

Malala Yousafzai :- Warrior With Words

Anuja Bipinbhai Patel

M.A (ENGLISH)

Abstract:-

There are lots of people in this world, some people in this class today, that believe education is a waste of time. They hate school and prefer to stay at home all day. Well the old saying is: “you don’t know what you had till its gone.” Thousands of young girls in countries like Pakistan have to suffer the loss of such a big, important part of their lives. Education is more than just learning things, it’s the beginning of choice. By following the path of education, you find yourself in front of many doors, all of them holding a choice. If it’s to be a doctor, or a police officer, or a prime minister. Because choice is the essence of freedom in us all and without it there is no uniqueness among us as a society. Malala brought education to those who didn’t have it, and made herself an example of a free, safe society!

Introduction:-

“A warrior does not give up what he loves, he finds the love in what he does.”

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. She writes in her autobiography *I Am Malala*, “I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday.”

Instead, Malala’s miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in Northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. She says,

“My goal is not to get Nobel Peace Prize....

My goal is to get peace and my goal is to see education of every child.”

I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls’ education, of a father who himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school and of a brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. Malala’s first dairy entered on 3 January, 2009 under the heading *I Am Afraid*. And BBC made a recording of that dairy using another girl’s voice and she began to see the impact of that dairy, she describe about it,

“The pen and the words that come from it can be much more powerful than machine guns, tanks or helicopters. We were learning how to struggle. And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak.” (Malala 131)

➤ Who is Malala.....? :-

Malala is a girl who isn't afraid.

“I will power myself with knowledge.”

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani education advocate who, at the age of 16 she became the youngest person to win the Noble Peace Prize after surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban. Born on July 12, 1997, Malala became an advocate for girls' education when she herself was still a child, which resulted in the Taliban issuing a death threat against her. On October 9, 2012, a gunman shot Malala when she was travelling home from school. She survived and has continued to speak out on the importance of education. In 2013, she gave a speech to the United Nations and published her first book , *I Am Malala*. In 2014, she won the Noble Peace Prize.

Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997 in a small town of Mingora, the largest city in the Swat Valley in what is now the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. Malala is the daughter of Ziauddin and Tor Pekai Yousafzai and has two younger brothers Khusal and smallest one is Atal. Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai wrote an anonymous diary about life under Taliban rule in north-west Pakistan. She was shot in the head by militants for daring to go to school. She is a *Pisho* for her mother and *Jani mun* for her father, *Pisho* and *Jani mun* is the nick-name of her is given by her mother and father. *Pisho* means cat and *Jani mun* means 'soul mate' in Persian and her father always called her that at the start of the day. She writes when she was born, people in their village commiserated with her mother and nobody congratulated her father.

Malala writes in her autobiography *I Am Malala*,

“I arrived at dawn as the last star blinked out. I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind the curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children. For most Pashtun's it's a gloomy day when a daughter is born.”

(Yousafzai 9)

But her father , Ziauddin , is different from most Pashtun men. He told people, “I know there is something different about this child.” He asked friends to throw dried fruits, sweets and coins into Malala's cradle, something they usually do for boys. Malala was named after Malalai of Maiwand, the greatest heroine of Afghanistan. Many girls schools in Afghanistan are named after her. But her grandfather, who was a religious

scholar and village cleric, didn't like her father giving name her that name. Her grandfather said, 'it's a sad name, it means grief- stricken.' When she was a baby her father used to sing her a song written by the famous poet Rahmat Shah of Peshawar. The last verse ends,

“O Malalai of Maiwand,

Rise once more to make Pashtuns understand the song of honour,

Your poetic words turn worlds around,

I beg you, rise again.”

