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<b>3.30PM 4.00PM</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	

**THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN EDUCATION IN SWAT PAKISTAN:  
AN ANALYSIS OF "I AM MALALA": A NOVEL BY MALALA  
YOUSAFZAI**

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**Abstract**

The importance of education for a woman is not only to gain equality and avoid harassment, but rather to establish the political power, although she must fight the authority and Taliban's challenges. So, it is with education, because education is the obligation and the right of human beings, even though there was the strongest challenge from Taliban. Through this essay the writer will describe Malala's struggles for women's right concerning education in the Swat Province of Pakistan. The writer also aims to find out her ways in struggling by using the concept of feminist criticism, especially Gynocriticism pioneered by Elaine Showalter. The first is the examination of female writers and their place in literary history. The second is the consideration of the treatment of the female characters in books by both male and female writers. The third and most important aspect of gynocriticism is the discovery and exploration of a canonical literature written by women. However, in this essay the writer will base his analysis only on the second aspect; 'feminist' phase, namely criticizing the role of women in society and the oppression of women. So, all the treatments and oppression against women can be identified closely and clearly.

**Keywords:** Struggle; education and women

**The Struggle for Women Education in Swat Pakistan:  
An Analysis of “I am Malala” a Novel by Malala Yousafzai**

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**Abstract**

The importance of education for a woman is not only to gain equality and avoid harassment, but rather to establish the political power, although she must fight the authority and Taliban's challenges. So, it is with education, because education is the obligation and the right of human beings, even though there was the strongest challenge from Taliban. Through this essay the writer will describe Malala's struggles for women's right concerning education in the Swat Province of Pakistan. The writer also aims to find out her ways in struggling by using the concept of feminist criticism, especially *Gynocriticism* pioneered by Elaine Showalter. The first is the examination of female writers and their place in literary history. The second is the consideration of the treatment of the female characters in books by both male and female writers. The third and most important aspect of gynocriticism is the discovery and exploration of a canonical literature written by women. However, in this essay the writer will base his analysis only on the second aspect: 'feminist' phase, namely criticizing the role of women in society and the oppression of women. So, all the treatments and oppression against women can be identified closely and clearly.

*Keywords: Struggle, Education and Women*

**A. Introduction**

Women education refers to every form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and skill of women and girls. It includes general education at schools and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional education, health education, etc. Women education encompasses both literary and non-literary education. Educated women are capable of bringing socio-economic changes. The constitution of almost all democratic countries, including Pakistan, guarantees equal rights to both men and women.

Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women, as both the Cairo and Beijing conferences affirmed. It is also an area that offers some of the clearest examples of discrimination women suffer. Among children not attending school there are twice as many girls as boys, and among illiterate adults there are twice as many women as men. Offering girls basic education is one sure way of giving them much greater power -- of enabling them to make genuine choices over the kinds of lives they wish to lead. This is not a luxury. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establish it as a basic human right.

According to Khalid (2006), “the quality of human resource play a critical role in the rise of and fall of nations, and human resource can be channeled and developed in the right direction with the help of proper education. A nation’s overall position and its standing in the comity of nations are, to a large extent, determined by the standard of its educational system. Since education is a mean for the development of personality and character, it is not merely about gaining knowledge and mastering science and technology and control of information; it is also concern with the nation’s belief system, culture and civilization, and values. Education simultaneously represents, a nation’s past, present, and future” (p.305).

In addition, Ahmad (1969) described that Pakistan’s Constituent Assembly passed the Objectives resolution in March 1949 that declared Islamic ideology as the bedrock of the country’s constitution (p.13). He also (1969) said that among the objectives was that the educational system shall be instrumental in shaping a value-based society, protecting and promoting its Islamic heritage, and transferring the ethical values to new generation (p.14).

Malik and Courtney (2012) also explained that “the current political environment undoubtedly promotes women’s educational opportunities but cultural attitudes towards the education of girls remain strongly biased and largely unchanged. Although successive governments have announced various programs to promote female education, they have been unable to translate their words into action because of deep-rooted political, social and cultural obstacles. Thus, the educational status of women in Pakistan remains low and is in fact amongst the lowest in the world” (p.4).

This research conducted by implemented Gynocriticism concept pioneered by Elaine Showalter using the second consideration the ‘Feminist’ phase, namely the central theme of works by female writers was the criticism of the role of women in society and the oppression of women. So that why we analyzed the work of Malala as her criticism in this very short essays

### **B. Malala’s Struggle for Women Education and her Critics**

Table of illiteracy in Pakistan is very grim. Although successive governments have announced various programs for the promotion of literacy, especially for women, they have been unable to translate their words into action because of various obstacles of political, social and cultural rights, as stated by Malala below:

*“Today we all know education is our basic right. Not just in the West; Islam too has given us the right. Islam says every girl and every boy should go to school. In the Quran it is written, God wants us to have knowledge. He wants us to know why the sky is blue and about oceans and stars. I know it’s a big struggle—around the world there are fifty-seven million children who are not in primary school, thirty two million of them girls. Sadly, my own country Pakistan, is one of the worst places; 5.1 million children don’t even go to primary school even though in our constitution it says every child has that right (p.312).*

Actually, the roles, functions and responsibilities of men and women in the social context is essentially not an issue, but when we examined more deeply can be the cause of gender discrimination, which is one of the basic rights of sex neglected, underdeveloped and suffered injustice. In terms of participation in education, women

around the world face the same problem. According to Baharun (1998) Islam says that women are creatures to be respected. It never existed in Western culture or anywhere outside the teachings of Islam. Women as mothers must be upheld at the top of the head. If she is to be the wife entitled to receive all such needs and livelihood, and sustenance both physically and spiritually. In the law stated that a man and woman equal as the currency side (p.147). Malala also tells the condition of the girl in the remote area in her home town as follows:

*“Their village of Barkana was very primitive and they lived crammed together in one-story ramshackle house with a mud roof which leaked whenever it rained and snowed. As in most families, the girls stayed at home while the boys went to school. They were just waiting to be married”* (p.29).

