

Title: Exploring the Complexities of Contemporary Feminism, Identity and the Presentation of Islamic Traditional Dress.

Name: Ishrat Subhan Eva

Student number: 1812832

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Supervisor: Alex Duncan

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Introduction:

Through my extensive research and focused study, I aim to demonstrate in this essay that separating a culture from its religious intertwining is impossible. Growing up in Bangladesh, a country with a diverse society and culture along with many religious practices inspired me to understand how the mixture of both culture and religion affects human life, especially from the perspective of the female gender. Religious and cultural boundaries seem to ignite as issues on a variety of occasions. It has come to my attention that religious practice is frequently blamed for being dominative or oppressive. Whereas, from a personal perspective (as a Muslim women) Islamic rules never seem to be oppressive or forceful in their application.

The foundation of Islam is a religion of peace, yet it is perceived to be extreme in its teachings by many. A view from the population and media in many Western societies believe Islam forces its rules upon an individual. It is unfortunate to witness that a Western society believes that Islamic rules do not allow a woman to be educated or independent, whereas the importance of educating women and their rights are clearly stated in Islam (Tamara K,2015). In Islam it clearly stated that “It is obligatory on every Muslim men or women to acquire knowledge (Dar-Al-Kotob-Al ilmiyah ,2008, p.224)”. However, the cultural social norms have been an issue in many occasions. It can be seen that there is a twisted relationship between religion and culture that has been used by various manipulative society to imbue misconceptions about religion, (often a religious ‘otherness’) and how it is an obstacle for women across both time and within place; here explicitly heightened for Muslim women.

Chapter one: 'oppression'

To begin, I would like to understand what causes the oppression of women, could it be specified or singled out as religion, ancient social practices which have been turned into a normality or the normality which has been presented as a symbol of oppression. Are women the only target for the male dominated society or do women also judge themselves under the banner of feminism? The idea of a male dominated society has recently shifted, due to women are now getting vast majority of bachelor degrees and more advanced in higher education. There is evidence which suggest that women are out pacing men in terms of earning, education and in many other fields. According to author Christina Hoff Sommer's data, when it comes to attaining education and progressing a field of study, women now have to be careful to use statement as such ' Male dominant society' because in various sectors women are way ahead compared to men (Christina H S, 1994, p.240).

Observing the lives of women close to me (My mother, grandmother and niece) and comparing each generation and their life, endless questions have occurred as to why things are the way they are. This has led me to research about women's perception of freedom, their role and the opinion about it within the society they live in.



Fig 1: *A Photograph of My Mother, 2018.*

National poet of Bangladesh and philosopher *Kazi Nazrul Islam* (1899-1976) better known as *Rebel poet* because of his contribution against oppression, slavery and corrupted cultural tradition during British Raj in 1917. His poetry speaks of religion, gender, love and freedom which inspired people to fight against injustice (encyclopedia, 2014). Islam's contribution during the *Liberation war of Bangladesh* against Pakistan is unforgettable for the people of the country till today.



Fig 2: *Kazi Nazrul Islam, Chattogram, 1996*

His poem '*Chol Chol Chol (March March March)*' contained such power that it helped the soldiers keep the fire burning to fight for their independence during the war in 1971 as a result it was titled as the national military song of Bangladesh (Mizanur R,2008). Islam's fearless approach towards injustice and inequality was so inspiring which is why he was given the title *National poet of Bengal* in 1929 during British raj (The Daily Star, 2018).

As a young Bangladeshi I grew up listening to the ‘*Chol Chol Chol*’ song and it has never failed to express the force and the power which flows through its words and contains such energy that it can make anybody feel strong and courageous.

Islam brought concepts around gender inequality into his poems and songs alongside his opinion about the contribution of males and females in society and how that should be appreciated equally. The influence of his work motivated the younger generation to look beyond gender and speak up against injustice for all gender, race or religion, which is the reason why often traditional Islamic scholars have criticised him because of their lack of understanding about Islam’s literary art (Afzar H,2018). One of Nazrul’s iconic and longest poem written in Bangladeshi, is entitled *Naari (women)*. Below are several lines translated into English from the poem;

I sing the song of equality;

In my view gender difference is essentially a triviality.

