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**“Marxist Feminism, Education and Women’s Oppression: A Case Study of Malala Yousafzai’s ‘I am Malala’”**

**Masood Ahmad<sup>1</sup>:** *PhD Scholar, English Department, Hazara University, Mansehra*  
**Ghani Rahman<sup>2</sup>:** *Assistant Professor English Department, Hazara University, Mansehra*  
**Safdar Abbas<sup>3</sup>:** *Education Department, Hazara University, Mansehra*

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**ABSTRACT**

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*Marxist feminists draw similarities between capitalism and patriarchal social structure and condemn both on the basis of their common principles which are, according to them, cause of exploitation and oppression of the weak. Post-colonial era in Pakistan has witnessed publication of a number of works supporting Marxist feminism and this research work explores Marxist feminism in one such work: ‘I am Malala’ by Malala Yousafzai. Technique of qualitative content analysis was used to investigate causes of women’s oppression and illiteracy in the work, under the framework of Marxist feminism. It was found that patriarchal social structure was the major cause of social, psychological and economic oppression and low literacy of women in the autobiography. The research concludes supporting Marxists view that women’s oppression and illiteracy is a social construct and through social evolution women of Pakistan are likely going to be placed at the pivotal places of reproduction because of new social and economic dynamics which will lead to elimination of their oppression and better literacy rate.*

## Introduction

The autobiography *I am Malala* is a description of social oppression and illiteracy of women prevalent in Swat, the area of Pakistan where the author was born. She was lucky to have a father who unlike other men of the society supported women’s rights vehemently and was owner of a girls school. When Taliban took over the area, they threatened him to close the school or face their violence. Her father continued running the school and she also supported him through her speeches and various other literary activities. As a revenge, Taliban attacked her but she survived, rose to the world prominence as an ambassador for girls education, became Nobel Laureate, and published her autobiography under discussion in which she narrated the events leading to the attack on her life and women’s oppression in Swat, Pakistan.

Women in the autobiography *I am Malala* suffered in their lives and remained uneducated because they were dependent on the men of their families. Malala has described how women in her village were dominated, controlled and kept uneducated by men of their families just because they (men) were the owners of everything in their homes. Women have been shown as a part of owned property of men who used them as their material assets. Though Malala was lucky to be born in a house where the head of their family, her father, favoured women’s rights and vehemently advocated women’s education but Malala had to face difficulties because of the approach of men around in her own family and area where she lived. Thus her story is a reflection of women’s miserable life which is among the works analysed by feminists to find out ways to ensure basic human rights to all women of the world.

Feminism, the movement for women’s rights, has raised voice against women’s oppression and illiteracy on political, social and literary forums throughout the world. History of human social setups reveals that there has been a shift in the relative status of the two genders with respect to time, culture, religion, political situation, and economic condition (Engels,

1884) and form of women’s oppression has also been changing. Karl Marx, the father of communism, saw all kinds of oppression stemming from a struggle for or because of economic dominance of certain groups or classes. His thoughts were applied in feminist studies to explain the nature of the mutual relation of the two genders; it gave birth to Marxist feminism. His ideas were explained and expanded systematically with respect to class division, women’s oppression, and social structure by Friedrich Engels in his famous book *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884).

Marxist Feminists are of the view that women are oppressed and deprived of basic human rights such as education just because they (women) do not have access to the basic necessities of life in capitalist societies. In patriarchal social structure, men are in control of means of production as well as the output of labor which results in distributive injustice with women. However, in a socialist system women can get their due share by the governments and they are less likely to be dominated and exploited by men. In patriarchal societies, division of labor is also done by men who, because of their hostile sexism towards women, always place women at less important positions and thus perpetuate their own dominance.

Marxist feminists think that women’s oppression can be eliminated by changing social structure which will provide women their rights without any exploitation by the men of their families. They support their argument with examples from the history of the evolution of social structures of human communities. They are of the view that in patriarchal social system, which is an offshoot of capitalism, men exploit women just like upper class exploits lower classes in capitalism. They get labor from women without giving them their earned wages thus women’s services are not compensated. Domestic chores are completed by women but men consider them negligible and women remain unpaid despite their significant contribution in family affairs. Similarly, the practice of ownership of personal property in

capitalism provides men opportunities to deprive women of their share in ownership.

