women those who are treated differently than the male make claims that they are equal to male and they demand the similar treatment to both male and female. Islamic feminisms don't talk about identity like others feminism but always seeks for equal rights and equality for both genders.

In contrast to Islamic Feminism western feminism, first wave feminism, second wave feminism and third wave feminism challenge patriarchy and attempt to dismantle the hierarchy of gender exists in the society. They ignore equal rights and equal justice. Badran states "Discourse of gender equality that derives its mandate from the Quran and seeks rights and justice for all human beings across the totality of the public- private continuum"(243). In this manner Islamic Feminism attempts to interpret through anti-patriarchal insight. It is all about equal rights and justice and there should not be any discrimination between male and female. So, Tahmima Anam in her novel representing fictional character wants to valorize the significance of women in the war and trying to give justice and rights for the both male and female participated in the war.

The Good Muslim represents the brutality of soldier towards female in the independence of war of Bangladesh. They raped women in the war and impregnate them. Women couldn't recognize their father. Maya is a revolutionary character in a novel. She attempts to perform abortions in Women's Rehabilitation Centre in order to make free of young seeds growing insides many women's womb. It is their compulsion to get rid of those babies because their fathers were unknown and also state ignores the birth of unknown babies."They are told they are carrying the seeds of their soldier"(142). Being a Muslim girl she performed abortions which are against the religion. Women are hurried to performed abortions because they are ashamed of

their unwanted pregnancy. Maya mentions in the novel; "She was early, you could hardly see. It must have happened towards the end of the war. She wanted abortions. Right now, she said. Do it right now. I was busy, I had ten other patients that morning but I told her to wait, I said I would do it. Today, she said it has to be today or I won't be able to" (243). Many women those who were involved in war have the problems of their unwanted pregnancy. So to perform abortions by avoiding religious conventions it seems that she is revolutionary. Badran mentions "Revolutionaries are exempt from all social conventions"(67). There are no any boundaries to speak against wrong action. She is in dilemma that to perform abortions in Muslim religion is not convincing but if she does not performed abortions many women get trouble to exist in society. They are ashamed of themselves that they are pregnant of Unknown Soldier. Finally, Maya has taken a risk to abort war babies those who are growing up in many wombs. She mentions,

Defiled by the enemy. The child in your womb is a bastard child, a vial of poison. You must not allow it to come into that world. You must not give it the milk of your breast. What has been done can be undone. You must not live with it for the rest of your life. You mustn't mother this child. Do not think of it as your child, it is the seed of your enemy, I told her. Finally, she agreed.

(244)

As government threatens them not to give birth of those innocent victims of war, they are convinced not to mother their babies. If they do so they cannot return with their families. Maya convinced them that growing child in their wombs is the blood of their enemies. And it is better not to give birth for those young ones. As they have contributed a lot for the war, as a result they have to face traumatic situation. They are ignored by their family and society but Maya encouraged them as they are great

person and they are war hero.

Maya as a social activist rejects and challenges religious beliefs and conventions of Muslim religion. Ziba states "and their attempt to translate into policy the patriarchal gender notions inherent in traditional Islamic Law provoked many women to increasing criticism of these notions and spurred them to greater activism"(4). Maya a Muslim girl acts as social activist and goes beyond social and religious conventions. She attempts to break traditional norms and values of community. She criticizes many unethical and superstitious beliefs practiced in society.

A beat. There were rules about pregnant women, about where they could bathe, but Maya brushed them aside; no one believed those things any more. She had been lecturing them for years now, about science and superstition and their rights. "Why not? She said to Nazia. She would remember it later, the movement of pause before she said yes, but on that day all she could think about was the water, its green coolness easing the lash of that summer. (18)

There are certain rules and values in the Muslim community. Pregnant women are not allowed to be in the pond. They are strictly prohibited to take bathe in a pond. But Maya tries to breaks the rules and regulations. She wants to live without any restrictions in the society and she also tries to aware other women who are in those burden restrictions. Nazia, a character in the novel breaks the rules and being the victim of punishment. "The punishment was one hundred and one lashes. Masud came back from the meeting and spat the words at his wife. 'One hundred and one', he said. That's what you deserve" (23). Here Nazia's husband gives her punishment for her deed that she has gone swimming in the pond. He blames that the child just born is not his." For lying about the child. He is not mine" (23). For a small matter he

blames that the child is from another person. Maya just want to aware of those superstitious beliefs and values which affect negatively in the society. Anita Kynsilehto states; "However, Islam has granted men and women are not men's enemies but rather their friends and helpmates. Thus, Islamic women's movement emphasizes peace and harmony in gender relations"(30). Maya as a Muslim girl tries to expunge injustice and exploitation prevail in the society. She demands parity within the religion.

Traditional gender roles represent woman an inferior creatures, they are forced to accept the laws and costumes that always make them feel low in various ways. Tyson in his book *Critical Theory today* mentions "traditional gender roles cast, man rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast woman as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive" (85). During the independence war of Bangladesh they sacrifice their life. The government of Bangladesh tried to give them name as "War Heroine" and Birangonas. "After the liberation war of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the country tried to honor these dishonored girls and women by naming them the war heroines and had ordered to prepare of list of these persons"(3). But the title given to them is not equivalent and they demand as equal respect and equality as male in the society. Many women have contributed for the state and the war but the remarks are only given to the male.

