

SEMIOTICS OF SOCIAL PROTESTS: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF MAHSA AMINI WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATIONS

BY

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ANALYSIS OF MAHSA AMINI WOMEN'S
DEMONSTRATIONS**

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Semiotics of Social Protests: A Multimodal Analysis of Mahsa Amini Women's Demonstrations** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Semiotics of Social Protests: A Multimodal Analysis of Mahsa Amini Women's Demonstrations

This study undertakes a comprehensive multimodal analysis of forty strategically selected visuals from the Mahsa Amini protests, integrating Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar with Kimberlé Crenshaw's Intersectional Feminism to explore the pivotal role of visual art in fostering street activism, advocating for human rights, and challenging discrimination based on intersecting identity markers. By examining the visual strategies employed by protesters, this research sheds light on the complex ways in which visuals can disrupt dominant narratives, mobilize support, and create counter-narratives that promote social justice and human rights. Through a nuanced analysis of the visuals of the protests, this study highlights the agency, resilience, and creativity of women and marginalized groups in shaping their own narratives and resisting oppression, and demonstrates the ways in which visual art can be harnessed to contest power, challenge dominant ideologies, and promote social transformation. The findings of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of visual art in shaping social movements and advancing social change, and underscore the importance of multimodal analysis in understanding the dynamics of social movements. By exploring the intersections between visual, linguistic, and spatial modes, this research reveals the complex ways in which meanings are created and negotiated in social justice activism, and highlights the critical role of visual art in shaping the narratives and outcomes of social justice activism. Ultimately, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the ways in which visual art can be used to promote social justice, challenge dominant power structures, and create new possibilities for human rights and social transformation, emphasizing the need for a multimodal approach to understanding the dynamics of social movements and the construction of social justice narratives.

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In loving memory of my eldest sister, Mrs. Kalsoom, who passed away on June 9, 2025. She was a perfect example of loveliness, care, and down-to-earth warmth, radiating motivation and joy through her gentle personality. As a devoted sister, Mrs. Kalsoom brought me up with tender care, educated me with patience, taught me manners with kindness, and imparted life lessons with wisdom. She was an unparalleled inspiration, matchless in her noble characters, and outstanding in every virtue. Her memory embodies the essence of love, guidance and strength, leaving an enduring imprint on my heart. In every step of my journey, I feel her presence, her encouragement, and her unwavering belief in me. I dedicate this achievement to my late sister, Mrs. Kalsoom, honoring her extraordinary spirit, her selfless love, and the profound, indelible impact she had on my life. May her soul rest in peace and may Allah SWT bliss her highest ranks in Jannah. May her legacy of love, compassion, tolerance, grace, truthfulness and inspiration continue to guide me; and may her memory be a blessing in my life forever. Ameen.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter sets the stage for the entire study, providing a comprehensive framework that guides the study in investigating the finding of the study. It begins with a general background that introduces the topic, followed by a concise historical overview that contextualizes the research within a broader narrative. The problem statement succinctly identifies the research gap, while the research questions of this chapter offer a clear direction for the inquiry. The significance of the study is also discussed in this chapter, highlighting the relevance and potential impact of the topic. In addition to this, the delimitation of the study is also presented in this foundational chapter which clearly defines the scope of the topic thereby ensures a focused and directional exploration. Finally, the organization of the study has been presented which provides a logical roadmap, outlining the structure and flow of the thesis and facilitating a coherence representation of the research findings.

1.2. Background of the Study

Gender inequality is a pressing social evil that is present almost everywhere with varying intensity. Gender discrimination is one of the root causes of gender inequality. This inequality is due to certain social factors that position women as lower and inferior. Women are portrayed as less powerful and inert and they are considered as subordinate. This patriarchal mentality is widely practiced in many countries. In some cases, for example, women are solely restricted to household activities. Their role in social and political affairs is neglected and completely denied. This gives men more space to dominate women in all spheres of life thereby making women dependent on men (Moghanizadeh, 2013).

To counter this patriarchal mindset which marginalizes certain groups over others, different streets protests and general demonstrations have taken place throughout the course of history. As per reports and established history, the labor movement in 17th

century is considered the first street activism strike in which the protesters used visuals, placards etc. designed through semiotic strategies. The street protests called for due rights for workers, fair wages and workers' due rights and fair play. The Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886 is one of the instances. It also initiated the international Labor Day which is celebrated in May every year. Another movement, the Lawrence Textile Strike started in the state of Massachusetts in 1912, which initiated in streets and got widespread attention around the globe. Thus, with the help of street activism, workers, women and other unprivileged classes got the ability to call for their due rights, equality and fairness (Stein, 1962).

Historically, street activism has been a dominant mean for communal transformation, with human rights and liberties demonstrations rising worldwide to confront repressive regimes and claim justice and equality. The current human rights progresses, street activism and movements got impetus in the mid-20th century, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) acting as the first and basic written manuscript. Globally, street activism has played a decisive role in determining civic speech and influencing course of action and changing policies, with arrangements and movements such as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States (1950s and 1960s) and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa via visual and linguistic elements to construct discourses, communicate ideologies and messages and defy prevailing authoritative regimes that defined the social structures of the societies.

In contemporary globally integrated world, street social protests and street activism go beyond physical boundaries, leveraging technology to create and spread discourses and messages worldwide. Conventionally ingrained in the 20th century, street activism has evolved, taking into account latest technologies and ways to magnify its contact and influence on the target audience. From habitual visuals to digital posts and hash tags, activists make use of a choice of semiotic apparatuses to construct discourses, communicate messages and assemble public support. By investigating the interconnectedness of technology and street activism, we comprehend how semiotic tools and methodologies form communal speeches and discourses and confront prevailing authoritative structures and powerful set-up in the current time, giving opportunities to social protests and street activism to get global notice and organize international support.

