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## Quest for Body and Voice: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Shamsie's *Broken Verses*

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### Abstract

*In contemporary and postmodern literary discourses, feminism has introduced a paradigm change in the sex debates. The plan of feminist critical discourse analysis is to explore different discourses from a feminist viewpoint. The planned study conforms to this field of feminist discourse that will attempt to analyze Kamila Shamsie's selected work, Broken Verses. She, being a famous feminist, has produced discourses in which structural and thematic samples absorb sex debates. Her feminist tendency has established clear expression in all the aspects of her works: body, voice and characterization. The current study shows how she has used feminist discourse strategies in conventionality with her feminist literary position. This research extensively improves the perceptiveness of Kamila Shamsie's work and pictures how the feministic arrangement and feminist critical discourse analysis have been inventively infused in her famous works.*

**Key Words:** Feminism, Patriarchy, Gender, Discourse, CDA, FCDA, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

### Introduction

Feminist literary theory named feminism has been produced as a part of a feminist association endeavouring to confront traditions, priorities and strategies in all parts of life. Feminism starts a platform for comprehending human being deeds within the common background by focusing upon the women and their conflicts in up to date society. Feminism emphasizes perceiving personality, relations, grouping and society in the collective, artistic, racial, financial and biased contexts. These contexts come out as helpful features for domination and suppression that is unswervingly linked to gendered relations. Feminism, in other words, is a condition or state of ideological and opinionated movements that raise a voice for equal rights for

academic, property rights, equal rights to vote to those men. It also raises a voice against nuisance, rape, and household aggression. There are three waves of feminism ranging from the nineteenth century until the present. The first signal of feminism started in 1968 for the rights of women. The second sign of feminism started in 1970 in the UK and USA. The third wave of feminism started approximately in 1990 and raising its voice for the female till the present. The western feminist discourse has a critical interest in how women bodies have been a special subject of concern with sexual orientation in various disciplines. In Western critical discourse, the women body represents a person's social, political and economic status. [Turner \(1996\)](#) says that in a society

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where we are living, our main environmental and social conflicts are presented through the human body and voice. Some western feminist scholars said that the "return to the body" posed the hazard of neglecting the description of gendered bodies, in which the woman was defined as the tricky body (Bayer & Malone, 1996). Beauvoir (1989), in her work *The Second Sex*, says that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman". Beauvoir says that in our society, women are considered inferior to men, and they are not given their rights properly, especially in a dominant male society. Women suppression means giving low-level status and providing impermanent opportunities to females as compared to males. Females are considered inferior in patriarchal societies and do not enjoy their freedom.

Discourse is defined as language beyond the sentence. In other words, we can say that discourse is showing or saying something from a particular perspective on any topic, i.e., social, political, moral, cultural and environmental. It is also a way of describing something in very minute and clear manners. Discourse is a viewpoint, point of view, and outlook, especially for an explanation. Discourse analysis means an explanation of something in detail or, to some extent, a clear analysis of anything. In critical discourse analysis, we study the power, relations, and gender issues at a depth level, e.g., different kinds of relationships or in different fields. FCDA (Feminist critical discourse analysis) is a recent growth under the broader division of (CDA) critical discourse analysis. The main attention of feminist critical discourse analysis is to address women issues, including body, voice, gender, theory and all other issues related to women issues. FCDA presents a clear analysis of women issues, especial in all fields in which women are currently facing problems (Lazar 2005). The notion of discourse in feminist critical discourse analysis is implied both in the linguistic intelligence of language, which communicates sagacity in surroundings. So, feminist critical discourse analysis stresses the idea that communities can use different discourses as means with which they can produce something new: the pupils of discourse can rework and confront the issues entrenched in discourses (Lazar 2005).

This study shows the complete and clear picture of feministic critical discourse analysis in Shamsie's novel from the feminist perspective. So, not only the internal quality of the feminist discourse explained but also the gendered discourses have clearly and concisely been discussed. Kamila Naheed Shamsie is considered as most central Pakistani novelist of the postmodern era of critical feminism. The most notable fraction of her writings is her concern for those concealed women who are bound to chase family boundaries and think of these limitations as a fence to their mental liberty and internal uniqueness. All the female portrayals of Shamsie bear a lot, either from macro features or inner dissatisfactions. So, the paper endeavors to examine the discourse patterns to reveal the propelling feminist proportions behind them. All the discourse components have been explained and described from the feminist perspective to expand or generate a new ideal analysis of the selected work.