Badran mentions;

We came together to examine women and identity politics, we wanted to compare ways identity politics shaped and controlled women and were compared how women themselves were often complicit in oupperting identity politics and its patriarchal agenda. It was in this context that some of us reported that Muslim women were subverting the patriarchal Islamist project

through what appeared to be a new form of feminism in the making which Muslim women in different parts of the world soon call Islamic feminism. (30)

Islamic Feminism deals with issue of equality and parity of human beings. They consider both male and female are equal and they pull down the discrimination between gender relations. In the novel *The Good Muslim*, Maya raise her voice against the patriarchal notions and conventions exist in the society. In the independence war of Bangladesh, Many women were seduced. Many women get pregnant. They have their own experiences about the war. Maya and many other female characters are in support of raped women who are shadowed by the state. Jahanara Imam in the novel states;

Right now across the country, thousands of women live with the memory of their shame. The men who shamed them roam free in the villages. No one reminds them of the sin they have committed. For those women, this trail. For them, justice must be done. If the courts of this nation will not bear witness to their grief, we will bear witness. We will bring them justice. It is our duty, our most solemn duty as citizens, as survivors. (213)

The state disoblige the contribution of the female in the independence war of Bangladesh. So, many females ask for the justice for them as equal as man. As Islamic female deals with the equal justice and rights for both male and female, the female warrior in the independence war of Bangladesh seeks for equal rights and justice. Badran mentions,

However, even though I believe deeply in Islamic Feminisms advocacy of sexual equality and I recognize the very real political necessity of certain feminisms, I am troubled by the extent to which feminism as a discourse has foreclosed the possibility of theorizing sexual equality from within alternative

paradigms. (20)

As female freedom fighter political contribution of female is being shadowed and only the male contribution is highlighted. So, there is revolt against the injustice and inequality for gender discrimination. Islamic feminism has a discourse about gender equality. Badran evokes, "Discourse of gender equality that derives its mandate from the Quran and seeks rights and justice for all human beings across the totality of the public-private continuum"(68). There are religious conventions within the Muslim religion. It also oppressed and exploits the sentiments of women. So Islamic Feminism deals with the attempts of anti-patriarchal readings. Maya a central character in the novel revolt against the exploitation given by the state. Rather giving regards towards the female, government disregard their contribution. Many female characters in the novel arouse their voice against the government decision.

If the state wouldn't give them justice they would find it for themselves. They would hold a people's tribunal in which the killers and collaborators would be tried and sentenced. It took a moment for people to realize what she meant [...].Not just for the boys who died in the battle-field, but for the women who were raped. (213)

It is impossible to get out from her home in Muslim community. They are confined in four walls even though during the independence war of Bangladesh they reject the religion and patriarchal restriction and boundaries and involved in the war to make the state independent. They had contributed a lot for their state but their contribution is not valued properly by the state.

Tahmima Anam American Bangladeshi writer through the text *The Good Muslim* represents the story of women those who are involved in the war. She explains all the miseries and trouble which the female go through with. She has also

contributed for the trend of female writing history tradition. In past there is only the male history writing tradition in the field of literature. And the official history of independence war in Bangladesh has also written with the male point of view. As the history was written in the male centric point of view, Anam counter the history and uplift the female literature and female contribution in the independence war of Bangladesh. Mariam Cooke in her book *Women claim Islam Creating Islamic Feminism through literature* mentions;

how women are reimagining foundational narratives from historiography to the war story to the narratives of migration to the most recent engagement in Islamic discourse...When the revolutionary clerics came to power, the veil became a compulsory uniform representing women's piety, but also, importantly the countries religiosity. (10)

The trend of writing story by the women about their experiences and their suffering in which the women is narrator can express their emotions and miseries. Here, in the novel *The Good Muslim* Tahmima Anam narrates the story through the perspectives of Maya and tries to depict the contribution and sacrifice of women in the independence war of Bangladesh. She presents the troubles and their miserable condition of women those who are participated in the war.

In a nutshell, after the study of Anam's *The Good Muslim* through the perspectives of Islamic Feminism, this research finds out that Tahmima Anam seeks justice and equality to the both male and female through the fictional character Maya. In the novel *The Good Muslim* Tahmima Anam counters the official history of Bangladesh which demoralizes the contribution of women in the independence war of Bangladesh. Women who were participated in the war were sexually victimized and tortured. The state instead of giving equal rights and justice only focused on the

contribution of male in the war. So Anam fought for equal rights and justice for female in the war through this novel. The major character in the novel search out the real identity and reality of female who were participated in the war. Besides she projects that both the male and female are the reason to make the state independent. So the rights and justice must be given to both male and female. She tries to show how official mainstream history is biased. She valorizes the female presence in the independence war of Bangladesh. Finally, Anam critiques the gap in mainstream history of Bangladesh.

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