(Yousafzai 11)

The relationship between a father and daughter is an important one, and Malala's father wanted to give his daughter a sense of security, strength and love. “Don't ask me what I did. Ask me what I did not do. I did not clip her wings, and that's all.” This is Ziauddin Yousafzai's answer when people ask why his daughter Malala is so courageous, passionate and poised. From the very beginning, her father wanted to give his daughter a sense of security, strength and love. “When Malala was born and for the first time... I went and looked into her eyes,” he says, “I felt extremely honoured.” In Pakistan, the birth of a girl isn't something to rejoice in. According to Ziauddin in his TED conference talk in 2014, **“When a girl is born... she is not welcomed, neither by father nor by mother.”**

At the age of five, when she should be going to school, she stays at home... When she turns 13, she is forbidden to leave her home without a male escort... She becomes the so-called honour of her father, brothers and her family. If she transgresses the code of that so-called honour, she could be killed. If fathers are crucial to the wellbeing of their daughters, their daughter's happiness and success is also pivotal to their own satisfaction. This plight of millions of women could be changed if women and men think differently, he goes on to say, “if they can break a few norms of family and society, if they can abolish the discriminatory laws of the systems in their states that go against basic human rights of the women.”

Many men in these male-dominated cultures support and love their daughters but their stories are rarely told. But, like fathers all over the world, these men do extraordinary things to protect them. One man refused to give his eight-year-old daughter away, despite being ordered to by a local tribal council as compensation for a relative's crime. Many Afghan families want their daughters to go to school, but poverty and tradition, along with the Taliban, make this a practical

impossibility. Children often need to work to support their families, and this on top of the lack of law and order, basic human rights or schools.

➤ Malala's Voice for Girl's Education and Freedom:-

“If one girl with an education can change the world, what can 130 million do?”

She told about her journey from ordinary to extraordinary. She tell her story not because it is unique but because it is not. It is the story of many girls, she told their stories too. She appear as one girl though she appear as one person who is 5 foot 2 inches tall if she include her high heels. It means she is 5 foot only. She said at the Noble Peace Prize acceptance speech addressing to that poor and wretched girls who deprived from education,

“I am not alone voice, I am not alone voice,

I am many, I am Malala but I am also Sazia,

I am Kainat, I am Kainat Soomro, I am Mizune,

I am Amina, I am those 66 million girls who are deprived of education

And today I am not raising my voice, it is the voice of those 66 million girls.”

She told the story of her school friend the same age as her who has always been bold and confident girl, dreamed of becoming a doctor but her dream remained a dream at the age of twelve she was forced to get marry and then soon she had a son. She had a child when she herself was a child. Only fourteen she could have been a very good doctor but she couldn't because she was a girl. And Malala said that her story is why she had dedicated the Nobel Peace Prize money to the Malala Fund to help give girls quality education everywhere and anywhere in the world and to raise their voices. She also added that the first place that funding would go to was where my heart was to build school in Pakistan especially in my home of Swat and Shanghala. She further said that in her own village there was still no primary school for girls. And it is her wish and her commitment and now her challenge to build one so her friends and her sisters could go to school and got quality education and they got that opportunity to fulfil their dreams.

Malala said at the interview with Rachel Hartigan Shea for National Geographic, “Without education I would have two or three children by now. I'm fortunate that I'm 18 and I'm still not married. When you don't get an education, your life is very much controlled by others. I would not prefer that life.”

Malala says in her autobiography *I Am Malala*,

“In Pakistan, when women say they want independence, people think this means we don’t want to obey our fathers, brothers or husbands. But it does not mean that. It means we want to make decisions for ourselves. We want to be free to go to school or to go to work. Nowhere is it written in the Quran that a woman should be dependent on a man. The word has not come down from the heavens to tell us that every woman should listen to a man.” (Yousafzai)

John Stuart Mill to the same effect: “what is wanted for women is equal rights, equal admission to all social privileges; not a protection apart, a sentimental priesthood, women could not be straitjacketed into either or categories: either worldly sophisticated or the kitchen sink. Women are poorer than men because- this or that.” (Woolf 3-4)

Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world. The picture of educational condition is grim in Pakistan. At most all the urban areas of Pakistan are relate with developed institutes, universities but in spite of this most of the citizens seem to be unemployed. The situation is also alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles.