### Literature Review

In this part, the investigator observes some of the writing that transactions with the subject matter of the latest learning. Feminism is a logical society just for the constitutional rights of women. It is both an academic pledge and a political association that seeks fairness for women. Feminist literature is literature that encourages the concept that feminist plan of explaining, establishing and defending the same civil, political, economic and communal rights for women. The terms "Feminism" Or "Feminist" first started in France and the Netherlands in 1872. The record of the current west feminist movements is separated into three "Parts". Each is described as dealing with diverse parts of the comparable feminist issues. The first wave explains the connection of the 19th from side to side early 20th centuries, which dealt naturally with suffrage, functioning positions and enlightening human being civil rights for women and girls. The second wave (the 1960s-1980s) dealt with the division of laws, as well as learning injustices and the place of women in society. The third wave of feminism is both persistence of the second beckon and a reply to the imaginary failures.

Women in Pakistan usually hang about the subject matter to a broad assortment of

discriminations enforced on them right through the responsibility of inherited nation, saintly explanations, and deep-rooted property-owner association (Mumtaz and Shaheed 1987). Women have been showing as ‘an image of contrast’ in surroundings of undependable degrees of wages and service points.

Alimam's (2010) MA assumption explains the internal story that Woolf inspects, linking to feminism, financial freedom, the autonomy of intelligence, and the forces women may possibly tolerate all over the path of their relationship with men, whether as an associate or an accompanying person. For example, in Woolf's novel 'A Room of One's Own', she writes how women are debarred from the educational globe and the possessions of this excepting, overtly the unprovoked distribution of richness.

Born in 1947, Pakistan is a reasonably blossoming state. To understand the true landscape of sexual category conversation and female position in today's Pakistani society and organizations, it is very significant to look at the sequential development of Muslim feminist thoughts in the pre-1947 majestic India. From the viewpoint of today's feminism, Minault (1998) examines, it is very important to be acquainted with that in nineteenth-century India, men were the pioneers in the actions for women's schooling, human rights and grouping. Men's input in sexual characteristics reforms was out of their

authentic nervousness and cheerfulness and also out of their hope to go with their private lives and the public roles and proclamations. Known the authoritative atmosphere of seclusion challenged by Muslim women who had little access to schooling and other balanced possessions, it is not a disclosure that men lead the manner of gender reforms in grand India.

### Theoretical Framework

The present paper is a qualitative textual analysis of the selected work of Kamila Shamsie, "Broken Verses". The targeted text has been analyzed under the heads of Feminist Critical Discourse analysis. Lazar's *Feminist Critical Discourse analysis* (2007) theory has been used for the textual analysis of the targeted text.

Feminist critical discourse analysis the center is of how sex deliberation and gendered relationships of power are reproduced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in communal relations between people, and in people's social and personal identities in texts and discussions. Feminist critical discourse analysis as a prejudiced standpoint on sexual category bothered with demystifying the interrelationships of sex, influence and consideration in discourse, is in the same way suitable to the study of texts as well as talk, which offers a corrective to approaches that mostly favour one linguistic method over another (Lazar 1999; 2000).

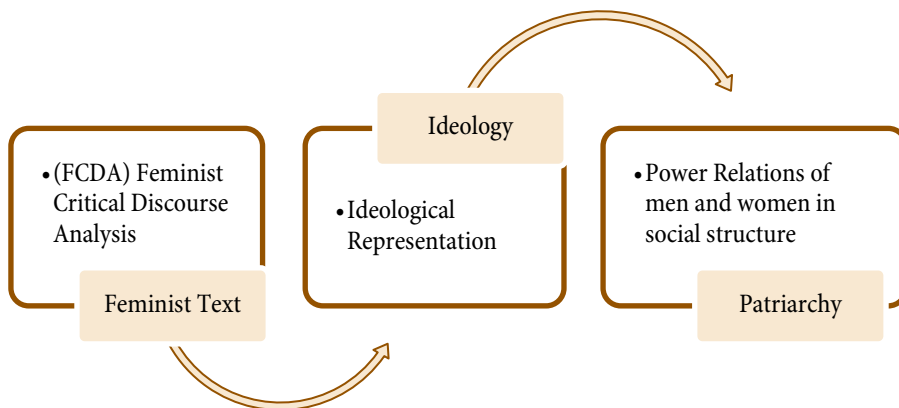


Image 1: Lazar model (2007) of (FCDA) Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Adopted)

### **Textual Analysis of *Broken Verses***

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Broken Verses* (2005), set in Karachi. Aasmani Inqalab is a young lady in her 30s who is worried about the tragedy. Fourteen years ago, her mother, Samina Akram, was misplaced and was assumed dead. Samina was an ardent follower of the poet, Nazim whose work reflected the injustices of Pakistani society through various stages. Furthermore, Aasmani started a new job at a cable TV station where she was introduced to famous actress Shehnaz Saeed. Shehnaz was a close friend of Samina, particularly in the difficult years after the poet's death. Aasmani received a series of letters from her fan. She was shocked to find that the letters were written in the secret codes used by her mother and the poet. Through letters, she got the news that her mother was alive. "He was still alive. Oh, dear God, he was still alive." The novel addresses two areas of interest, the poet role in reflecting the ills of society and Aasmani grief for her mother.