Marxist feminists divide labor into productive and non-productive categories e.g. production of material is a part of productive labor but its distribution is placed into a non-productive category. According to Marxists, capitalists by design put women in the non-productive places thus men become dominant and women become a victim of their oppression. Similarly, labors such as housekeeping and babysitting are culturally placed in non-productive category regardless of the value of these services. By labeling these services of women non-productive, their role is conceptually minimized. Marxists' campaign against this injustice with women gave birth to various social movements such as International Wages for Housework Campaign launched in Italy in 1972.

According to Marxists, women’s oppression can be eliminated only if capitalist system of political structure and patriarchal family set-ups are dismantled. Similarly, with the emergence of the concept of intersectionality, Marxists attributed various other forms of women’s oppression also to capitalist social structure and social classes. Both Marxism and feminism have many shared goals. Both seek to bring equality in human beings: Marxists favor classless society and feminists seek a society where there is no gender based discrimination. Both the movements make people more conscious about their rights and guide followers by suggesting means and ways to get and sometimes snatch their rights.

### **Literature Review**

Marxist feminism sees women’s oppression and low literacy rate as a product of social evolution which has placed men in charge of production and division of resources. Many other theories also support Marxist feminists and support the idea that gender roles and identities keep on changing with evergoing social evolution. If roles and identities are redefined by social evolution, then what Marxist feminism aims at is not just a criticism on the patriarchal society but is also an effort to deliberately change basic

dynamics of formation of social setup so as to bring parity between the two genders to eliminate women’s oppression. In the succeeding paragraphs, we will revisit history of social evolution with respect to changing roles and identities of the two genders and will also evaluate whether social evolution is changing mutual status of the two genders in Pakistan as well and what are the likely chances of elimination of women’s oppression which has been depicted in the autobiography *I am Malala*. A number of theories have been presented which favour the idea that roles and identities of the genders change with the passage of time. Social evolution is shaped by various factors such as rapid scientific inventions, changes in climate and natural calamities. When a new social change appears in a society, it is tested by a phenomenon which is called social inertia. Societies do not embrace new changes suddenly and the changes are opposed by social inertia. However, if a new change is persistent, it is adopted by the people of a society after incorporating local social values and customs once the conflict between traditional values and new social change reach a point known as social equilibrium which may redefine gender roles and identities.

Though the autobiography *I am Malala* is full of incidents of women’s oppression which reflect an oppressive society of Pakistan, there have been major changes in the social setup of Pakistan also and gender roles and identities have also seen evolution. A number of recent research works have pointed out that economic pressure, improving literacy rate though very slow, influence of social media and exposure of people to other communities in the world are changing approach of the two genders to each other. Sarir (2019) in her research work has shown a shift in the social values of Pakistani patriarchal society. The researcher has highlighted through a quantitative research that now women’s oppression has started decreasing in some areas of Pakistan especially in big cities. She has supported her argument by showing that educated women of Peshawar are no more forced to marry on the orders of their

parents. Rather they are free to choose their partners and they make their decision keeping in mind their own economic and social requirements.

Various theories have explained the factors which lead to redefining social roles and identities of the two genders. In the preceding paragraphs, some of these theories have been discussed.

**Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987)**, which is in some aspects an explanation of Marxist theory, revolves around the basic concept that stereo type roles of the two genders are formed by the division of required labour in society. These roles are redefined when there is a change in the labour required in a society. Factors such as scientific innovation which bring revolution in life also modify social roles and identities. For example, in conservative society of Pakistan, women were never expected to drive but increased number of automobiles and change in the pace of life events have forced women to drive and with the passage of them, now concept of a driver from a male figure is changing to both genders. Thus role of the genders has witnessed a change in this regard.