Everything that is great in the world, all the works, beneficial and good,

half must be credited to woman, and to man half only we should,

All the vice or bad in the world, and the pain or flowing tear,

for half, man should be blamed, the other half only woman should bear.

(poem hunter, 2012, p. 410).

The language within *Naari* speaks of both genders being of equal importance for this world and how the support from one to another needs to be acknowledged and which is often ignored. The poet used his literary art to describe emotions of both gender and their unknown influence on each other’s life whether it is positive or negative. His writing about

the great victory achieved by men and how it has been recorded but no one has a record of the mothers, sisters or wives who have sacrificed their honour and their loved ones. The poem is solely based on explaining the feelings and emotions which are usually taken for granted in our society. The poet tries to tell us about how important it is to appreciate the involvement and participation of a person and their support, despite their gender.

Chapter two: 'feminists wave'

Islam's presented the importance of women's participation in society without disrespecting the opposite gender. However, the social standard of independent women according to mainstream feminist' group such as New York Radical Women (NYRW), Redstocking, The Feminists, the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLU), Ann Arbor Feminist House, Cell 16, WITCH and Seattle Radical Women have questionable concepts and has shifted from having equal rights to gender war (Jones J L, 2020). In my research I have read about the shift through what has become known as the *waves of feminism*. For example, in the First wave of Feminism (located in the Nineteenth to Twentieth Centuries) the movement was based on more opportunities for women in industrialism, social politics and their suffrage (Tara, 2018). Activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted the ideology when the wave began with hundreds of men and women demanding for equal right for women at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. The early movements gave voice to the other activists such as Sojourner Truth, an African American activist who stepped forward to support movements towards equal rights (Martha R, 2015). At this point it is clear that idea of feminism began with the intention of equal right in the fields where men had more advantage or opportunities compared to women until the idea of equal rights extended in the Second Wave.

The Second Wave of feminism had drastically shifted from equality to civil right, reproductive rights, dominant issues and sexuality. It was based on objectifying women, the rights for minorities of the society which was unfolded in this phase movements. The first protests Second Wave took place in Atlantic City against Miss America pageant 1968 and 1969 holding a parade called "Cattle parade" where a radical New York based group named

the Redstocking staged a sheep with a crown as the pageant and threw oppressive feminine artefact such as makeup, under garments, heels etc.



Fig 3: When feminist protested Miss America as 'Cattle Auction', 1968.

Radical feminist Carol Hanisch, who addressed the negativity of beauty contest which gave opportunity to newspapers of the country spreading photographs of young women only to be judged by their appearances. There were racial issues regarding beauty standard which was acknowledged during this phase. For example, during any beauty competition a woman of colour never stood a chance of winning, as if they were present there only to enhance the beauty of the white participants (Roxane G, 2018). Undoubtedly the Second Wave was one of the most powerful time of feminism as it addressed issues such as women's sexuality, appearance as well as social right and sexual harassment. On the other hand, by forming women only groups such as Sisterhood is powerful, The BITCH Manifesto etcetera women

became broader critique of normative heterosexuality, role of a housewives and a mother (Martha H, 2015).

Third wave in 1990s was based on challenging female heteronormativity and to redefine femininity to accept differences such as sexual orientation, race, class among women at the same time rejecting various stereotyped feminine idea. The aspect of third wave feminism questioned earlier feminist and third ideology and refuse to identify as feminists (Margie D,2021). It is difficult to point out one incident which started the third wave, there are often considered two events which are credited for a new generation of Women Right's activists. Firstly, when Anita Hill spoke up against sexual harassment in 1991 which sparked national feminism support. Secondly when second wave feminist Alice Walker's daughter Rebecca Walker began to describe the political climate as '*The Third Wave*'. Male dominated leadership, speaking publicly about sexual assaults issues as such was actively brought forward as a result next year twenty-seven women were elected to congress. The phase had few groups who worked toward to be mainstream feminist for example, Riot Grrrl and Guerilla Girls were the most famous groups at that time.

