



## The Struggle of a Prostitution Girl in Kishwar Naheed's Poetry, We Sinful Women: Feminism Issues

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### Abstract

*The researcher decides to analyze feminism in Kishwar Naheed's selected poems which have the same theme of caste inequality between women and men. This research method makes use of qualitative data analysis. Qualitative research looks for reasons and explanations rather than simply describing the research method and summarizing its findings. James (1998:576) says that feminism is based on the idea that women are disadvantaged or oppressed compared to men and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Kishwar Naheed disagrees with the idea that all women are sinful and are viewed as objects and properties that can be abused by man-made laws of intensity and equity. According to some interpretations, the poem "We Sinful Women" defies time, form, and the nation-state. Many different interpretations of her poems exist, some of which I have presented here. The topics covered in the course emphasize the significance of women's agency as writers, as female protagonists, and in transgressive literature-literature that is regarded as "dangerous" in their own society. In her poems, women try to break the rules and free themselves from their chains by becoming their own liberators. Women breaking through barriers of marginality and achieving previously unimaginable heights.*

## 1. Introduction

Feminism must exist independently of and as part of the larger struggle to end all forms of dominance as a liberation struggle. We must acknowledge that patriarchal dominance is ideologically rooted in racism and other forms of group oppression, and that it cannot be eradicated while these systems are in place.

According to Hooks (1989), this data ought to always guide feminist theory and practice. 22). According to James (1998:576), feminism is based on the idea that women are less fortunate or oppressed than men and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. It is incorrect to consider feminism to be a single philosophical doctrine or to imply an agreed-upon political program, even though there are numerous interpretations of women and their oppression that fall under this general description. Feminism is an effort to ensure that women in all cultures and professions receive the same respect and opportunities for advancement as men do. Feminism is centered on the idea that women's full and spontaneous participation is necessary for genuine social progress. According to David O. (2012:40), poetry elicits a vivid imagination and conveys strong emotions and experiences through the use of figurative language. Feminist is derived from the French word *femme*, which means "a woman who champions the rights of women as a social class" (plural).

There must be a distinction made between men and women in terms of psychological and cultural differences as well as biological differences. Clare Burton (2014:12) stated that in his book "Subordination (Feminism and Social Theory)," he uses three terms., they are: 1) Liberal' Feminism; Discrimination against all women in our society is a central concern of liberal feminism. Liberal feminism focuses on legislative reforms that seek to develop attitudes that support women's equality. This should be done taking into account the existing situation. If this is done without considering different situations, then the activities implied in feminism can be carried out only to benefit special women. And that applies in the world of work or in the world of paid work. 2) Radical' Feminism; Radical Feminism is related to its main proposition that the relationship between the sexes is more fundamental and is a source of oppression that is more often carried out in society. 3) Socialist' Feminism; Socialist Feminism relates to the gender and economic aspects of the oppression of women. Women can be seen as residents of the economic class in Marx's view and sex class. That is, women display valuable service to "capitalism" as both a worker and a devoted wife receive no wages for their domestic work. According to socialist feminists, the patriarchal and capitalist systems exploit women.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Marquis de Condorcet were the pioneers of the feminist movement, fighting for what is now known as a universal sisterhood in European colonial nations. Charles Fourier came up with the term "feminism" in 1837, and John Stuart Mill's 1869 book "The Subjection of Women" helped spread the word. Due to numerous instances of women's rights being restricted in a variety of areas, the feminist movement grew quickly at that time and a social group. This feminist movement began to spread to the American mainland in response to the emergence of social and political revolutions after rapidly expanding in Europe. Women's rights started to get more attention after Mary Wollstonecraft published *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. It is common knowledge that in the 1840s, resistance to the practice of slavery in the United States began, eventually leading to its abolition. This brought attention to the rights and positions of women, who now enjoy better pay and working conditions, as well as opportunities for education and political representation like men.

Using a feminist perspective, for instance, the theme of discrimination, the place of women in society, and the image of women. Bhasin and Khan (1995:5)

define feminism as an awareness of the numerous ways in which men oppress women and a set of strategies for countering this oppression. From a society that believes that only men are qualified to be leaders and that not many women can, we can see how men hold the dominant power and have a place at the top of the social structure both globally and in our own country. Be someone you can rely on as a leader because it is commonly held that women only consider their emotions.