This is one of negative attitudes toward women and Riffat Hasan (1990) has observed that ‘the negative attitudes pertaining to women which prevail in Muslim societies, are in general rooted in theology. She discusses three theological assumptions: first that man is the origin of creation, second that women are by definition temptresses, and the third women were created as a means for men (p.96). Then, she also tells that her father wants her to be a great hero in education as she says in the following:

*“My father wanted us to be inspired by our great hero, but in a manner fit for our times — with pens not swords. Just as Khattak had wanted the Pashtuns to unite against the foreign enemy, so we needed to unite against ignorance”* (p.49).

In addition to struggle (Jihad) in the sense of war required the strength and capabilities against the enemy, the argument proves that jihad is not only meant a war against the enemy with a weapon on the battlefield. Firmly Allah mentions in the Qur'an 'Jihad in the Qur'an', even ordered it. Allah says, "Do not follow the unbelievers, and strive against them with the Qur'an with great jihad" (Al-Furqan, 52). Akbar (1994) explained that owing to the developments in and around Islam, words such as fatwa (a sermon), jihad (struggle, including arm effort), ayatollah (highly learned scholar and cleric) are now common in the West. The tabloids have consequence of the Western media using or misusing words and adapting or adopting them to local usage. It also reflects the interplay and the interchange of ideas between Islam and the West (p.2). However, by looking at the role and attitudes of Taliban above, they make mistakes in implementing the word jihad, especially against women as cited below:

*“When a group of Taliban came, and confessed himself as a representative of Mullah Clerics. They claimed themselves as good Muslims by saying that “I am representing good Muslims and we all think your girl’s school is haram and blasphemy. You should close it. Girls should not be going to school,” he continued. A girl is so sacred she should be in purdah, and so private that there is no lady’s name in the Quran, as God doesn’t want her to be named”* (p.94).

Taliban is a moderate Muslim, Akeel Bilgrami (1995) said the conflict is one that arises because of moderate Muslim’ fundamental commitment to a doctrine that contains features that are often effectively invoked by the absolutists whom moderate Muslims fundamentally oppose (p.219), in this case women education. Educational institutions in Pakistan, rooted as they are in traditional culture, contribute to women’s subordination rather than helping to empower them. There is considerable evidence that educational institutions in Pakistan shape boys and girls differently (Qureshi,

Pirzado& Nasim 2007). Besides, most of Malala statements against the Taliban is the very politically as in the following:

*“I told the documentary makers, “they cannot stop me. I will get my education if it’s at home, school or somewhere else. This is our request to the world — to save our schools, save our Pakistan, save our Swat” (p.161).*

It is fully politics, when the coming of female Muslim leaders such as Benazir Bhutto, and with the increased demand for extended female political participation in the Muslim world in general and in the Arab world in particular, the matter of female involvement in politics on various levels have become a much debated issue. The hadith of the Prophet which says that the people who have a female leader will the succeed has been the foundation on which Islamic scholar have built their prohibition of female leadership (Roald, p.185).

After recovering from gunshot wounds, Malala began to realize and start talking back to continue her struggle criticise the women role in Pakistan as stated below:

*“...we talked about how things happen for different reasons, this happened to me, and how education for female not just males is one of our Islamic rights. I was speaking up for my right as a Muslim woman to be able to go to school” (p.283).*

The above statement is her criticism against women role especially in education because it corresponds to the verse of al-Furqan 52 in the holy al-Quran, Monazza (Nd) concluded that “a boy is associated with a larger probability of positive spending...more expenditure may need to be incurred for transport and school clothing for girls for safety and modesty concern. In this case, there will be pro-female expenditure allocation in the second mechanism (p.4) However; Shaikh (2004) reported that “cultural practices and beliefs have been prevalent regardless of age, socio-economic status of the family and level of education. ...Throughout the life cycle, gender discrimination in child rearing, nutrition, health care seeking, education and general care make a woman highly vulnerable and disadvantaged (p.49).

### **C. Conclusion**

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that girls’ education in Pakistan will empower them to come forward and contribute towards the development and prosperity of the country. Since they remain backward, and economically dependent on men, the helpless condition of them cannot be changed. The life or condition of women would improve a lot, if we take a broad outlook in the field of female education. Then, by education, women in Pakistan are now looked upon with dignity and honor. They will become a source of inspiration for millions of young girls who make them their role-models, such as Malala. She is an educated woman who can prove to be highly successful in the fields of life. This will help improve the overall condition of other women in the society. She can hope for better days while all women of her country will be enlightened and educated.

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