

Conclusion

The topic of my research has been selected to cater to my existential crises. I grew up from a practising Muslim family and being perturbed by the issues like polygyny and verbal triple talaq, I became curious to know how educated Muslim women deal with the inequities propagated by the conventional Islam in countries other than India. I chose the locale of America for more than one reason. Most Muslim women in America are diasporic, coming from various other countries (primarily from Muslim countries). Thus in their writings, we get a glimpse of Muslim women's condition both in the home country as well as in America. It helps to have a comparative study in terms of their geo-cultural positions.

Though I am concerned here with Muslim American literature (MAL), I have not selected any male Muslim writer in this thesis. But the context of representation of Muslim American women's lived experience, the representation by Muslim male writers also needs to be taken into account. I have not done so mainly because of two reasons – constraints of

space; and secondly to keep the thesis more focussed. Any research scholar may take up this area for further exploration in future. I have not included any non-Muslim writer who has written about Muslim life in America. This will also be an interesting area of study to examine how non-Muslims look at Muslims. One can hope a very nuanced comparative study out of it. I have not also done justice to the male Muslim characters of the novels I have taken up for study. All these characters need more attention as they also go through various phases of alienation and acculturation. But due to space constraint, I have focused mainly on the Muslim women characters of the four novels.

I proposed in the introductory chapter of this thesis that I shall explore the literary works of Muslim American women, Azar Nafisi, Diana Abu-Jaber, Mohja Kahf and Asma Gull Hasan. For that purpose, in the first part, I have traced the history of Muslim immigration to the land of America. The demographic study reveals that the inflow of Muslims has taken place in three chronological phases. The research shows that these Muslims belong to diverse races and ethnicities across the world and the reasons for their exodus are various: they migrated as bonded labours, political refugees, fortune seekers and the like. In the second part of Introduction, I have looked into the emergence of the new genre called Muslim American Literature (MAL) a term which was proposed by Mojha Kahf. In this segment, I have tried to understand how 9/11 drastically changed the lives of Muslims in America. It is for the first time, they have to put their ethnic identity at the backseat and assert their religious identity in order to express their solidarity for the purpose of countering the hate politics against them. At the same time, they have stopped accepting one single rigid traditional interpretation of the Qura'n. This interpretation is, to a great extent, patriarchal. They have started practising *ijtihad* (process of critical

reasoning) to open up more interpretations which will address the demands of the time. In America, Muslim writers are concerned with their new lived experience. They show how it is a different experience to live in a new country and how the liberal space of America contributes to the practice of their religion. Kecia Ali says:

Living in a nation where Islamic law has no coercive power, regardless of its moral weight for individual believers, I write as one with the luxury of deciding whether and how to apply religious doctrine in my life—whether to arrange my affairs to follow the dictates of one or another school of jurisprudence, or the regulations in the Qur'an, or to follow civic law. The entirely voluntary nature of all types of religious observance means that the urgent questions for Muslims living under civil laws in North America and Europe in particular are ethical or moral rather than narrowly legal. At the same time, the fact that there are no putatively Islamic civil statutes involved means that those Muslims concerned with Islamic law tend to focus on “authentic” texts, rather than the national legal codes, making engagement with the tradition necessary.(xxxi-xii)

This section also deals with the salient features of Muslim American literature in detail. It also incorporates how Mojha Kahf has classified the writers of this genre. In the following section, literature survey of my proposed thesis has been done where we found that little critical works have addressed the creative writings of this arena. Here, the proposed structure of this thesis as well as the arrangement of the chapters have been discussed.