By publishing a poem titled "We Sinful Women," Kishwar Naheed demonstrated her empathy for women. The poem raises the issue that all women are sinful and deserve to be treated badly and describes the situation as a whole using a variety of key poetic devices. Throughout the poem, Naheed employs sarcasm to emphasize that the woman is not the one who chooses to be treated in this manner. Additionally, contemporary valences overlap in Naheed's poetry. Naheed demonstrates that Pakistani women continue to prioritize late 19th-century models of femininity from her perspective. She goes beyond historical times. The term "temporality" refers to things that happen in time or are related to time. Naheed argues that social expectations have transcended historical divisions by departing from the ephemeral. Naheed's argument demonstrates that women's social roles remained unchanged despite the end of formal colonialism and the Partition of India in 1947, despite historians' theories that there was a time lag between the events. This line of reasoning is very critical of the liberal nation-state model, which says that all citizens should have the same rights. Naheed goes one step further in this feminist argument by looking at how women oppress other women by imposing feminine norms on generations of women. Naheed refers to the unquestionable propagation of social norms as the "feminine myth" perpetuation. At the time it was written, this iconic poem was both shocking and explosive. It is a way for women who don't follow social and cultural norms to say they are independent. Many of these oppressive and restrictive standards for women are still in place in Pakistan today, even with greater research. As a result, Naheed finally made his point by publishing this poem.

In this research, the researcher decides to analyze feminism in Kishwar Naheed's selected poems which have the same theme of caste inequality between women and men. The researcher has a curiosity about the content of the poem and the message the poet wants to convey. The researcher wants to convey his perspective on feminism in poetry to readers and connoisseurs of literature.

## **2. Methods**

This research method makes use of qualitative data analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (in Joubish, 2011, p. 2083) define qualitative research as the study of natural phenomena. Joubish et al., the article's researchers (2011), qualitative research looks for reasons and explanations rather than simply describing the research method and summarizing its findings. According to Fraenkel and others (2012, p. 426), qualitative research observes and gathers data by directly targeting a specific set of interests. Six characteristics are shared by qualitative methods, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2007). The research must begin in a natural setting first. The second research instrument serves as the primary one. The research becomes the primary instrument of the research because the researcher directly collects the data. Thirdly, the data are words rather than numbers, and the research is written in a descriptive style. Fourth, the process of conducting research is more significant than

the product itself. Five, the significance of the research is the primary objective. The majority of research is inductive, last but not least. One could make the argument that qualitative research does not first test the hypothesis. In inductive analysis, according to Thomas (2003, p. 3), the data are determined by the research objectives in addition to multiple data readings and interpretations. The descriptive method of research, as defined by Creswell (1994), entails gathering information about the current circumstance. The objective of the descriptive method, according to Creswell (2012, p. 274), is the systematic discovery of a comprehensive explanation and description of the subject of the study.

### **3. Findings and Discussions**

#### **3.1 Findings**

##### **The part life of Kishwar Naheed**

Kishwar Naheed is a feminist urdu poet. She has written several poetry books. She was born in 1940 in India. Later she migrated to Lahore in Pakistan after partition in 1949 with her family. She also was a witness to the violence including rape and abduction of women associated with the partition of India. All those blood shells had left a lasting impression at a very young age. All those gruesome sights which she had to witness accompanied her. Throughout her life and it is a driving force that led her to write many famous feminist poems and works. At a very young age she, also faced struggles to receive an education from society, where women were not allowed to go to school. She has written 12 volumes of her poetry and published both Pakistan and India. Many of her works were translated into other languages as well and this particular poem "We Sinful Women" it was first published in Lahore in 1990 and later in London in 1991. And this poem was referred as women's anthem among Pakistani feminists. She has also written several children books and had one UNESCO award for children literature. And her love for children is as much as her concern for the woman. She expresses this concern through her poems. She focuses on the plight of woman in a male-dominated society. And this vision for women is that particular kind of woman in a male-dominated society and the need for women empowerment and emancipation in a male dominated society.

##### **Analyzing Kishwar Naheed's poetry**

In the poem it says that they are "women" fighting for the empowerment and emancipation and they went to get out from the exploitation of men. As well as the society the religion and all the systems that suppress women are conventional women to which. Kishwar Naheed is comparing herself and other feminist women to stereotypical women who are living by the rules of the society and those women are praised by the society for living a suppressed life inferior to men. These women are trying to please the society.

In their 2012 study "The Position of Pakistani Women in the 21st Century," Dr. Jaweria Shahid and Khalid Manzoor Butt defined feminism as "equality for women and freedom from gender discrimination in all aspects of life." "those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about oppression, unequal relations between men and women, and who want to change it," is their definition of feminists.