Girls of rural areas are facing many problems regarding their studies. There are several issues and causes of education problems for girls in rural areas of Pakistan. Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men are the primary authority figures and women are subordinate. This has serious implications on women’s and men’s life prospects. The aim of this study was to explore current gender roles in urban Pakistan, how these are reproduced and maintained and influence men’s and women’s life circumstances. Five focus group discussions were conducted, including 28 women representing employed, unemployed, educated and uneducated women from different socio-economic strata. Manifest and latent content analyses were applied.

Two major themes emerged during analysis: ‘Reiteration of gender roles’ and ‘Agents of change.’ The first theme included perceptions of traditional gender roles and how these preserve women’s subordination. The power gradient, with men holding a superior position in relation to women, distinctive features in the culture and the role of the extended family were considered to interact to suppress women. The second theme included agents of change, where the role of education was prominent as well as the role of mass media. It was further emphasised that the younger generation was more positive to modernisation of gender roles than the elder generation. It reveals serious gender inequalities and human rights violations against women in the Pakistani society.... However, attainment of higher levels of education especially not only for women but also for men was viewed as an agent towards change. Furthermore, mass media was perceived as having a positive role to play in supporting women’s empowerment. Virginia Woolf quoted Lady Winchilsea’s poem on the position of women in her long essay *A Room Of One’s Own*,

“How are we fallen! Fallen by mistaken rules,
 And Education’s more than Nature’s fools;
 Debarred from all improvements of the mind,
 And to be dull, expected and designed;
 And if someone would soar above the rest,
 With warmer fancy, and ambition pressed,
 So strong the opposing faction still appears,

The hopes to thrive can never outweigh the fears.” (Woolf 55-56)

Sometimes people like to ask Malala why should girls go to school, why is it important for them but she think more important question is why shouldn't they, why shouldn't they have this right to go to school. Many of today's teens, take the privilege of education for granted. One girl stands out in the crowd as someone who eagerly risked her life for this freedom; one who inspires and moves the minds and hearts of people worldwide.

Virginia Woolf quoted in her long essay,

“Alas! A woman that attempts the pen,
 Such a presumptuous creature is esteemed,
 The fault can by no virtue be redeemed.
 They tell us we mistake our sex and way;
 Good breeding, fashion, dancing, dressing, play,
 Are the accomplishments we should desire;
 To write, or read, or think, or to inquire,
 Would cloud our beauty, and exhaust our time,
 And interrupt the conquest of our prime,
 Whilst the dull manage of a servile house

Is held by some our utmost art and use.”

(Woolf 56)

Her great hope is that this will be the last time we must fight for the education. Let’s solve this once and for all. We have already taken many steps now it time to take a leap. Whether you live in the most poverty-stricken and dangerous country, or the safest and wealthiest country in the world, education is important to us all. Sadly, not all of us are granted the right to an education, and therefore a better future.

Malala Yousafzai, the co-recipient of the 2014 Noble Peace Prize, has been advocating across the world for girls’ education rights, even in the face of extremely difficult circumstances in her home country of Pakistan, where gunmen attempted to assassination her in 2012. Of course, women throughout the world face a range of challenges, and none more so than in the developing world. Levels of education, health care and political representation can be dauntingly low, and discrimination and sexual violence are all too frequent. One of the most prominent cases of a country struggling with the competing dynamics of development, modernization, religion and tradition is indeed Pakistan, the sixth most populous country on earth. The World Economic Forum ranks the country as the least gender equitable in the Asia and Pacific region. The 2012 annual report from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan details many challenges women there face, including being “attacked and killed on account of asserting their rights to education, work and generally for choosing to have a say in key decision in their lives.”

In 2012, UNESCO started that Pakistan showed the least progress in the region educating low income girls: “The poorest girls in Pakistan are twice as likely to be out of school as the poorest girls in India, almost three times as likely as the poorest girls in Nepal and around six times as likely as the poorest girls in Bangladesh.” In June 2013, militants blew up a bus carrying female university students in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan’s south-western Balochistan province, and the school since been shuttered. And Malala- the Pakistani schoolgirl and education advocate who was shot by the Taliban for her views- addressed the U.N. in favour of free, mandatory education around the world, adding that she was focusing on women “because they are suffering the most.”