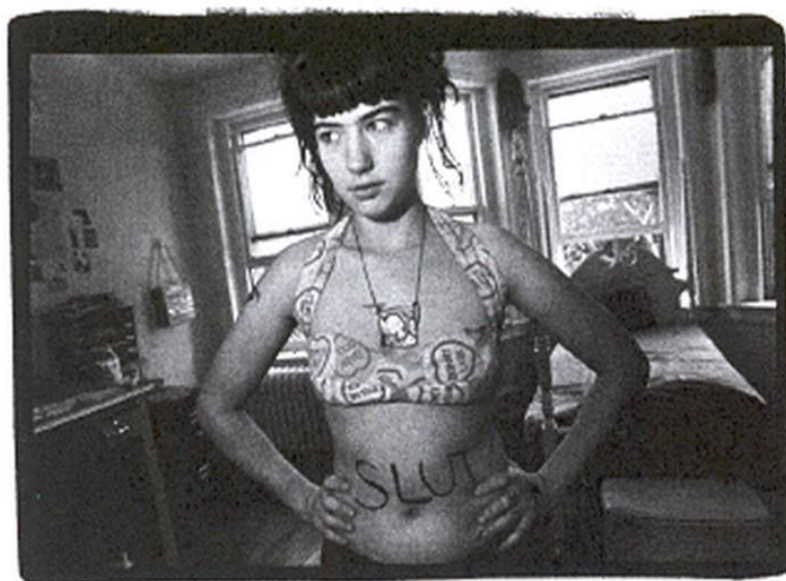


Fig 4: Kathleen Hanna of Riot Grrrl band, *Bikini Kill*, 1992

Women spoke about eating disorder, abortion, sexual assault and it continuously addressed various problems until the beginning of fourth wave of feminism. Similarly, fourth wave feminism is characterised by action-based movements such as #MeToo and also has been characterised as sex positive, trans inclusive, digital driven (National Women's History, 2020).

The fourth wave feminism is receiving international attention by mainstream media and politicians because of problem such as 'slut shaming', unequal pay, rape culture and other serious issues that are been addressed by young women's around the world. Speaking out about sexual abuses, transphobia body shaming is not considered extreme to talk about in public. Mainstream feminism ignorance toward women of other races has been pointed out by Vox media after 'women's March' which was taken place in Los Angeles in 2017. The article begins with the phrase, "We're all the same, has never served women of color" which is often used by inclusive feminist groups (Jenee D H,2017).

There is no doubt that the feminism movements have had tremendous effect regarding the rights of women, however its shift over the years are questionable by young women today. Author Bell Hooks wrote about class differences which occurred during early contemporary feminism in her book *'Feminism is for Everybody'*. According to Hook's the "stars" of feminist movement never included any Black women though they were as active as the white women were during the movement. As the contemporary feminism progressed reality of racism within the "*Sisterhood*" which was supposedly for all women was solely focused on white female privileges. The revolutionary movement to change the system for equal

rights changed by rich white women who were becoming economically powerful was supported by granting their rights in order to maintain the white supremacy (Bell H, 2000, p. 3). YouTube channel called *Vice* arranged a debate featuring few progressive and conservative women and their opinion about current feminism and what does it mean to identify as a feminist.



Fig 5: screenshot of a feminist debate By YouTube channel 'Vice' 2019.

During the video Nala Simone a Black Trans women talks about the identification as a Feminist is a struggle for her because of the way modern feminism has been ignoring serious issues such as women's colour, equal rights for everybody etc.

The concern about modern day feminism being opposed to religion as a whole, was also brought up by a conservative Jewish female, who spoke about how she felt like she did not belong in a women's march organised by modern feminists. She felt sidelined and ostracised because of the way she was treated by other feminists. The pre-described notion that to be a Feminist means you had to therefore be 'anti-men' was also addressed by Yamini, a Muslim feminist (Vice, 2019). During the discussion she talked about issues I often wonder

about regarding equality, modern feminism and being anti-men. For example, people view patriarchy as all men, which is a pressure on this sex and has the potential to hurt them and destabilise their beliefs of who they are in society, but it is not discussed very often. Social activist Bell Hooks states that feminism is about sexism now and, “women can be just as sexist as men can” (Bell H, 2008, p.viii).