### **The Exploitation of Woman's Body by Patriarchy**

The attitude of "patriarchy" is measured in charge of this as it externalizes and underestimates women. The women's activists are of the termination that our sex cognizance is determined and customized by culture. So, their specific goal is to modify the world by advancing ladies' consistency and criticize patriarchy. So women's activist deed can be viewed as a form of activism to alter the position of women and hold them at standards with men in each locality of life.

*Broken Verses* is a close mother-daughter story. Samina Akram was the mother of Aasmani Inqilab. Suddenly she vanished. Her daughter got the news that her mother is no more in this world. Samina Akram was the enthusiastic admirer of the poet; Nazim. The superiority of the narrative is in the method Shamsie uses an interior way to confront deep discussions, comparable to patriarchy, as a system of mistreatment and dissimulation. Shamsie reconstructs the public and gender structures of Pakistani society. Aasmani knows well about the position of a woman in the Pakistani patriarchal culture where she is only a complaint used to resolve old scores. There is a need for essential safety on the

vessel of women, and male members delight them as insignificant beings. The male members have their own consciousness. If they want to take revenge on any other person, they take it on the women. Patriarchy is also an ideological scheme that interacts in composite ways with, say, corporatist and consumerist ideologies (Lazar, 2007). Behaviour shows a questionable depiction of human autonomy in her values in which women fight against the understandable demerits of the female body.

It evidently shows the historical recollections of the daughter's love for her mother. The unexpected loss of her mother has a shocking impact on her personality. It shows Aasmaani's love for her mother. She has spent her whole life without her mother. Encouraging upon her past recollections similar to her mom's passing in a healing centre and her life in Karachi, Shamsie makes her very own universe, which is at the same time botched up, entertaining and ludicrous. Despite the fact that her protagonist needs to adapt to the hopeless and sad circumstances due to the love of her mother. Aasmaani's life is full of problems. Nobody is there with whom Aasmaani can share her thoughts, feelings, emotions and whatever she feels about her whole surrounding, so in these circumstances, she always needs her mother to whom she loves a lot and can share her feelings. She thinks that without her mother, her identity is in danger and can be wiped out at any time by a male-dominated society as her mother vanished. A sudden hope aroused in her when she got the letter from someone that her mother was alive. Since now, she has started to think about when she will meet her and quest her thirst of separation. This clearly depicts that through the critical character of Aasmani, Kamila Shamsie wants to clear that in our country, the status of a woman is no more than a commodity. The writer creates a close relationship among gender, caste and religion in our country Pakistan through the character of Aasmani Inqalab. With the help of this protagonist, we can see the dirty programming of this patriarchal society. Through this critical character Aasmani, and generally other characters, we can generalize the plight of women throughout Pakistani society. From these particular characters, we will go towards the general situation of women in Pakistan and then to the women throughout the world or this planet. The woman is in chains

everywhere. These chains may be social, economic, gender or religious based.

### Discourse as a tool of gender Struggle

Aasmaani's procedure of self-construction starts when she knows that she has been a casualty of her mother. Aasmaani considered herself as 'performative'. Aasmaani has performed a series of actions, and through these actions, she continues her struggle for the never-ending progression of her identity construction. Society builds up parameters of rights and obligations inside which one's motivation and purpose might be forged, and these offer different clues to differentiate between lives that are beneficial, effective and cheerful as [Berguno \(2008\)](#) expressed his view that: Death, suffering, struggle and guilt, these situations represent a limit to our power and knowledge.

The female begins in almost every society in contemplating and trying their best to prove that themselves equal to that of the males, in the following prestige, they sometimes act in a quintessentially different manner that labels them as eccentrics. While acting in eccentricity, they do not follow the societal and traditional taboos, mores and ethics and, as a result, are bound to live as outcasts from society. But there are some other female beings in every society that even have no or less courage to bear teeth against those injustices that they face within male chauvinistic society. So these women act in conformity to the standard taboos of dominating male society and spend miserable lives without their consent. *Broken Verses*, the targeted text of the current research, also explains different intricate characters that act in an eccentric manner and are bound to struggle in future ahead. Throughout her life, Aasmani struggles hard for her identity, for her status, and for her life, especially in a dominant male society. During her job, she has faced a lot of problems regarding her identity or status. She has also faced internal or external problems just for the sake of her own self, identity and positive position in society. Her internal problems are directly linked with her family, her mother, and her lover. Aasmani Inqalab presents herself as a performer in front of Pakistani society. As the matter of her mother is concerned, she was popular due to her political activities.