Evolutionary psychologists are of the opinion that psychology of the two genders is also evolved if there is an evolution of economic, political, geographical or religious dynamics and evolution of these dynamics is an evergoing process in human civilizations. These evolutions make the two genders think differently towards each other. As pointed out by Sarir(2019), same is the case with the people of Pakistan whose opinion and approach has also evolved because of economic demands, better social awareness and migration from rural areas to the urban.

Biosocial model explains how social and economic requirements are fulfilled by assigning both the genders roles depending on their physical strengths and limits. In the old civilizations, muscular power was required to meet most of the requirements so men were placed at the most significant places due to their more muscular strengths but scientific inventions have shifted dependence from

muscular to mental capabilities and same has given new roles and identities to the two genders.

Conflict theorists including Karl Marx are of the view that there is an ever going conflict between different classes of any society and this conflict makes the two genders to work together to overcome the other classes. During this class struggle sometimes the challenges required new social roles of the two genders which become acceptable after initial resistance. This conflict is still going on in all the societies of the world but unlike past, with a very high pace due to rapidly emerging scientific innovations.

Functionist theorists such as **Parsons (1967)** and Durkheim (2014) are of the view that gender roles are reshaped by the changing functional elements in the society. New roles are accepted after initial resistance from the society. In this age of social media, local and geographical civilizations are shaping into a universal civilization due to availability of information about them on electronic sources. A number of customs and values are been accepted as an integral part of any civilization; parity between the genders is the most prominent among such values. This global trend is changing roles and identities of the genders throughout the world. In a recent work, a researcher (**Saad, 2019**) has analysed how US society has witnessed some major changes in American culture in last fifty years and how this acceptance will have an impact on other civilizations of the world. Among the accepted customs are interracial marriages which is an indication of more flexibility in approach towards other gender, new rules on abortion, rise of women in political affairs, and home making as vocation for both men and women. This change in attitudes of the people is going to bring major changes in roles and identities of the two genders.

Roles and identities of the genders have been shaped also by the change and innovation in technology. First major change came in 1765 with the dawn of the first industrial revolution when the requirement of muscular power

reduced with the introduction of machinery in agriculture. Then in 1870 discovery of new sources of energy in the form of electricity, gas and oil transformed into second industrial revolution. Further innovation in science led to the third industrial revolution in the shape of discovery of peaceful use of nuclear energy in 1970s. Then an era came when social relations saw new dimensions in the form of social media and it is being taken as the fourth industrial revolution. All these revolutions gave new roles to the two genders. Mental capabilities are now more important than muscular power because of these industrial developments and mutual dependence of the genders has changed and so have been their roles and identities.

Life style of people keeps on changing with the passage of time because of scientific inventions and climatic changes. In the initial phases of known history, men were dominant in the society because of more requirement of muscular power. During this phase, groups who had more men, dominated other groups. Role of women in all groups was limited to birth and rearing of children. Durant (2021) while evaluating human social evolution pointed out that Plato considered it important for any society to provide equal opportunities to both genders but Aristotle had the opposite opinion and was of the view that women can not be given equality because of their weak physical condition. The same has been summarised by Durant(2021) in the following words:

*That woman should be anything but a household slave, a social ornament, or a sexual convenience, was a phenomenon known to other centuries than ours, but only as a phenomenon, as an immoral exception worthy of universal notice and surprise. Plato pled quixotically for the opening of all careers, and the equality of all opportunity, without regard to sex; but Aristotle, more congenial to the prejudices of his time, classed woman as an arrested development, and explained her as nature's failure to make a man. She belonged with slaves as naturally subordinate, and quite unworthy of participation in public affairs. (Durant, 2021, p. 129)*

Then with the evolution, roles of

genders kept on changing due to numerous factors and a stage came when women became powerful in domestic and social affairs as has been described by Abbasi (2015, p. 17) in the following words:

At the time of 'savagery' and 'barbarism' woman had a powerful and respectable position in domestic and social life because of her household work. She had the right to own children and household items and was respected and obeyed by all including the husband. Usually, the female portion ruled the house; the stores were in common. No matter how many children or whatever good he might have in the house, he might at any time be ordered to pack up his blanket and budge; and after such orders, it would not be healthful for him to attempt to disobey. The house would be too hot for him.