Though men benefitted from the system of patriarchy it came with a price for them to think and act as superior to female which some men find it difficult to maintain as they are disturbed by the hatred and fear of women toward men (Bell H, 2008, p.ix).

The definition of patriarchy is ‘a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it (oxford dictionary definition)’. The idea that men have to be ultra-masculine to provide, cannot ever suffer mental health issues, or have to be the bread winner of a family have never been thought about. Previously mentioned in Sommer’s research, she also proves that men are more likely to suffer from depression compare to women (Christina H P, 1994, p. 248). The recent scale of male suicide in Wales was published by BBC news as a ‘*National emergency*’ to raise awareness towards preventing suicide and mental health. according to the news 360 people took their own lives in wales and among them 278 were men (BBC, 2018).

Through my research, it has made me think if it is fair on men that they have to be fit into a ‘masculine’ box, the same way a woman has to fit into an ideal feminine standard in the society. Feminism is constantly evolving word that should become a more inclusive umbrella, under which could sit the equal right for gender, religion, sex, race etc instead of focusing on only one agenda of male domination and religious boundaries. As Sommers explains in ‘Who stole feminism’ how eighteenth-century feminism influenced by political

agendas and is about gender war whereas first wave feminism was focused solely on women rights which had achievable ends (Christina H S, 1994, p. 22). This, for me, is missing the point about equality; paying more attention to how the dominant oppression started rather than directly blaming one certain culture, religion or the male?

Chapter 3: 'matriarchy'

To counter the perceived dominance of a patriarchal society, we will now look at examples where women are superior in a community and discuss whether it is as virtuous as we imagine. Do the men within that community have similar, converse issues regarding equal rights? Various controversial aspects of culture and social practices have shown as a part of religious practice in my opinion, which agitated me to find out about the differences between living in patriarch society and matriarch community.

The Matriarchal society has been a topic of interest after seeing the work of Bangladeshi painter Kanank Chanpa Chakma. A Matriarchal society is usually governed by women and a family's head is the mother who is the ruler of her family (Merriam Webster, 2021). Chanpa belongs from one of the ethnic groups of Bangladesh called Chakma and represents the women of her community through her artwork. The position of women in a society and being oppressed by male dominated society has been a subject of recent discussion. Surrounded by and being within a patriarchal society had me wondering about the community where women in general have more authorities. The idea of women having more or total authority at first glance sounds promising. However, according to several authors and artists who either belong to, or have researched a Matriarch society it too has its complexity and issues.

The Guardian published an interview with Hanna Booth whilst she was searching for answers to her curiosity around Matriarch families. The article was titled as;

"It's a place where women rule, marriage doesn't exist and everything follows the maternal bloodline but is it as good for women as it sounds – and how long can it last?"

(Hanna B, 2017)

In order to find answers Booth interviewed a corporate lawyer based in Singapore, Choo Waihong, who visited China to find out about *Mosuo* which is an ancient tribal community in south-west China where women are superior in society to men. She told how both patriarch and matriarch societies both expect women to embrace motherhood even if it is something they are not keen on. It is simply not acceptable in Mosuo community as women bear the responsibility of carrying the family line forward (Choo W,2017). Upon reading this article it can be said that no matter which gender is superior in the society the role of each gender is already set in mind of people.

Similar concern was expressed by artist Chakma's representation of women from *Chakma* tribe and their activities in their family is an important part of her work (Kanak C C, 2021). She focuses upon women's contribution in daily life which is why I have chosen to research about how she convey the story of the subject through her paintings. She also discusses how difficult it is to understand culture completely and lifestyle of the people. Chanpa has been representing various tribal communities including her own for the better understanding of different cultures and their struggles (Kanak C C, 2021). Chanpa's way of connecting culture, religion and the interweaving between them while centralising women which has fascinated me and found it relatable with my own subject of work.

Chanpa's painting "A Hunters Glory" is curious piece of work. In this painting the subject to me appears to represent both the gender of the community. The ornaments on the head gives the impression of a Chakma women whereas the body structure appears to be of a male figure. In my observation this painting is an amazing example for portraying gender roles equally through art.