A social movement for women's social rights is the ultimate goal of every feminist endeavor. Given this, one could argue that Pakistani feminism is nothing

more than a myth. Ovais). Unfortunately, many people are not aware of the origins of Pakistani feminism. Feminism in Pakistan did not originate in a concept, novel, or researcher. Islam and feminism are subject to various superstitions; They see the ideology of feminism as an anti-Islamic movement. In Islam, women enjoy economic, spiritual, and moral equality. The Muslim holy book has discussions about women's rights to education, marriage, divorce, property, and life. Many quotes from Islamic scholars and hadiths are included. Recent advances in education and media reflect feminist standards. There is ample evidence of feminist standards in politics thanks to recent advancements in education and media. Women have fought for their rights ever since Pakistan gained independence, and Fatima Jinnah and Mrs. Liaquat Ali Khan were outstanding women at the time who demanded equal rights for women. Mehsud) Fatima Jinnah inspired numerous women to bravely fight for their fortune even before Pakistan gained independence. Following Pakistan's founding in 1949, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan established the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) to promote women's economic equality and respect. In September 1981, the Women's Action Forum (WMA) was established with the demands of women.

Radical feminism sees it logically that women from oppressed social groups face a variety of forms of abuse. In various deadly combinations, status, race, and incapacity have a systematic structural effect on the lives of various women. Writers from Pakistan feel like they belong to their community. Their literary works poetry, autobiographies, novels, and essays all depict this relationship.

Feminist Kishwar Naheed has a spiritual connection with the women of her community. Naheed wrote numerous poems that were widely read. Her poetry has frequently received praise for its depiction of woman's beauty, Asian women's strength, and the human spirit's call for social justice for all. She is well-known for her poetry all over the world. Through her writing, she imparts numerous lessons. However, the majority of reviewers commend Naheed's poetry for addressing gender, social, economic, and political issues that are significant to Pakistani women and their nation. In her poems, Kishwar Naheed portrayed the idea that despite the many challenges that people face in life, they should not give up. Indeed, Kishwar Naheed fought for herself from a young age, fighting for her rights and basic needs, which made her the most admired and influential figure in Pakistani literature. Kishwar Naheed's writings embody radical feminism in its essence. Because she stood up for her rights, Kishwar was subjected to racial and gender discrimination from an early age. In her poetry, she depicted this.

As a feminist poet, Kishwar Naheed has also emphasized the instrumental identity that society had enshrouded women in. the marginalization; an instrument used for the benefit of another. Naheed's writings go over a lot of different aspects of the subject of objectification. We sinful women who do not bow our heads, fold our hands together, or sell our lives, are not awestruck by the grandeur of those who wear gowns, (Ahmad, 1991).

Kishwar Naheed slams males in her country who view females as corrupt and immoral in this poem. As a result, they view women as separate entities. Men are permitted to exploit women as long as the rules are made by men. Women are viewed as suppressed objects. If women spoke out against the cruelty of men, this so-called male-dominated society would label them as sinful women and punish them.



Kishwar Naheed write the poem about women becoming their own liberators and striving to break the rules and free themselves from their chains; In her poems, the researcher see women crossing the lines of marginality and ascending to heights previously unattainable.

The following is a verse from the poem "we sinful women" by Kishwar Naheed.

**Table 1.** Analyze of Stanza

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Stanza 1</p> <p>It is we sinful women<br/>Who are not awed by the grandeur of those<br/>Who wear gowns<br/>Who don't sell our lives<br/>Who don't bow our heads<br/>Who don't fold our hands together</p> | <p>The poet is addressing to herself as well as the other feminist woman. She's saying about the peculiarities of this woman who are being called as sinful by the society.</p> <p>And the poet is saying that we sinful women are not awed by the grandeur of those who wear gowns</p> |
|--|---|

The poet is meaning that there are women out there who are living with the conventions, they are stereotypical women who are living by the norms of society and they wear gowns to cover the parts of their bodies. The poet is saying that sinful women including herself are not intimidated by the magnificence of those who wear gowns, since they just don't want to just confine to merely a gown. They want to wear different clothes, they want to enjoy their life and they just don't want to waste their life in just a piece of gown, not just by owing with the grandeur of a gown.

*"We don't sell our lives"*

This means that in stereotypical society in a male-dominated society, women are actually selling their lives to males. Because they do not have their own wishes, they don't independent, they don't have a word of self-expression. They were just living to please society as well as men, they are not leaving for themselves.