In the Eastern part of the globe, street activism has got a distinctive shape, with women's activities and street activism in states like Turkey, Egypt and Indonesia using street protests to confront cruel and biased regimes and claim real emancipation for their due rights. Likewise, in the Muslim part of the globe, street activism has been created by the multifaceted relationship of religion, culture, norms and traditions and politics, with women's engagements and street protests in countries like Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. They have been using semiotic strategies in street activism to claim due rights and defy patriarchy. In particular, in Iran, street activism for women's rights has an extensive record, going back to the early 20th century, with the women's awakening associations and demonstrations for claiming rights in the 1930s defying their traditional social set-up and calling for women's freedom, education and involvement in political and public spheres (Watson, 2005).

The advancement of street activism in Iran is of various types categorized in several phases containing the pre-revolutionary era, post-revolutionary era, reformist era, Green Movement and the latest Mahsa Amini protests. The pre-revolution era had variations in rendering women their rights, but the demanded rights were never given to the women of Iran. The revolution of 1979 narrowed space for women and limited them to homes taking their autonomy and freedom. This made women of Iran dependant on men and a patriarchal social set-up resumed. The Mahsa Amini protests in 2022 showed a considerable instant in Iranian women street activism as women were facing so many barriers and they were under strict laws purely designed by men. These street protests were women-led that openly defied patriarchy and called for equality and due rights. From a semiotic standpoint, these demonstrations drew attention to the significance of visual and linguistic elements in passing on the discourses and confronting governing power structures. The bringing into play of symbols, signs and slogans in the streets by the protesters passed on dominant discourses concerning resistance, solidarity, and social justice.

The multi-modal analysis of the Mahsa Amini street demonstrations shows the ways in which women utilized various modes such as images, text and gesture to express their ideas, present their stance and oppose the patriarchal traditions. This study looks at the semiotic dimensions of these street demonstrations, taking the analysis of the visual

and linguistic elements employed by the women. By investigating the multi-modal strategies used by women, this research study attempts to add to our understanding of the role of semiotics in social demonstrations and street activism.

The 2022 Iranian women's demonstrations that started after the demise of a lady—Mahsa Amini—by the morality police of the State of Iran marked an important and pivotal moment in Iran's history. Women and marginalized groups of the society came out to streets in Iran and people from around the globe showed their solidarity with them. They came out to openly oppose the patriarchal norms that prevail therein. Women came out for their fundamental rights. Despite many restrictions and hardships, the protesters came out to streets and used different strategies to convey their message to the world. Through street activism, they took help from multimodality, used social media and print media and other platforms to challenge the patriarchal norms of the state and society. This study takes the broader context of women's protests in Iran and analyzes the data through an integrated framework of multimodal analysis and intersectional feminism.

The current research study deals with the issue of gender discrimination in Iran where women are subjected to different social, political and religious oppressions. With the help of an integrated framework (multimodality of Kress & Van Leeuwen and intersectional feminism of Kimberley Crenshaw), it analyzes the visuals (placards) of women-led street protests in Iran. The protests started after the murder of a lady—Mahsa Amini—by morality police in Iran. This incident caused widespread waves of street demonstrations and street activism in Iran and in other countries around the world. The demonstrations took coverage from the international news channels and a movement for claiming women's rights and freedom erupted in Iran in September 2023. The street protests are still in progress in different parts of Iran.

1.3. A Brief History of Women's Rights through Street Activism

This section throws light on the brief history of women's rights struggle across the globe and specifically in countries like Pakistan, Iran and India. The protests which carried out on streets, public spaces and other social arenas are briefly discussed in this section showing women's activism on grass-root level. The protests, struggles and marches with their slogans, banners, visuals and other discourses are presented in this

section. This not only helps in exploring this topic but also links my study with the other relevant studies.

On global level, semiotics, street activism, and placards give power to feminist activities by passing on dominant messages and challenging patriarchal traditions and concepts. In Iran, women utilized these tools to object biased and prejudiced laws, often via representational means like defying hijab etc. through street activism. Likewise, in close countries like Pakistan, Morocco, India and Egypt, feminist activists make use of semiotics and street activism to set in motion for reforms in the existing laws and norms, support women's due rights and claim parity and fairness. This explains the region's continuing effort for women's rights and empowerment. By designing and presenting multimodal images for combined and cooperative actions, these arrangements try to make social transformation and endorse feminist causes.

The struggle for women's rights through street activism has been an issue since long. It has been a global issue. Some countries still have the issue missing the international standards of women rights. Street activism has been a universal fact, playing a fundamental function in opposing patriarchal traditions and calling for the due rights of women. For example, the global MeToo movement, which started in 2017, used social media and street protests to make people aware regarding sexual harassment and beating, attempting to make an inclusive community of street activists combating for women's emancipation. In the same way, the women's march, held in different parts and cities of the globe in 2017, confirmed the power of global street activism in claiming women's rights and defying patriarchal customs and practices.

In the Western part of the world, street activism has been an important way and strategy for women's rights protests and movements, with street activists using semiotic tools to openly oppose leading power structures and prevailing social practices. The suffragette movement in the United States and the United Kingdom in early 20th century, to cite an instance, employed street demonstrations and visual signs like purple, white, and green to call for women's suffrage. In recent past, the women protested in streets and public spaces in the United States and Europe called for handsome and equal pay, reproductive rights and to put an end to any sort of violence.