As an ever going phenomenon, social roles and identities kept on shifting because of new social setups. Just like the time mentioned above, women are playing important roles in domestic and social life and they have become powerful and now in developed countries men are facing various forms of oppression as has been pointed out by Durant (2021):

*"...the husband has come to be just as oppressed as the wife used to be in the old Orient, with corresponding psychological recessions which are becoming more and more evident." ...American women are becoming breastless Amazons, and produce "an effect of coldness, hardness, and soullessness,"...what remains may suffice to reveal to us the coming subjugation of men...."*

Further explaining the causes of this oppressive life of men, Durant(2021) is of the opinion that a stage may come when women become even more powerful because of some of the potentials such as dealing with the details. He paints the future social structure in the following words (2021, p. 135):

*Within a generation or two, the weaker sex has made such progress in conquering a position in the industry, in pervading almost every field of it except the brutally physical occupations.....there is no telling how far this feminine permeation of industry will go; the time*

*may come when the superior tact of women, and their skill in the manipulation of details, will all but balance the greater strength and bolder initiative of men. When electric power takes the dirt and muscular strain out of the industry, even man will have to become intelligent to keep his place in the economic world.*

### ***I am Malala: A reflection of Patriarchal social set-up***

In the autobiography under discussion, women are oppressed by men in various forms just because men control their lives. They deprive women of basic human rights such as education, health care, ownership of property and freedom to decide life-making decisions e.g. marriage as they have all the powers in family life. The oppression of women that we find in the autobiography has been explained below under the framework of Marxist feminism.

Malala Yousafzai's autobiography *I am Malala* is a depiction of a society that is based on traditions and customs which oppress women in all spheres of life. A girl who had her childhood in such a conservative society surprisingly became a symbol of education. She decided to become an ambassador of education for all the women as she is of the view that education would bring awareness among the women, will make them politically and academically strong which will lead to making them socially vocal and strong. Education will bring women closer to each other to struggle collectively against their unjust treatment. When they will be well connected with one another through social media or any other source and will be educated also, they will not be forced to be silent on discrimination or maltreatment. It will eliminate their oppression and will give them their own identity. It was with this strong conviction that while dedicating her autobiography, she wrote "to all the girls who have faced injustice and been silenced. Together we will be heard." (Yousafzai, 2014, p. xiii).

Malala's autobiography is full of instances of oppression and identity crisis of women and there is an underlying message that only education can eliminate women's issues in

Pakistan. However, according to the author, in the patriarchal society, education is considered as a necessity for men only as they have to go for job or earn to run the family. However, women of Pakistan, both in rural areas and urban areas, have now started realizing the importance of education. They know that if they are educated, they will be able to raise voice against their social oppression. The same was realized by Malala's mother who could not get any education and because of her ignorance faced many problems in her life. Often she expressed her remorse for remaining uneducated. She made her children realize that her illiteracy was a big hindrance in her life and she did not want her kids to suffer like her. In the morning while waking them up Malala's mother often said, referring to importance of education, "Don't wake up like me and realize what you missed years later." (Yousafzai, 2014, p. xvii). Similarly, when Malala's mother was learning English to settle down in England she realized that education was making her life easier. Malala says that getting education is helping her become more confident so that she can speak up outside the home, not just inside with us. The author says about herself also that she was receiving education with full dedication as "I believe that I must get an education to strengthen myself for the fight I will surely have against ignorance and terrorism." (Yousafzai, 2014, p.1)