Society inculcates in the mind of a woman that she cannot live without the presence of a male by her side, but in the targeted novel, instead of behaving like ahead of a family, almost all the men behave in an irresponsible way. For example, Samina is abandoned by her husband when her children were very teenage; she is not provided with any security or protection after getting married to her lover.

Even women steeped in the notions of patriarchy are also in favor of manipulating the same ideas as constructed by men. So, we see that she is in the social chain and has to pose differently to live in society. She has to face suffocation all the time and everywhere. This is not practised by only one female Aasmani, but all the women in the whole society are harassed to such an extent that they feel themselves in chains and cannot live freely in the society.

### Women as an Object of Exploitation

In the present society, women are considered inferior to men, and they do not have their rights properly. In *Broken Verses*, we have seen a lot of examples about the status of women. Shamsie's female characters also present clear glimpses about the status of women in Pakistani male-dominated society. Samina Akram is a political activist, a mother, and a lover of her husband and family, but she is regarded as an object in current society. Where the first-wave women's liberation movement was worried about females' suffrage and property rights, the second wave expanded these worries to incorporate sexuality, reproductive rights, the work environment et cetera. All that began with Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1986), where Beauvoir traces the roots in which woman is seen as other in a patriarchal society, second to man, which is considered and regarded as the first or default sex. She observes: "Humanity is male, and man defined woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. He is the Subject, he is Absolute- she is the Other" ([Beauvoir, 1974](#)).

Beauvoir discussed that woman is considered as the other man. Masculinity is socially developed as the widespread standard by social thoughts regarding mankind are characterized, talked about and enacted against. McCall advocates Beauvoir's projection of

Sartrean concept of man as self and woman as other as that her philosophical discussions are completely her own (McCall, 1979). According to McCall, other is a concept that is directly threatening to the self; there are different apprehensions than that “woman is a threat to man”; and if a man wishes to remain free, he must subordinate women to him (Tong, 1998). Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1986) starts with the most self-evident questions; what is a woman? Beauvoir comes up with an opinion, “Woman? She is a womb, an ovary; she is a female- this word is sufficient to define her” (Beauvoir, 1974). The social and cultural traditions have dependably considered woman, the other of man and woman normally defines herself just through him. Friedan, in her prestigious work, *Feminine Mystique* (1963), argues that women live in the present-day modern world but are still being treated as Victorians, as she says that “Woman's anatomy determines their destiny” (Friedan, 1963). Women are considered to be a victim of false beliefs as they signify their identities themselves by relating them to their children or their husbands. Beauvoir declares about a women's thought that “she determines and differentiates herself in relation to men--- (Beauvoir, 2009).

The present study clearly shows the relationship between a mother and her daughter. In this novel, Shamsie has described the true status of women, especially in Pakistani society. Shamsie has presented the true picture of females in both cultures: east and west. She is regarded as a cross-cultural writer. So, she is well aware of the statue of women, not only on a national level but an international one as well.

### **The Complexity of Gender and Power Relations**

In “Broken Verses”, we have seen a lot of examples about the gender and power relation regarding Pakistani culture. Shamsie has used many vocabularies, especially in the context of Pakistani

culture, for the sake of creating different discourses through gender. Butler furthermore explains that “sex” in “gender” is a unique sense that a sexed body exists within the social nexus that characterizes it. At another place, Butler is of the view that “its voluntarism; gender is a matter of becoming and thus subject to choice and change” (Butler, 1990). Butler says that it is the Beauvoir's view that gender is a phenomenon that is not fixed or permanent; it is changeable and depends upon the choices that have been made by the individual. One aspect of women's life described by Beauvoir is that there are numerous occasions in a developing girl life that reinforces the convection that it is a misfortune to be born with a female body. She expounded that her female body is such an aggravation, an agony, a shame, a problem to manage, appalling, cumbersome, etcetera. Regardless of the possibility that a young lady tries to overlook that “she has a female body, society will soon remind her”.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, we may say that the traditional stereotyping expectations from woman are dictated by men. When women have to get alone with the rules set by men they have to sacrifice their own individuality. Kamila Shamsie has explained the complexity of gender and power relations in *Broken Verse*. First of all, *Broken Verse* is an intimate story of a mother and her daughter. Samina Akram relation with her lover also creates complexity for her and for other family members. In *Broken Verses*, there is a fake relationship between male and female characters. Mir Adnan Khan's relationship with Aasmani is also superficial. Here we can find the different discourses for different things. The main reason for the complexity of gender and power relation is the male attitude towards females. Pakistani society has also shown the complexity of gender and power relation, not only in Shamsie's work but the other Pakistani writer's as well.

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