1.4. History of Women's Rights in Iran

This section highlights the history of women's rights struggle generally and in Iran. It presents some relevant studies from the available literature and makes a ground for the analysis of my research work. Iran has been having a long history regarding women's rights. It has seen different phases in the reigns of various rules especially pre-revolution and post-revolution status of women in Iran. Giving a brief understanding about western feminism, this section highlights the rise of Muslim feminism and the differences between western and Muslim feminism narrowing down it to the context of Iran.

Feminism is an act of women activism and a movement for political, economic and legal rights for women which put women on equal level with men. It talks about the protection of women from different oppressions. Feminism is the oldest movement like other social movements which has its history and it is an old concept as women face suppression for so long. The word feminism has got many interpretations and meanings and the term is not a simple one but a multifold concept that carries much in itself. There are three waves of feminism and they have their own aims. All the waves struggle for women's rights in different spheres through different ways. There are many types, variations and conceptualizations of the word feminism. These dimensions are inter-dependent and yield each other. There are various types of feminism: liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, black women feminism, existential feminism, multicultural feminism, eco-feminism, post-modern feminism etc. Different modes are used to make various discourses that construct various messages from feminist point of view which helps in communicating the message of women's rights to common men (Odhiambo & Mutuku, 2022).

Western feminism and street activism have conventionally insisted on individual civil liberties, egalitarianism and secularism, emphasizing on individual freedom, independence and equivalent opportunities in schooling, service and political affairs. This trend and approach has been effective in advancing the rights of women in Western setting. On the other hand, Muslim or Eastern feminism insists on building community, spirituality and cultural distinctiveness, looking for empowering women within their cultural and religious contexts. This feminism confronts and opposes the biased

interpretations of religious texts and cultural norms, emphasizing on the rights of women and their true emancipation.

The main dissimilarity between Western and Muslim/Eastern feminisms is in their approaches to individuality, secularism and cultural context. Whereas the Western feminism prefers complete civil rights and personal liberty, Muslim or Eastern feminism takes the helm of the complexities of cultural and religious contexts, giving weight to society, social norms and mysticism. By knowing these distinctions, we can contextualize Muslim feminism within the vast background of international and Western feminism, giving a wide-ranging and thoughtful know-how of feminism on global level. This contextualization supports harmony, understanding and helps in framing effectual methods for advancing women's rights in any part of the world. This enriches Western feminist discourse and provides a base for a deeper understanding of women's rights in Iran and in the world.

Iran and its history regarding women are old and so are its culture, traditions, norms and religion. It has an old civilization which traces back to Aryan civilization. It has been through different phases and changes and different civilizations have left their impacts on Iranian civilization. Women had played different roles throughout this history. The revolutions and various upheavals in the twentieth century made women capable of playing a positive role. They were granted freedom in most spheres of life and they have had a considerable contribution during that time. Despite gaining some freedom, different religious and other social extremists did not want women to gain freedom and they resisted the momentum of women movements and progress in Iran (Tafreshi, 2010).

Multiple factors are responsible in shaping the identity of women in Iran. The history, social norms, culture, social and political structure and the like factors play their role in giving the women status in Iran. State policies, religions and the mindset of the intellectuals really matter in defining the status of women in every society and also in Iran. External factors such as international laws, UN charter about human rights and other documents also matter, but the internal trends have dominant role and impact in shaping and defining the roles of women in Iran carries. This has made the role and status of women a confusing and contradictory one therein (Tohidi, 2016).

Iran has had a long history of women's rights and women's participation in different walks of life. According to the Office of International Affairs (2016) states that the shah of Iran in 1963 gave social and political reforms regarding women which were taken negatively and adversely by the people of Iran and were strongly opposed. It was termed as the agenda of the West and was called a so-called revolution by the locals which gave freedom to women against the existing norms of their society. This granted the women of Iran the right to vote and run political offices. The reports further adds the statistics of the 1978 elections and states that women got significant seats in the election which gives a positive clue about their march and struggle towards their rights. It writes, "...women held 22 out of 268 seats in parliament, 333 served in local councils, and five were judges." (p.17). the report also writes that various reforms were passed that grant women even more rights. For instance, women were given the right to divorce husbands, the age of marriage for girls was raised from 13 to 18 and women were given due share in the property. These reforms were enacted under the Family Protection Laws of 1967 and 1975.

Islamic narrative and modernism are in tussle in shaping a better future for women in Iran and other nearby countries. The advocates of the earlier ideology are too strict thereby limiting women to certain tasks while the advocates of modernism want to see them free and fully independent. This has been a constant ideological battle since long which got too intense in the current age. The issue of women's rights has been through different phases and fluctuations under different reigns and shahs. Various kings (shahs) came and various policies were adopted regarding women's rights. Most of them dictated women and kept them deprived of their due and legal rights. Women were just thought as objects of beauty and something to be used. They were deprived of the right to vote, get proper education, and make associations to struggle for their due rights. They were put at the mercy of men and were placed below men in all walks of life (Camara, 2012).

There have been four stages that happened in the last and contemporary century in which some ups and downs occurred regarding women and their rights. These shifts happened after the 1979 revolution in Iran. Different presidencies came where everyone played his role regarding women's representation in social, political and other walks of

the state. These four phases are; retrenchment during the first decade after the advent of Ayatollah Khomeini, b) hard-earned reforms under President Hashmi Rafsanjani, c) rollback after President Mahmood Ahmad-e-Nijad, and d) big promises and little work under Hassan Rohani (Hanna, 2020).