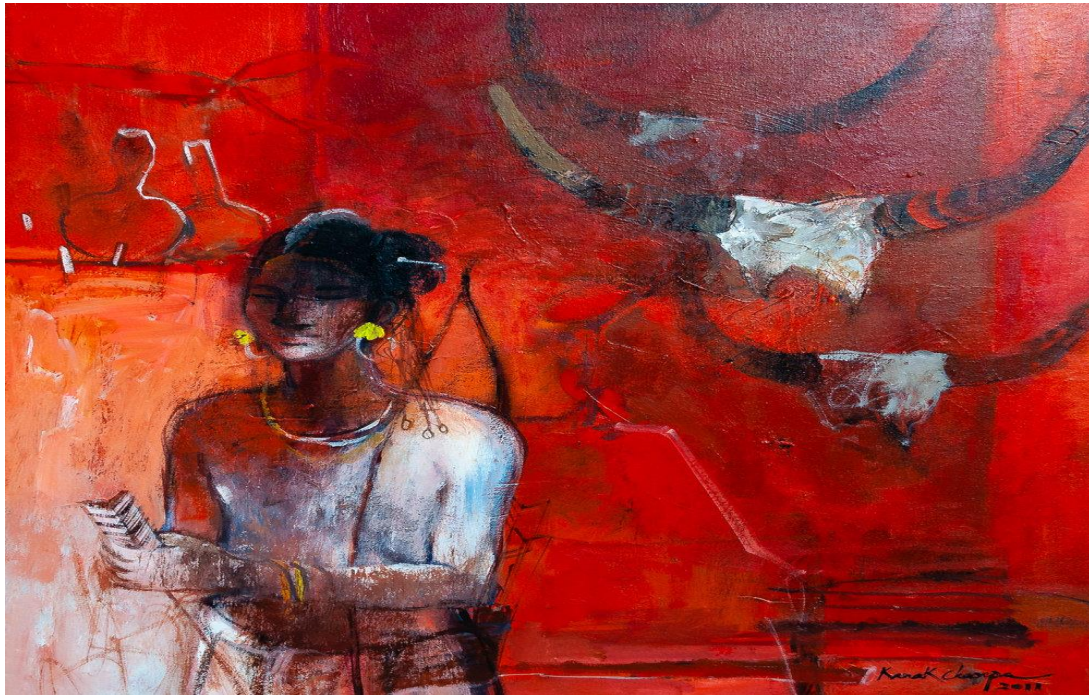


Figure 6: *Hunters glory*, 2011 by Kanak Chanpa Chakma

She talks about Chakma community and their stories which she tries to capture in her work.

Kanak also states:

"In plains and in hills, women are similarly cornered, even though they often contribute more than men to their families. I therefore prefer to centralise women in my works."

(Kanak C C, 2021).

Chanpa's comments about Chakma community which she belongs from has motivated me to search to find out about their social and spiritual values for better understanding.

Majority of the people practice Buddhism in Chakma community, a few practice Christianity and Hinduism. Chakma village have Buddhist temples in almost everywhere for them to celebrate or practice religious ceremonies or festivals (Alexandra C, 2021). According to the artist thought Buddhism a free spirit religion woman in their society also are less appreciated in their community (Dhaka mirror, 2014).

Chapter 4: labelism

Often the reason for oppression or domination is blamed on religion for example author Heide Goettner Abendroth's research on matriarchal society critically pointed how religious cultures exemplified the patriarchal societies worldwide and has created differences among international feminist struggles for women's self-determination (Heide G A, P.25, 2012).

The definition of equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities and "an organisation aiming to promote racial equality" according to oxford dictionary. Whether it is the fight for equality of gender, discrimination or race, we can see variations on these causes have been boiling for years. However, one specific matter has been a cause of personal agitation regarding equality, for the way current feminist culture has few questionable definitions about independent women and how women of faith are portrayed as oppressed (specifically Muslim women) - often how the opposite gender is to blame for all the problems, when recently women have been attacking other women in the name of feminism (This Morning,2020).