The poet is proudly saying that we are that women do not sell our life, that has meaning is we don't live for other people, we don't live for society and we don't live for male folks but instead, we live for ourselves. And the poet proudly says that we are sinful women and we love to live our life this way, a way which does not exploit their life.

*We don't bow out heads*

This means these sinful women are not ready to bow their heads to anyone, not to society, not the male. This poet literally means just pouring the head, it means that they are not ready to live their whole life inferior to a society that is entirely dominated by male's.

*Who don't fold our hands together*

This means we are not that sinful women are not ready to fold our hands in suppression. This stanza actually means that they are not ready to surrender any of their rights to please society or to please men, they are living for themselves and they are not ready to compromise their lives for the sake of others.

**Table 2.** Who don't fold our hands together

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Who don't sell our lives<br>Who don't bow our heads<br>Who don't fold our hands together<br>(Appendix A: 3-5). | The "who" in the poem describes that women cannot be treated arbitrarily. A job demands responsibility but does not mean that women become lowly slaves who have to bow their heads over things that are not pleasing. |
|--|--|

In this context, the term "who" refers to all women who oppose patriarchy and do not wish to live as servants or serve others. Women want their own rights and proper social status because they are also an important part of the world. She uses sarcasm throughout the poem to emphasize that women do not want to be treated in this manner; Men wanted women to act like slaves and other small creatures and forced them to do so. Because they lack self-determination, independence, and the right to speak, women are actually selling their lives to men.

The third stanza tells about women who protest the norms and customs imposed by men and try to defend their rights. Naheed's language shows that women who are truly sinful are those who oppose male vices. "The speaking tongue has been cut out," said the poet. Kishwar refers to the way many women who have ability, education, power or opportunity are cut off, stunned and prevented from fighting for their own rights in many countries. Seen from the point of view of men towards women who state that women are unfit to lead this creates the impression that women have a degree far below men.

Positively, Naheed concludes her poem: These eyes will never be shut." Now that the past is behind us, She asserts that the woman of this century will not be afraid of the psychic of angry men and will fight for her rights. The "sinful" women will tend to their own needs. Now, women will uproot the world's extreme patriarchy and live the lives they want.

### 3.2 Discussions

#### The Feminism of Poem

This seminal poem was both a revelation and incendiary at the time it was written. It is a declaration of the independence of women who did not subscribe to societal and cultural norms. These norms imposed on women are oppressive and confining, and for the most part still exist today in Pakistan, if not in even greater force. In her poem "We Sinful Women," she criticizes the idea that all women are sinful and are viewed as objects and properties that can be abused by man-made laws of intensity and equity. The same theme can be found in another of her poems, "Khud Kalami" (Talk to Me). If I survive, you might lose face, so punish me. Punish me because you will die if my sons raise their hands. I deserve retribution because I adore the new life with each breath. I will live my life and double my life after my death. Punish me because you will die if only one sword opens to speak. Your sentence or punishment will end if you punish me. (Ibid, 55). This story of a sinful woman is closely guarded and practiced in a patriarchal society. It is a story for everyone. Black feminism is used to promote women's suffrage in some countries, but religion is used in Pakistan to promote women's suffrage. Kishwar Naheed wrote

poems like "Khud Kalami" and "We Sinful Women" to address the root causes of women's discrimination in society.

Although patriotism is regarded as a fundamental topic in the writings of the east, Kishwar Naheed's works sadly lack this essential element. It was because women were never considered to be a part of the country. Before nationalism can be enjoyed, it needs to be nurtured. Sadly, women's literature has never been included in the political or historical archives. Writing has contributed to women's awareness of politics and religion their aspirations, setbacks, and even triumphs have all been documented and disseminated through poetic metaphors.

The fact that Kishwar Naheed addresses sensitive issues of self, emotions, sex, and gender discrimination under the banner of historical events is an important aspect of her poetry. These issues could not otherwise be expressed in its sociopolitical context. Consequently, Kishwar Naheed's work not only reaches a larger audience but also articulates Pakistani feminist politics. When we look at Kishwar Naheed's works from a broader perspective, we find that, despite being portrayed as a writer who advocates for women, she quietly drew connections between men and women, sexual orientation, and patriotism in Pakistani literature.