From the literature cited above, it can be said that the issue regarding women's rights and emancipation in Iran is old. Many phases came in this cause with different results. Some phases restricted women's rights while some reigns showed some relaxation. The issue of women has, thus, come through ups and downs throughout its history as the available literature shows. The current situation shows that there are still many restrictions on women in Iran which cause Iranian women to strike for their rights. The demonstrations of Mahsa Amini are one of its prominent instances. It shows the continuation of women's struggle to claim their due rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

1.5. Multi-Modality: The Concept, its Evolution & Aims

This section presents the details about the origin, history and meaning-making potential of multimodality. It tries to discuss that how different modes were used to construct various discourses. It attempts to highlight that how different modes are used to construct various messages and convey different discourses in the current technological age. This section also tries to know that how is multimodality used in connection with language in meaning-making process. Thus, in this section, the history, origin and meaning-making potential of multimodality have been explored.

The usage of various modes of meaning-making is the basic aspect of human communication that dates back to the earliest ways of human contact. It has been in use since long, but formally started and came to the formal subject study in 1960s. Humans have been utilizing a range of strategies since long to communicate and interact like using body language, moments and gestures with verbal communication. In antique civilizations, cave paintings, old signs and symbols and petro-glyphs were in use to join visuals and use them for making stories, messages and symbolism. These were the potential ways to construct various discourses through which people would communicate in a multimodal way. The mind-blowing progress of technology has been transforming the ways of communication and it has brought in various modern semiotic strategies to

construct different discourses in a highly specialized manner. This has led to the expansion of modern strategies of multimodality. A gradual shift has come from the simple print to digitalization. Now, multimodality uses the arrangement of manifold semiotics modes of communication to construct various messages through a specialized way. Currently, textual language, colors, graphics, animations, videos, visual, gestures etc. are used to construct potential discourses that effectively communicate the target message and meaning. Thus, tracing back to the old times till present, we see a dramatic shift in the use of multimodality which has been the best way in making strong discourses (Kress, 2010).

There is a link between multimodality or multimodal analysis with discourse analysis and the former concept can better be traced and understood by throwing light on this historical interconnectedness. Discourse analysis is the term which is first introduced by Zellig Harris probably in 1952. This concept has been used and evolved since then. Making this concept a base for his work, Halliday presented systemic-functional theory to analyze any language as a potential meaning-making process. Halliday's approach brought in social context along with text analysis and combined them. The concept of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was thus introduced. This development and theoretical evolution made the researchers capable to use linguistic theories and analytical tools to other modes of communication: images, visuals and films. This led to the development of analyzing any complex (semiotic) or simple (textual) communication discourse presented through simple mode or multimodality. Thus, in contemporary time, simple discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis are used to analyze any sort of discourse in broad disciplines in order to decode any text or visual that how semiotic strategies are used to construct certain discourses (Yang, 2019).

Multimodality is more about meaning making concept than merely stating things, ideas or general concepts in words. Multimodality goes beyond words and makes an effective way of using various modes to make potential discourses. Multimodality has more implications in the social semiotics of today's world and it has been in use from 1950s till now. It has the capacity to form more impactful discourses through special arrangements of various semiotic features. Unlike past, the trends have developed with time and we are in the modern and technological era where various modern strategies are

employed to construct certain discourses. It has been done on very unique and advance manners considering different aspects and dimensions. Thus in the past and in the present, multimodality has been the best and effective way to form different discourses and build different meanings. It has the potential to bring different meaning-making processes together and create certain discourses. Different semiotic strategies and various aspects like colors, gestures, space art and gaze etc. are used in special ways to construct potentially strong discourses and pass on certain ideologies (Ledin & Machin, 2018).

Multimodality is more practical than theoretical and it has practical implications unlike using simple language which seems odd and straight in creating meanings. It helps in producing more beneficial messages by making a multimodal discourse very clear and catching thereby enhances comprehension and gets more engagements. Jewitt (2017) writes about multimodality in his book, 'Encyclopedia of Language and Education'. Multimodality is more efficient in creating various discourses and conveying meanings that have practical social and political implications. Due to its practicality, effectiveness and complex nature, various psychological, social and political theories are used to decode the discourses of multimodality. Multimodality is used to use and combine different modes and find their impacts on one another that how different combinations make different senses and meanings. Thus, the word multimodality has more social implications and it is, therefore, commonly used in the contexts of social semiotics.

Thus, multimodality refers to the utilization of numerous modes of communication to express senses and construct meanings. When protestors from diverse linguistic backgrounds, in this study or in other multimodal studies, come closer as one, multimodality enables them to converse and put into words their meaning more efficiently, often through public visuals or gestural languages, signs, or descriptions. I, therefore, use multimodal approach for this study as it allows me for a comprehensive understanding of the visual data. By using multimodal analysis, I am going to decipher the complex discourses and ideologies presented in the visuals of my study which would not be, otherwise, easy to understand and analyze.

1.6. Statement of the Problem

While there has been increasing research on the language of civil protests and social movements, there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of the visuals and

linguistic elements (texts, colors, images etc.) of the Mahsa Amini women's protests, particularly in the context of women's rights and social justice in Iran. Some studies related to these demonstrations are recently conducted, but the multimodal data has not yet analyzed through the framework which this study applies. The feminist perspective, in this study, helps better understand what the protesters want and what meanings they create and convey in their placards. This dimension of these protests has not yet explored which makes this study important.

The Mahsa Amini women's protests, which started in September 2022 and are continuing to date, provide a valuable data/research potential for analyzing the role of visual communication in civil protests, given the significance of the protests in highlighting the ongoing struggles for women's rights in Iran. These protests which took place on a large scale in Iran and also in other different countries have their impacts and their analysis, therefore, becomes essential. There is a lack of research that specifically examines the linguistic and visual elements of the Mahsa Amini women's protests through a multimodal framework.