“One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world.”



Conclusion:-

‘The girl who was shot by the Taliban’,
‘but the girl who fought for education.’

There are lots of people in this world, some people in this class today, that believe education is a waste of time. They hate school and prefer to stay at home all day. Well the old saying is: “you don’t know what you had till its gone.” Thousands of young girls in countries like Pakistan have to suffer the loss of such a big, important part of their lives. We take our education for granted. We take our freedom for granted. We don’t value all the things we have in life. Education is more than just learning things, it’s the beginning of choice. By following the path of education, you find yourself in front of many doors, all of them holding a choice. If it’s to be a doctor, or a police officer, or a prime minister. Because choice is the essence of freedom in us all and without it there is no uniqueness among us as a society. Malala brought education to those who didn’t have it, and made herself an example of a free, safe society!

“I am only talking about education, women’s rights and peace. I want poverty to end in tomorrow’s Pakistan. I want every girl in Pakistan to go to school. Education is neither eastern nor western. Education is education and it’s the right of every human being.” (Yousafzai 136)

In conclusion , Malala Yousafzai is a woman of courage and ambition. She started at a very young age giving speeches locally telling everyone how the Taliban wasn’t going to stop her from receiving an education. She was recognized quickly for her ambition and goals. She managed to do this all under a death threat from the Taliban. Eventually a man went onto Malala’s school bus and shot her in the head, leaving her in critical condition. About a year later she was able to start school in Birmingham, England. Malala Yousafzai received the Noble Peace Prize in 2014. She was then later to create the Malala Fund which helps provide girls’ education around the world.

REFERENCES:-

1) Primary Sources:-

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room Of One’s Own*. Hogarth Press.1929.

Yousafzai, Malala, and Christina Lamb. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education*

And Was Shot by the Taliban. Orion Publishing Group, 2014.

2) Secondary Sources:-

Alexandra, Raphel. "Women, Girls and Malala: Research on gender and education in

Pakistan and beyond." *Journalist's Resource: Research on today's news topics*,

10, October, 2014,

Journalistsresource.org/studies/international/human-rights/Pakistan-women-equality-education-economic-development-research-roundup.

Ali, Tazeen S., and Gunila Krantz, and Ingrid Mogren. "Gender roles and their influence

On life prospects for women in urban Karachi, Pakistan: a qualitative study." *Globe*

Health Action, 2 Nov. 2011,

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3208374.

Erin. "Malala Yousafzai." *My Hero Stories Literary*, 18 Feb. 2016,

myhero.com/M_Yousafzai2_dnhs_kt_US_2017_ul.

"Girls Education In Pakistan." *Times of Pakistan*, 18 May 2017,

Timesofpakistan.pk/education/2017-05-18/girls-education-pakistan/105372.

How Important Is Education for Female in Pakistan, 21 Aug. 2015,

www.archivistonline.pk/how-important-is-education-for-females-in-pakistan.

“Importance of Peace Education In Pakistan.” *Times of Pakistan*, 6 June,2017,
Timesofpakistan.pk/education/2017-06-06/importance-peace-education-in-
pakistan/105632.

“Malala:- like father, like daughter.” *The Telegraph*, 5 Nov.2015,
www.telegraph.co.uk/film/he-named-me-malala/malala-father-daughter-relationship.

“Malala’s father:- She is the spirit of the house.” *Women in the World*, 29 Feb. 2016,
Womenintheworld.com/2016/02/29/malalas-father-she-is-the-spirit-of-happiness-in-
This-house.

"Malala Yousafzai - Biographical." Nobelprize.org, The Nobel Foundation 2014,
30 Mar 2018,
www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/yousafzai-bio.html

“Malala Yousafzai.” *BBC News*, 17 Aug. 2017,
www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23241937.

“Malala Yousafzai Nobel Peace Prize Speech.” *Malala Fund*, 11 Dec. 2014
[youtube/MoqlotJrFvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoqlotJrFvM).

“WOMEN EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN.” *The Nation*, 21 Feb.2015,
Nation.com.pk/21-Feb-2015/women-education-in-pakistan.