It can be seen that contemporary feminism has become more about insulting men rather than seeking equal rights. As author Sommer states:

"The feminists who hold this divisive view of our social and political reality believe we are in a gender war, and they are eager to disseminate stories of atrocity that are designed to alert women to their plight."

(Christina H S, 1994, p.16.)

It is disappointing to see mainstream feminists using their platform to create an image of a modern, independent women as a hater of the male gender, whilst making other women

feel insecure about not being financially independent by choice. For example, *This Morning* television show invited Alena Petitt who left her marketing management job to become a 'Trad wife' (which means living like a traditional 50's housewife, Micheala T,2019).

It was shocking to witness the host of *This Morning* call her a 'faux-feminist' as she chose to stay at home and look after her family, rather than retain full-time employment. Upon being called a 'faux-feminist' Petitt said she believes that she is a feminist, as feminism is about making your own choices and having the freedom and ability to follow through with this decision (This Morning ,2020). It seems that contemporary feminism has an idealised image of an independent women, whereas true feminism should be about supporting and respecting women and their choices across a broad spectrum of whatever that path may take, as long as they are aware of their options, choices and have the freedom to do so. In my understanding, feminism has divided into different groups and this division has fractured the strength of a collective energy and togetherness which could remain a major issue for women and society.

Recently, issues regarding feminism was brought forward by writers, artists and activists, who believe that feminism has now lost its core meaning and values. Activist and writer Roxane Gay describe how feminism helped her find a voice and empowered women around the world. However, among feminist's community few groups do not understand the true meaning or importance of it (Roxane G, p.4,2014).

I believe that feminism has, and should offer different meanings to each individual. It should not be categorised in certain criteria which determines feminism. Unfortunately, mainstream feminism has labelled women who believe living life traditionally or dress according to their faith as oppressed or anti-feminist. While traditional or religious women

are being labelled as anti-feminist, artist such as Nazlee Laila Mansur present women of Bangladesh and their usual activity through her art to show their stories. Her subjects appear to be free willing or involved in ordinary activities which are based on daily struggle of life.

Mansur presents female figures in a formal realism, portraying what life is like (rather than an oppressed figure which is assumed from a society where majority of the women are housewives and Muslim according to contemporary feminist idealism. Reflecting on her work, Mansur mentions she does not consider herself as a feminist, as it has no connection with being independent or being strong as a woman. Her story telling approach presents women in usual social activities in Bangladesh and she paints the subjects using vibrant colours and focused women surrounded by other social activities to prove that female empowerment is not about being rebellious, it is about choices (News Age,2017).



Fig 7: *Usable paintings (On sofa and partition)*, 2003, Acrylic on canvas, 152 x 122 cm

usable paintings (on sofa and partition) is a split image of an evening in Bangladesh, reminded me of my Mother, who after all her tasks are finished will sit down with her cup of

tea and watch tv or read a newspaper. This image is a common sight of every household in Bangladesh which called 'the family tea time'. Usually all women of a family get together after making snacks and tea for all members then sit together to catch up on their favourite tv show, sewing or conversing while sipping their tea.

Mansur has portrayed the narrative of each of her subjects with a beautiful and fluid paint handling. The posture of her subjects and the composition of her paintings has caught my attention, for instance, the seated female with tea cup seems to be the main subject of the painting - the tea cup itself is right in the middle of the canvas and comparatively larger. However, with closer attention we can see how uniquely Mansur has used the interior of the room such as the partition and the sofa has been used to tell the story of more than one subject, drawing the eye across the canvas, the girl in white on the partition is standing on the roof and a boy on another roof trying to show a common sight of lovers in Bangladesh. The little girl holding a baby is representing an unfortunate role of child labour where young girls has to earn money by working in middle class or rich families. The fatigued women on the back of the sofa sitting on a rickshaw is enjoying the breeze by taking her face out of the curtain at the back of the rickshaw, this is a common sight of women who work or study. Mansur's goal is to portray the loneliness of the subject despite them being in social activity and with their loved ones. The artist believes everyone is alone in their own world, no matter where they are in their life because of contemporary social differences. She attempts to capture those moments of each subject which are majorly focused on women in society (BDnews24, 2008).