To put plainly, this study aims to analyze the linguistic and visual elements of the Mahsa Amini women's protests through a multimodal framework and feminist perspective. The goal is to understand the meanings created and conveyed in protesters' placards, shedding light on the role of visual communication in these civil protests and the ongoing struggle for women's rights in Iran.

1.7. Research Questions

1. What patterns of multimodal meaning emerge through the interplay of linguistic and visual elements?
2. How have women been portrayed in various placards/visuals used in this study through feminist lens?

1.8. Research Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the patterns of multimodal meaning that emerge through the interplay of linguistic and visual elements
2. To examine how women have been portrayed in various placards/visuals used in this study through a feminist perspective

1.9. Significance

This research work focuses on analyzing the messages conveyed by the visuals used in the Iranian women's protests following the death of Mahsa Amini. The research uses an integrated framework (Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodality and intersectional feminism of Kimberley Crenshaw). The study aims to examine the linguistic and multimodal features of the visuals to understand how Iranian women have strategically used language and other semiotic modes to express their concerns and advocate for their rights. By shedding light on the discourse patterns, metaphors, imagery, and rhetorical strategies used in the visuals, this study contributes to a nuanced, clearer and deeper understanding of the role of language in social protests and more importantly in social activism. Furthermore, the study's integrated framework enables a nuanced understanding of how different modes interact to create meaning and impact. The findings of this study not only contribute to the specific context of the Iranian women's protests but also a broader field of research on the role of language, visuals and communication in promoting social change through activism.

1.10. Delimitation

The research study has some delimitations. First, the study focuses solely on the visual images created by women protesters in response to the killing of Mahsa Amini in Iran. Other protests or forms of protests related to women's rights in Iran or other countries are not considered in this research. As a result, the study's findings may not be generalize-able to other women's rights movements or protests.

Second, the study only analyzes forty visual images that include placards and banners. While these images have been chosen to provide the best insight into the protests, a larger sample size could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the events. The selected images have been obtained from online platforms such as Google, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. The study excludes other forms of multimedia such as videos and documentaries, which could provide additional context and insight into the protests. Furthermore, the study focuses solely on the textual and visual content of the selected images while keeping in view the contextual background of the protests. In addition to this, the proposed study excludes the perspective of the authorities or opponents of the women's rights movement in Iran.

1.11. Organization of the Study

The research work includes five chapters. The very first chapter of the research work talks about the aim of conducting this study. It throws light on the importance of the research work. This chapter also informs the readers about the research questions, statement of the problem, significance of the study and delimitations. Overall, this chapter deals with the background of the study and lets the readers know that what is the objective and importance of conducting the research study.

The second chapter deals with the available literature and presents the review of the relevant literature. It covers the research studies that are relevant to the research. The research studies that are based on multimodality and feminism are cited in this chapter. This gives background to my research study and provides a base to the research work. It also highlights that there is a gap for the study to be explored and helps in the data analysis, methodology and other aspects of my study.

The third chapter provides the details of carrying out this study. It talks about the plan of the research study. It discusses the sources of data collection, the rationale and general categorization of the data, and the information about the strategy of analysis with the help of the theoretical framework.

The fourth chapter is the important part of the research study. It elaborates that how the data is analyzed with the help of the theoretical framework. It is the chapter which involves the readers that how different modes are used to create messages and convey various ideologies regarding different social and political issues.

The fifth chapter is about conclusion. It includes the discussion of the study that what has been gained from the analysis of the data. It also includes the findings of the study and gives some recommendations for future researches. This chapter reflects back on the research questions and objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter on literature review takes stock of the past and relevant studies on women protests. It identifies the research gap for this study and makes this study an important and new one. The literature reviewed in this chapter gives a clear insight about women's struggle for their rights around the globe through street activism and open demonstrations. It presents that how various campaigns, demonstrations and street protests have taken place that used multimodality. The literature that the study covers lays the foundation for my data analysis and helps me to know about the existing research studies on social protests, semiotics and multimodality. The relevant literature assists me in identifying the key concepts that lead to the objectives of my study. Thus, linking the available literature with my work helps in creating a new research gap for my study.

This study has been planned in a way that involves seeking and conducting a wide range of literature review. It is then followed by a multimodal analysis of the visuals of Mahsa Amini Women's demonstrations. The framework of multimodality from a feminist point of view is used which better analyzes my data of semiotics. The plan is designed in such a way that it covers a thorough understanding of the relevant literature and theoretical foundations of semiotics. The study also takes the understanding of the application of multimodality to social protests. It specifically focuses on the demonstrations of Mahsa Amini women's protests that took place in Iran.

2.2. Reframing Resistance: Visual Advocacy for Women's Rights

This section describes the role of visual art for making effective and powerful discourses that talk about women's resistance against patriarchal norms. It highlights that how inclusive representation is represented through visual art designed through multimodality that calls for women's rights and emancipation. The subject matter of my thesis is also women street activism made through street protests and demonstrations. This section is, therefore, important and in link with my study.

Social semiotics is used by various networks, communities, organizations and independent individuals. These groups and individuals are active and mobilized agents for social change. Their social mobilization and protests include a wide range of movements that address various political, social, economic or other issues in a society and call for their solution. They use visual art and semiotic strategies to construct various discourses. Women and the advocates of women's rights use the same semiotic tools to produce various discourses and make their voice heard on various platforms (Rucht, 1996). "Women's protests are a significant component of social protests, often addressing a wide range of issues such as reproductive rights, violence against women, workplace discrimination, and political representation. These protests mobilize women and their allies to challenge systemic injustices and demand change." (p.189).