Because the poem's title makes use of the inclusive noun "we," it makes reference to all radical women. Because it demonstrates that it includes all women who are concerned with these manners, the poem's repetition of "It is we sinful women" at the beginning of each stanza is effective. In accordance with the man-made law of energy and men's equity, Naheed criticizes men for treating the women of the country as "wicked ladies" and treating them as assets that can be misappropriated for no apparent reason. Women's bodies can be exploited by men. Women demonstrate because they are oppressed. The materialistic world is ruled by wicked and sinful women, whereas the men who harvest our bodies turn out to be glorious and well-known. The lyric's line number, "not awed by the grandeur of those who wear gowns," which refers to the poem in appendix A. 2, demonstrates that not all women are stereotypical in the sense that they are afraid of the rest of society and care a great deal about what other people think of them. The poet talks about the women who spoke up in the following line, saying.

The poet makes use of irony, contrast, and just a position to demonstrate that the most devoted and pious women are the ones who are called "sinful." Naheed discusses so-called men who are praised by the social order if they torture women in their homes "while those who sell the harvest of our bodies" in the second stanza of the poem. Naheed discusses individuals who still enjoy social acceptance despite selling women out of lust or hatred. They develop wickedness and a lack of character because no one holds them accountable. At the end, only women are mentioned; Men commit crimes like selling, harassing, looking at, selling, or considering women to be toys. As they "become the just princes of the material world," the rest of society follows in their footsteps. It is effective for men. Everyone speaks highly of them and regards them as a campaign.



**Table 3.** The Feminism of Poem

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|---|---|
| <p>"For the wall which have been razed<br/>don't insist now on raising it again"<br/>(Appendix A:19-20)</p> | <p>In the given lines, Naheed<br/>addresses society's radical men,<br/>who continue to coerce women<br/>through a variety of means.</p> |
|---|---|

However, the poet asserts that all of their efforts are now futile. Women will lead this age because of their strength, intelligence, and determination. In his ballad "We Sinful Women," Kishwar Naheed uses a profound, significant, and capable subject. She wanted it to achieve her objectives; The same number of women acknowledge what she says with the intention of making changes and are encouraged by her words. Most people view a woman who works at night "who serves" as a dirty and adulterous woman. People don't even care about the background behind someone doing that thing. People's thoughts are always negative about prostitutes. In this poem, Naheed explains that even though they work as "prostitutes", they do not deserve to be insulted and treated as they, please. The woman in this poem does the job to provide for them financially.

In this literary work, Naheed's mission to promote feminism in Pakistan is clear. Kishwar Naheed has kept herself informed about political and social developments for more than fifty years. Naheed has emphasized the status of women from a gynocentric rather than an androcentric perspective in her scholarly contributions to this nation. In addition, the overall goal of her writing—in verse as well as composition is to emphasize women's humanity. a normal human being with feelings, thoughts, and potential. In point of fact, they are distinct individuals just like every androgenic member of society. Naheed's poems are delightful, fresh, and moving, despite the radical spirit that can be seen in her verses. She has contributed significantly to Urdu writing, both in the form of measured lyrics and free stanzas. Her verse and exposition bring to light a number of issues associated with women that were prevalent in Pakistan after independence, such as abuse in the name of securing women's educational rights, physical violence against women, and even prejudices in our so-called Islamic nation. She has established herself as a straightforward advocate for women's rights in the country thanks to her unwavering commitment to the cause. She writes from the heart, and that shows in her work. In Pakistani literary society, Naheed is more than just a symbol; She is the epitome of contemporary Urdu writing across the entire subcontinent of South Asia.

#### 4. Conclusion

The poem "We Sinful Women" by Kishwar Naheed was interpreted in this study as a poem that defies time, form, and the nation-state. There are undoubtedly many possible interpretations of his poems, some of which I have presented here. The researcher's analysis of We Sinful Women reflects the course themes of women's agency as female protagonists, women's agency as writers, and transgressive literature deemed "dangerous" in their own society. contrary. Last but not least, the researcher wants to make it clear that Mona el-Tahawy's recent argument that Naheed and other women from third-world countries oppose an inherently patriarchal religion is overly simplified and reductionist. Instead, it appears that "culture" is to blame for women's oppression, which also grants Naheed and

other writers permission to write transgressive literature. Recognizing the nation-state's role in society's cultural and legal organization and oppression, as well as the difficulty of understanding culture as a concept and challenging reforms within a generational framework in which customs and traditions are endlessly reproduced, is becoming increasingly important. From this perspective, Naheed's social criticism can be interpreted as feminine rather than Pakistani. The researcher wants to keep looking at culture as an intellectual space and pervasive zeitgeist in the classroom, which makes it possible for transgressive literature to be written, read, contested, banned, and ultimately influenced in a way that is unprecedented.

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