Mansur's work focuses on the social lives of Bangladesh displaying woman's struggles in life and attempts to spread social awareness within this society through her work. The artist is considered a feminist by her audience; however, Mansur disagrees with this opinion about her:

"Women, their reality and psyche have been the themes for my works time and again in the local context but my approach to women is not that of a feminist's, though I like to tell the story which is mine and other women's too.

(NewsAge, 2017)".

Why is it that a person is considered a feminist whenever they speak for women? I believe that one just needs to be a human with the understanding of right and wrong to represent another. Issues regarding male domination have existed since ancient times but does that mean that a woman has to be conscious about bringing the problem around men's life just in case it does not fit with the ideal feminist criteria. For instance, a Facebook page called '*Project Nightfall*' had posted a video about how on various occasions a man being harassed often completely ignored or portrayed as a harmless joke, whereas for the same reason a man receives hate or are sent to jail (Project Nightfall, 2021). It seems as though the idea of equality is being compromised in order to seek out women empowerment.

If feminism is about equal rights, then a feminist should be of the position to acknowledge and respect all points of view regarding that of gender, race, religion etc. A Muslim woman wearing Islamic attire is rarely considered a feminist and it is not, I believe, because people across the world are haters of Islam. From my research, it can be argued that is symptomatic of how Islam has been portrayed by the Western media, owned by Media moguls who are donors and associates of political leaders across many countries (C-SPAN,2015 and Guardian News 2019).

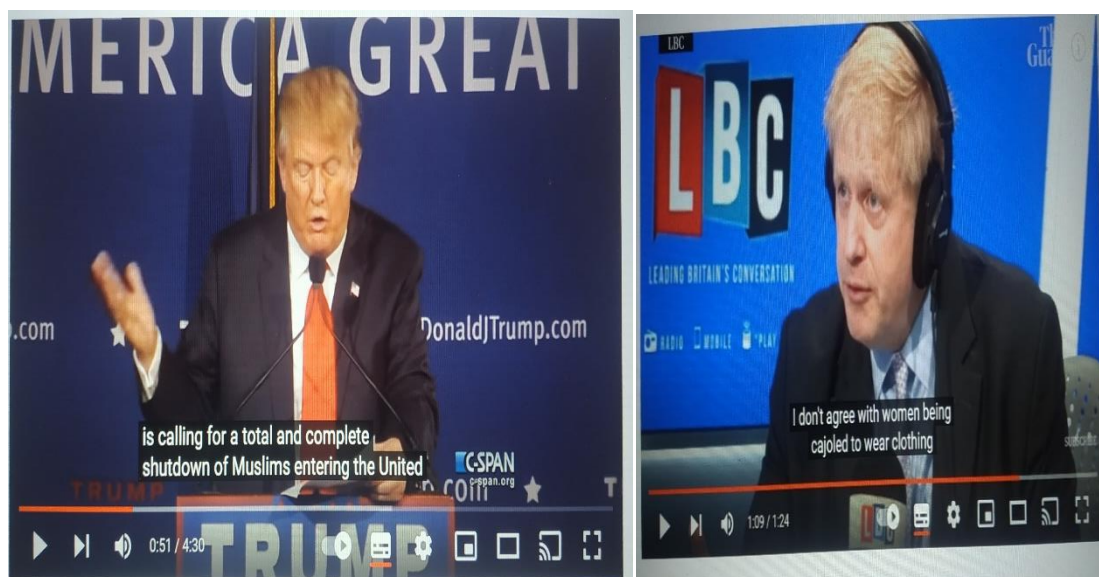


Fig 8: screenshot from C-SPAN news,2015 and The Guardian news,2019

I would say as well as the lack of knowledge or research done about the religion and its practices by the western world. There have been countless occasions where religion has been blamed for oppression and domination over women, especially where practices of Islam have been pointed out and often compared to other religions such as the Christian faith.