Women's demonstrations, where the visuals are designed through multimodality, call for basic women's rights like gender parity, equal opportunities for everyone regardless their gender, reproductive rights and independence, and the free will to have free and fair choices about their life careers and goals. They use semiotic strategies to represent their demands and show their status to the world. Through these strategies and specially-designed discourses, women attempt to search for true liberation and autonomy. "Women's protests, which specifically focus on advocating for gender equality, women's rights, and empowerment, are the true movements of change (Haider & Miguel, 2021, p. 24).

Through diverse forms of street activism, including marches, strikes, and digital campaigns, women's protests add to the larger discourse of social change and awareness thereby giving enough space and weight to the voices of the suppressed and marginalized groups. These social protests, which use multimodality and semiotic strategies to design and construct their discourses, advocate and call for all-encompassing policies and social practices. By taking active part in social protests and harnessing street activism, women, human rights activists and their allies make efforts to form a more balanced, unbiased and just society for all individuals regardless their gender or social status (Texier, 2019).

Instance of women's protests and street activism within the broader context of social protests also include the Mahsa Amini women's street protests, which erupted in

reaction to gender-based violence, inequality and discrimination. With the use of semiotic strategies and multimodality, these street demonstrations not only focus on the specific challenges confront by the women in Iran, but also call attention to the links of women's rights with broader political and social justice issues. Thus, Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations are the important elements of the wide tapestry of street activism which reflect the communal struggle of those who challenge the patriarchal norms and inequality on the basis of gender. The social and political issues are addressed and openly challenged through discourses that are designed and produced through multimodality.

2.3. Social protests concerning women's activism

This section attempts to highlight that how social protests help in addressing social issues especially the issues of women. Social demonstrations are primarily held to address important social, structural and political issues, highlight them and make common people aware about them. The injustices, inequalities and biasness are opposed through street activism. The street demonstrations give open room to the marginalized people wherein they present their issues and make their voices heard. In the same way, the Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations call for social justice. They are held in streets to spread awareness, oppose the false social norms and make a difference through their placards and visual arts.

Social protests on various levels have been arranged in different countries which address various issues including women's rights issue. In case of countries like Pakistan, or Iran, different religious, cultural and institutional norms and concepts are used and manipulated to suppress women and make them inferior to men. To answer these dogmas, spreading awareness through street protests is the active tool for getting women's rights and bringing social changes. Using different platforms and strategies, women have always played important roles in different movements across the globe. Thus, women have been active agents in fighting for their rights through spreading awareness, arranging street activism or making legal proceedings (Akhtar (2021).

Social constructions are primarily shaped by education institutes in a country. The syllabus of any nation defines the collective wisdom and approach of that nation and the new kids are nurtured in educational institutes where they learn. In the same way, the textbooks of Iran also play a crucial role in mapping the mindset of young children. Most

of the textbooks in Iran portray women as passive and inert beings. The visuals of the textbooks of Iran play a crucial role in this matter. The social practices and mindset that we see today are the outcomes of what the kids study in their books. This mindset, which considers women inferior to men, is installed in the young generation of Iran which is proved through the data received during the study. The data of primary, middle and secondary levels in the Islamic Republic of Iran was analyzed and the visual arts were specifically focused (Schroder, 2012).

The socially-constructed gaps on different levels between men and women cause differences between both the genders. To fill this gap, women use different platforms and arrange social protests to raise awareness against discrimination and disparities (Blair, 1980). Hundreds of thousands of women, for instance, in the United States, actively worked against these gaps and wanted to get their due rights. Women formed various organizations for their rights—Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) (Auslander, 2011). In places where women's and men's unions were impossible, only women's unions were formed like in textile and other sectors to safeguard women's rights and women's movements actively acted to arrange different programs and protests for women's welfare. They used various ways to pass on their messages and claim their due rights (Perrot, 1974).

Social protest and street activism work for the due rights of women. Women use various platforms to struggle for their liberation from the chains of patriarchy. The formation of liberal and secular states aimed at ending the distinctions on the basis of gender and other differences. As women were kept away from their due rights and they could not participate freely in the social and political spheres of their society, it was the need of the time to grant them rights as they were struggling for their legal and political rights and freedom. These movements yielded best in America and Europe where the gap between women and men is considerably narrowed. The right to participate in political debates and other social affairs were only enjoined by the white upper-class women while ignoring the bulk of women in all spheres of life. The social and political movements which used semiotic strategies and other means proved helpful in giving most of the rights to women (Bereni & Revilllard, 2019).

The visuals of the ‘Me Too’ movement of 2006 show the resistance of women that they have created through multimodality. The movement was initiated in New York which used visual art to present the stance of the protesters. The movement, for instance, utilized different forms of visuals in its protests to create different discourses that can effectively communicate the message of the protesters. The movement included marches, digital activism, street protests and strikes. Various platforms and modes were used in the movement. All this led to the amplification of women’s voices to be heard on various platforms and on social media forums Ilyas (2021).

Street activism enabled the women of South Africa to stand against the tyrant ruler. Their due rights were snatched by the state laws and practices. Different movements, organizations and set-ups were formed by women who struggled for the liberation of women from the atrocities of the state. These platforms were made to safeguard women’s rights and grant them freedom in all aspects of life. Women would arrange different protests and trends to fight for their rights. They would use multimodality to produce various discourses through which they would challenge the dominant narratives of the state which snatched their due rights. The women of Africa thus strove for their rights like the women of Mexico, Chile, US and France (Kaplan & Temma, 1990).

In the context of Iran, women have been the victims of many social and political issues. Many social movements have been taking place claiming women’s rights in Iran. The social movements are conducted to challenge societal norms and fight for women’s rights Grave (1996). Different movements have taken place which used different modes of communication to highlight the issues of women in Iran. From the Dark Ages to the suffragist movements of the 19th and 20th century till current time and movements, visuals have been used by women to fight against gender discrimination. This has led to the end of many social evils based on gender discrimination (Rubio, 2018).