In patriarchal societies, just like in capitalist system, everything is valued with respect to the output or share in production. Men in such societies consider daughters a burden as they leave their parents' home after their marriages and do not help or assist them financially. Similarly, in the tribal area where Malala was born, the birth of a daughter was considered a bad luck. Malala describes the reaction of people when she was born and says, "When I was born, people in our village commiserated with my mother and nobody congratulated my father". (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 9). Further describing the traditions and customs of her area, she says: "I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a

son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children. (Yousafzai, 2014, p.1). Further explaining this approach she says, "For most Pashtuns it's a gloomy day when a daughter is born". But her father was a different man who did not discriminate between sons and daughters. The author says, "He even asked friends to throw dried fruits, sweets, and coins into my cradle, something we usually only do for boys." (Yousafzai, 2014, p.1)

The author describes hostile sexism of men towards women as a cause of their oppression. Men consider women less intelligent and give them no role in decisions. Malala while describing the personality of her father and the relationship of her parents says that her father was different from other men. He openly discussed everything with her mother which was against the customs of her tribe. She says: "Though she cannot read or write, my father shares everything with her... Most Pashtun men never do this, as sharing problems with women is seen as weak. 'He even asks his wife!' they say as an insult". (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 17). It was always a reflection of their hostile sexism: the belief that women are less intelligent and unable to decide serious matters.

Lives of the women in her area are so much controlled by the men that there is no concept of women moving at their own will. To go to any place outside their own home, they have to get permission from their elder male family members and they cannot move without a male member accompanying them. This tradition is so strong that women themselves become confused if ever they have to move out without a male family member. The tradition is justified with the argument that it is for the protection of women. It is a part of what has been called benevolent sexism: something that is presented for some gender as positive but based on a negative idea. In this case, the negative concept is that of the weakness of women. The author says about this tradition: "While boys and men could roam freely about town, my mother and I could not go out without a male relative to accompany us, even if it was a five-year-old

boy! This was the tradition." (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 20)

The patriarchal society increases the importance of sons for the parents who forget that their daughters are also their offspring. Unfortunately, the followers of Islam forget the commandments of their religion and create an environment based on what is called 'Distributive Injustice'. It is a form of oppression in which girls are deprived of their basic rights when the distribution of basic necessities of life is done by parents or society or even government. This injustice starts from home where sons are preferred to daughters. They are provided better food, education, and resources. While describing this approach, Malala narrates the life of her aunt and says:-

*The school wasn't the only thing my aunts missed out . In the morning when my father was given a bowl of cream with his tea, his sisters were given only tea. If there were eggs, they would only be for the boys. When a chicken was slaughtered for dinner, the girls would get the wings and the neck while the luscious breast meat was enjoyed by my father, his brother, and my grandfather. (Yousafzai, 2014, p.22)*

Discrimination between men and women is so embedded in the social system that people cannot understand the simple logic that something bad for men is equally bad for women also and vice versa. Many examples can be given to further explain this approach. Smoking cigarettes is injurious to health for all but if it is done by a woman, it is considered injurious not to health only but also the society. This is the approach which is a part of what has been called 'Retributive Injustice.' And some researchers call it a kind of 'cultural imperialism'. Malala also points out this discrimination prevalent in Pakistani society while talking about the customs and traditions of her area. She says that if a girl approaches a boy for any relation, it is taken as a socially unpardonable offense but if the same is done by a boy, it is considered something very normal and socially allowed. She says: "In our society for a girl to flirt with any man brings shame on the family, though it's all right for the man." ( Yousafzai,

2014, p.54)

The patriarchal society especially the feudal system considers women as a commodity that can be exchanged with someone if there is a need, for example, if men of a tribe involve themselves in a crime against another tribe and the other tribe overcomes them in power, as compensation they can demand women of the tribe. It is an inhuman tradition but it is still followed in some tribes. Malala says about it: "We have a custom called Swara by which a girl can be given to another tribe to resolve a feud. It is officially banned but still continues...why should a girl's life be ruined to settle a dispute she had nothing to do with?" (Yousafzai, 2014, p.53)

Malala's autobiography is a depiction of area where extremists got hold of the political affairs and in the name of Islam started dictating people the lifestyle based on their own misinterpreted religious theory. Unfortunately, they were successful in grabbing the attention of the illiterate community of that area and were supported by them in the beginning. Later when these extremists became dominant and tried to dictate them forcefully a section of the local community stood against them. Malala's father was also among the people who did not support these extremist elements. He continued running a school for girls despite strong opposition of the extremists. His determination resulted in an assault on Malala. The author has described this in the following words:

*The year before I was born a group called*

*the Taliban led by a mullah had taken over the country and was burning girls' schools. They were forcing men to grow beards as long as a lantern and women to wear burqas... He said that the Taliban had even banned women from laughing out loud or wearing white shoes as white was a 'color that belonged to men.'*

*Women were being locked up and beaten just for wearing nail varnish. (Yousafzai, 2014, p.55)*

The society of Pakistan has ever been diverse in its approach towards women. In some areas, it has been imposing strong restrictions on

the women while in other areas it has allowed women to take part in politics, games, and economic activities. Malala describes that whenever news of such active women reached Swat, the women of that area were fascinated to listen to them and in their imagination dreamed of becoming like them. Likewise, Benazir Bhutto, the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan became a symbol of courage to fight against all social odds. Malala narrates the positive effects Benazir created on all the women of the country. She says: "It was because of Benazir that girls like me could think of speaking out and becoming politicians." (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 107)

Oppression and identity crisis of women of Pakistan is because of the culture that has been inherited from other civilizations. Before political independence of Pakistan in 1947 people of other religions also lived here. More than seventy-three years have passed since this political independence, but the same traditions of keeping women as marginalized remains there. Islam teaches its followers benevolent treatment of women but they have not changed these traditions. One of the reasons for this stagnation is misinterpreted religious teachings. These misinterpreted teachings are further transferred to the next generation by the religious teachers who teach the Quran to children but have no in-depth knowledge of religion. The Holy Quran is read without its translation so whatever is written does not convey meanings and it becomes a religious reading of the script. Malala has narrated how she was taught by the Qari, the religious teacher, and how he misguided children. She gives reference to the murder of Benazir and the way their Qari tried to justify her murder as he considered women unsuitable for political leadership. Her father asked her to ignore whatever is explained to her by Qari and learn only the pronunciation of the Quran. The following extract from the book explains this aspect of the life of the people of Pakistan:

*We used to have Islamic Studies teachers-qari sahibs-who came to our home to teach the Quran to me and other local children.... We*



*recite in Arabic, and most people don't actually know what the verses mean, but I had also started learning them in translation. To my horror, one qari sahib tried to justify Benazir's assassination. 'It was a very good job she was killed,' he said. 'When she was alive she was useless. She was not following Islam properly. If she had lived there would have been anarchy. (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 79)*

Malala is now an example of the women who take stand against their oppression and who achieve success in their struggle. Though there are other factors also that have contributed in making Malala a world-known figure, the role of her father, her luck that she survived the attack, her exposure to the media and her hidden talents which have made her quickly pick up to settle in a new culture also played important roles. One of the reasons that in the area where she lived and in most parts of Pakistan, sons are given preference over daughters is that they become supportive for parents in old age and sometimes become more famous than them and become their identity. Here Malala who was previously known as the daughter of Zia became so famous that people know him now for her struggle and her personality. This identity reality has been described by her and her father's pleasant reaction is also mentioned in the lines given below:-

*I know it's odd for him that now people want to hear him because of me, not the other way round. I used to be known as his daughter; now he's known as my father. When he went to France to collect an award for me he told the audience, "In my part of the world most people are known by their sons. I am one of the few lucky fathers known by his daughter." (Yousafzai, 2014, p.259)*

Malala points out that the oppression and identity crisis of women is now slowly decreasing. There may be other factors but global socialization through social networks is the most significant element. People have started educating their daughters even in Swat, from where the author was born and they have accepted that women can also work outside their homes. Malala shows her pleasant surprise when

she sees some women in her area working in different professions. She admires the positive change which was previously unimaginable as: "I see women having jobs we couldn't imagine in Swat. They are police and security guards; they run big companies and dress exactly as they like." (Yousafzai, 2014, p. 260)

### **Social Evolution in Pakistan and its Impact on Gender Roles**

As a part of ever going social evolution, roles and identities of the two genders have seen changes over the time in Pakistan since its independence in 1947. In the following paragraphs, various phases of social evolution in Pakistan have been discussed. This evolution has brought paradigm shift in social setups and has gradually brought women from an extremely insignificant position to an important status in family and society. However, the country is yet not free of the incidents of women's oppression which reflect men's dominating culture and oppressive nature.