Fig:9 Kardashian in Balenciaga, Met Gala,2021

The image shown above is from the one of the biggest events in world fashion, the Met Gala 2021. Where Kim Kardashian, an American socialite turned up wearing an all-black outfit by Balenciaga which covered her entire body including her face. Kardashian received mixed responses regarding the theme of the event and fashion until a Muslim writer Hafsa Lodi decided to point out the problem with the mentality of the audience or critiques of western world. She mentioned that when a Muslim woman chooses to cover their skin they are considered oppressed, or labelled an extremist, far from fashion and glamour, Wearers of the traditional Burka are constantly treating as a threat to security in many areas of western world (Jessica D,2021).

For example, Figure 10 saying "Stop extremism!" was printed out and distributed across France to ban burka in all public places which influenced a right-wing Switzerland political party voting in the support of banning burka in the name of security.



Fig 10: *Stop extremism!* 2021

Opposing the act, the Swiss council of religion later voted in support for keeping the religious practice, proposing that it is a basic human right to be able to practice every religion with freedom (CNN,2021). In various occasions where women of Islam have been shown as oppressed and weak whether it is through advertisement with caption such as “stop the oppression of women in the Islamic world” by a German advertising agency which has published a photograph of a woman wearing traditional Islamic clothing. By portraying a woman wearing niqab with prison bars over her eyes the photograph was supposed to represent how women in Islam are victims of dehumanisation and oppression (Ben H,2007).



Fig 11: *Stop the oppression of women in the Islamic world*, photograph (2007)

The advertisement was a massive offence towards a religion made in the name of social awareness targeting Islam. Religion around the world such as Christianity and Sikhism have practices of head covering yet fortunately never been subjected to this level of visual oppression. Countries such Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, hold a reputation for forcing Islamic dresscode on women, however other countries with Muslim majority such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, and Iranian women are known for being independent and liberal (Theodor G, Rabiha H, p.20, 2011). This shows the idea of domination and oppression is not about religion but the twisted way of targeting one religion which can benefit political agendas and by the authorities who has higher power over social matters (Theodor G, Rabiha H, p.15, 2011).

My experience of growing up in a Muslim majority and living in a western country has helped me acknowledge how the people of Western culture have very little knowledge about the women of Islam. It is crucial that people need to be taught about religious difference in schools and research about religious practices in a belief to understand it properly before judging it.

If Islam is a dominating and oppressive religion then it would have been difficult for Bangladeshi women to go outside without Islamic dress even if they are non-Muslims which is a common rule in other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia (Theodor G, Rabiha H, p.14, 2011). There are issues in Bangladesh regarding domination over women which exist in every household whether it is Christian, Hindu or a Muslim community and it is only to blame on cultural practices rather than religion. The rituals and culture in these countries were introduced by rulers from different region who brought different aspects and ruling of social life During *British Raj* in 1858 (Chandrika k, 2011).

Conclusion:

Through this focused research, it has become clear that the importance of representation, its manifold issues, and the burden of social stigmas (whether on men, women, culture, or religion) are deep and sprawling. The constant battle between what is deemed 'wrong and right', 'better or worse' is weighted by egoistical mentality alongside the control of power and finances rather than being an openminded human.

Therefore, we must consider what is to be human. Should this not be the issue rather than gender, skin colour or belief system. There is no easy solution for these problems, steps to make this world a better place have been taken by many in the past and then destroyed. Society has become more about being against one another when what we really need is an ability to work together.

Addressing domestic violence, sexism and the right of women is as important as preventing suicide and constant pressure of masculinity to fit into a patriarch society. Men need to understand that women are as capable as them just like a woman should understand that men have the same insecurities and emotions as a woman would. The beginning of humanity, and understanding how these issues began is necessary to find solutions regarding these issues.

The media (be it social/ online/ journalistic or television) needs to be responsible. Influential people (whose focus it is to gather rather than separate) need to speak up and should be allowed to be heard. This will allow people to educate themselves not just academically, but also about humanity, in order to respect each other's individuality and choices in life, about how to dress and choose to fill their lives.

Feminism, people of minorities, religion, gender, sexuality, and identity have all been a part of human life therefore it is a responsibility to expand our knowledge and understand better is we have the intention of making this world a better place for everyone.

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