2.4. Academic works on women’s protests

In addition to the previous section, this section gives a detail set of academic studies done in various parts of the world. It presents those multimodal studies which are related to women rights and the like social and political issues. The Mahsa Amini women’s demonstrations are closely linked to these studies and all of them have the same

nature and approaches. These studies help me in getting deep understanding of my study and assist me in the better analysis of the data.

Different types of visual and verbal discourses interact to construct gender identity. Different ways and platforms are used for this aim to feed certain discourses. Education system is one of them where various kinds of concepts are taught and mindsets are made. The multimodal analysis of textbooks language and visuals of Allameh Tabataba'i University Iran is worth mentioning here. . Different aspects of images like contact or interaction, social distance and approach, attitude and narrative representation are designed through such a way where women have been shown inherently weaker. The visual and verbal aspects of the books show that they interact with each others to portray women as fragile and dependent. The underlying ideologies and hidden discourses were decoded through Halliday's (1994) framework and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) reading images model which found out that the social practices are the results of what is being taught in the books. The social and political implications are proportional to the lessons taught in educational institutes (Marefata & Marzban, 2014)..

Women are mostly ignored in many walks of life which compel them to convey and enforce their message through protest arrangements and making certain discourses in textual and visual forms. Women's participation is limited in social and political arenas in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran. A case of a conservative social set-up of Hazara region is analyzed to know that how women are treated. Almost 13 in-depth interviews are being done and visuals of the protests are properly analyzed to understand the main themes of the study and find the real results. The patriarchy of that society led women to ask about their due rights for which they arranged protests and claimed their rights. The conclusions showed that the links and intersection of identity politics, patriarchy, social norms and established hierarchy have led to the situation where women are considered inferior to men. Women came out to break these social norms and they made their voices heard through their street protests and visuals which were widely shared on social media and other platforms (Haider & Loureiro (2021).

Various semiotics tools are used to portray women as fragile and dependent. Memes are created on different social media platforms which are prevalent and widely seen. The computer-mediated discourses are analyzed to know how memes are created

and how different modes are used to create these memes. Different ways are used to create humor and convey the desired message. A normal meme has more vivid still images with texts mixed in a way that their combination makes a good humor effect. These memes are created to convey certain cultural values, ideologies, stereotypes and gender representation in different societies about various concepts. A set of data was collected from paint-rest websites focusing particularly on the roles associated with men and women. Health and relationship issues were primarily highlighted in the data. With the help of critical discourse analysis in combination with Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) theory of visual grammar the textual and visual elements of the memes were analyzed. The study tried to explore how different genders were shown and how various stereotypes were constructed regarding both genders. How the text and images interconnect to create gender identity and roles was explored. It was found that different modes and markers are used to create different stereotypes and images regarding the two genders. The two genders are shown differently through different discourses and visuals associated with them. The role of visuals in memes is, thus, proven by how different memes are created so that they become viral thereby making humor about women (Mahfouz (2021).

Various kinds of semiotic discourses are designed and used by world organizations to promote the awareness regarding women's rights. Campaigns and seminars are arranged for this purpose. Organizations like UNICEF works in this regard to oppose any sort of inequality with women and children. The discourses of UNICEF, promote unbiased learning that leads to gender equality and mutual harmony. These organizations issue books, pamphlets and other scripts which help in spreading awareness. They also play their part in designing textbooks of schools in some countries. They use various visual arts and other materials which help in making people aware about social issues (Asriyama & Sari, 2022).

Awrat (women) March in Pakistan, which is held every year, also uses various kinds of multimodal discourses to raise awareness about women's issues. In 2019, for instance, the issue of patriarchy was raised in the march and the visuals of the march were designed through semiotic strategies to bring awareness and get public attention. The feminist struggle to diminish patriarchy and put an end to male dominance is the

prime aim of the march. The signs of protest, the slogans, the messages and the meanings that are made and constructed through the visuals openly oppose the patriarchy norms and call for equality and social justice. Patriarchy has been portrayed as an institution in Pakistan that works firmly to make women subordinate and weak. This makes the rights of women less important and allows men to snatch the fundamental and civil rights of women. Women, as a result, cannot participate in social movements and public jobs as they are ignored by men in all spheres of life. Re-appropriation and redefining the patriarchy, for instance, is the basic aim of the march to counter all those narratives which subject women to various oppressions. The existence of patriarchy in Pakistan and women's subjugation through different biased social norms are the main causes that have put women lower on every level (AKhtar et al., 2021).

Texts and visuals play very important role in producing certain discourses. Various modes have the potential to construct meaning in a very specialized way. How the modes are used to create certain discourses, what meanings they convey and what social implications they have are the main dimensions and aspects of multimodality which combines different modes to promote certain ideologies. Modes (visuals, texts etc.) make a message more effective both in its impact and transmission. These multi-modes help to activate the minds of people and mobilize mass support. Active engagement can be achieved through manipulating different multi-modal discourses (Bahrudin & Bakr, 2022).