In the initial phase of its establishment, (1947-1971), Pakistan was one of the major agriculture countries of the world. During this time men and women worked together in agriculture fields to earn their livelihood. As men contributed more due to muscular power, they were dominant in all affairs of life and women suffered oppression in their lives but it was never discussed at any political or social circle as there was no presence of media.

In 1971 East Pakistan which was centre of agricultural activities became Bangladesh and the West Pakistan shifted its focus from agriculture to industry which changed the life style of people because of shift of work place especially for men from agricultural land to factories. Men had new getup, daily routine and even mindset. However, most of the women kept on working in the agricultural fields. During this phase, men earned much more than women and dominated women in social and domestic life which increased the chances of women's oppression. Most of the people of the time thought that education was necessary only for those who worked in some industry. As women

were mostly working in agriculture or at home, their literacy rate in Pakistan remained very low because of this approach.

The last decade of the twentieth century brought another major change in the outlook of Pakistani society when the country became a hub of business activities alongside industrial activities. Education in business administration opened new professions for both the genders. Women not only started getting education but also made distinctions and excelled. They started earning which changed their status at home and society. Though it was happening mostly in the urban areas, it did change mindset of men even of those who were living in rural areas of the country. Another important phenomenon which changed the mindset of men was shifting of people from rural to urban areas to find better jobs and education of the children. With new openings, approach of the two genders changed towards each other. In the new cultural and social environment, as women were equally contributing towards family income, incidents of their oppression reduced to some extent in urban areas though the same continued in rural areas which made up more than sixty percent of the country population.

The first decade of this century brought another major change in Pakistani society. From 2000 to 2010, advancement in information technology brought revolution, and electronic media which used to be limited to some newspapers saw emergence of a number of electronic platforms of information such as FM radios and new TV channels. Exposure to so many sources of information brought awareness among the people which changed the mindset of the people and they started accepting some international social values such as parity among the genders. As women also availed themselves of this opportunity and started participation in all fields, incidents of their oppression decreased to some extent with varying degree in urban and rural areas.

The recent years have seen unbelievable changes in communication and information technology. Previously, where it was difficult to find any relevant information on a topic, now it

is an age where efforts are made to avoid unnecessary information and to reach the required one. This IT revolution is reshaping society, social set up and above all thinking of the people of Pakistan. Now women are no more considered just the assistants of their husbands and other male members of the family but partners who are equally important for raising a family, making a family set up, shaping society, and contributing towards national progress. This shift in the status of women from the relegated position of the 1950s to an important and equal segment of society is definitely going to eliminate the oppression of women and give them a new identity, their own identity for which they have been struggling for long.

In the recent years, communication and information technologies have witnessed rapid innovations and access to all sorts of information has become very easy which has improved social awareness among the people. Women are the beneficiary of this revolution as their roles have been redefined under electronic globalization and social media has started providing them innumerable platforms to raise voice against their oppression which has given birth to electronic social movements such as metoo#.

## **Conclusion**

Malala’s autobiography exposes societal oppression of women in Pakistani patriarchal society which is perpetuated through a vicious circle of women’s illiteracy, deprivation from resources, linguistic sexism demeaning women, hostile sexism with disgracing implications of women’s social status, potentials and capabilities, and many others, thus, Marxist feminists’ point of view seems truly depicted in Pakistani social setup. This oppressed nature of women’s life not only makes their life miserable but is also detrimental for economic growth of the country. Though history of social evolution reveals that women’s status is going to change with the passage of time but it will take a long time. Through deliberate social restructure and organized education of both genders, the same goals can be achieved in much shorter time.

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