The role of language in framing different discourses for advertisements and other purposes is very crucial. Various theories help in decoding those discourses made through language and semiotic strategies. Systemic Functional Linguistics can be a best tool to be applied to the multimodal discourse analysis of public service advertisements in a better way which can effectively decode the meanings of the advertisements. In terms of visual contact, the four aspects--- visual interaction, social distance, perspective and modality--- work together, not in different ways, to encode a sense and make a meaningful discourse that conveys a clear message and passes a desired meaning. The simultaneity of these aspects assists in making the whole sense and constructing a clear discourse that effectively communicates the desired message. Moreover, the verbal text also plays its role in making sense and creating the desired discourse for the target

audience. The way the whole text, visuals and different modes are organized, does not only produce the intended meaning but also helps the readers get the desired ideas, issues or solutions and they are self-reflecting. The images are of high and vivid modality to make the intended sense clearer and vivid for the audience. To consider representation and contextualization, the visuals are of high modality with a clear description of the environment and vivid setting of background. Images, thus, play an important role in creating clear meanings and images of high modality. They convey even deeper meaning and real impressions to the readers (Liu, 2010).

The visuals of London Women's March 2019 are also worth considering. The visuals of the movements were considered as the voices of the women and general public. Different types of discourses were formed through these movements. The discourses had different forms and functions and they had their impacts and meaning. This led to social changes and upheavals as the history of different movements in various countries showed. It was the march that tried to advocate women their rights and make them stronger in social and other circles. London Women's March 2019 used visuals that were designed through semiotic strategies. A corpus of the march showed that the multimodal visuals of the protesters portrayed their intended meanings to challenge the stereotypes associated with women. Taboos regarding women were also challenged and the visuals were designed to create certain discourses regarding different genders (Vinda, 2021).

Master's level ESL textbooks also use semiotic strategies through which different visuals are formed. Through multimodal analysis as an analytical technique used to analyze the visuals, it was found out that there was a trend of creating certain kinds of discourses thereby conveying certain meanings and messages. Different modes were used together with semantic shifts and a political-economic agenda was used to convey certain discourses. In organizations such as the British Council, the trends of gender representation were discovered. Gender as a reality was also identified through the trends in the books of these organizations and of other related programs. Multimodality is used to use different modes and create different discourses that promote dominant or intended narrative (Ciaschi, 2000).

The rising issues of sexuality in UK were studied and their causes were traced. The books and children's literature in the UK were analyzed through multimodality as

less work was done on the issue of sexuality in books, textbooks, visuals and other literature books. The analysis of the representation of gay co-parents through multi-modal and linguistic angles was focused. Almost twenty-five pictures were selected. Pictures regarding father and mother families were selected and the explicit focus was given on their sexuality. Differences were there in the representation of gay mums and gay dads. The Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Network (1996, 2008) categories of nomination and categorization used to reach the objectives. The visuals, gestures, colors, physical contact etc. were analyzed. The co-parents' sexuality, which is the prime focus of the study, was portrayed positively and mothers constructed more co-parents than dads. Thus, with the help of multi-modality, the representation of genders and different gender roles production were carried out effectively and different roles were attributed to different genders (Sunderland & MacGlashan, 2012).

Sociolinguistics deals with the use of language for different social relationships, diversity and various patterns of language along with practices. Conversations are the basis of making any discourse regarding social issues including gender (Lakoff 1975). The patterns of turn-taking in language usage and practices are also gender oriented and gender matters in any conversation. The social stereotypes are firmly rooted which defines one's role in a society or in conversation. Women use more turn-taking while speaking than men and women are more talkative than men. Numerous strategies are employed in making turns in speaking. Men-to-men, women-to-women, and trans-sex conversations show that take more turn-taking in speaking and men dominate in conversation. The stereotypes result in making men dominate in speaking on various platforms. More turns by women may be due to interpersonal sensitivity rather than a lack of assertiveness (Leaper, C., & Robnett, R. D. 2011).

Semiotic strategies or multimodality is almost used on all platforms for various aims around the globe. Using it in educational set-ups and academics has significant impacts. The awareness of gender-related issues in the textbooks of schools in Indonesia has its influence on the children. The English books of lower and middle level show that the visuals are specially designed to create an impact as multimodal discourses stick easily to the mind. With the analysis of data through of Kress and van Leeuwen visual grammar, gender differences and asymmetries were found in the visuals of the books.

The women were shown passive, dependent and fragile. The images clearly portray men dominant and brave. This biasness is created through the application of multimodal analysis of the visual art of the books (Damayanti, 2018)..

Print media and social media play a very crucial role in portraying different issues and ideologies. Social, cultural and political issues are presented by social and print media in a very specialized way and the visual are created through digital tools. There are closed links of language and the power as language plays an important role in designing certain discourses through which different ideologies are promoted and others suppressed. In contemporary age of technology, media, both print and social media, play an important role in this task. With the help of Fairclough model, it is found that certain discourses are deliberately designed to promote certain ideologies through print and social media. Media has been used as a tool and vehicle for promoting different social, political and cultural ideologies. Medias shape discourses, spread them and influence people and their understanding. Salience is given to certain ideologies while others are erased or made less important (Baig et al., 2020).

2.5. Social Protests and Women's Activism in Iran

This section throws light on the social protests and street activism in Iran. It provides the details about those studies which give an understanding about social protests, women's demonstrations and street activism. This aligns with my study and gives more detail about the concepts that my study explores. Both the cited literature and my study work on the analysis of the visuals of street protests in Iran.

Iran has been having women issues of various natures since long and women empowerment is very low in Iran. Women are the victims of different segregations and they face hurdles in different walks of life just because of their gender (Grave, 1996). There is a lack of awareness and legal constitutional provisions to recognize women's rights and give them due share in public spheres. The media, social norms and education sector play important role in creating, spreading and installing this mentality. Although the Iranian constitution provides certain provisions for women's rights, there is still a great need to ensure women's rights in its true sense. Laws and regulations exploit women and their rights (Janghorban et al., 2014). There is vivid discrimination and institutionalized differences based on gender in Iran thereby making men stronger over

women. Honor killing and other atrocities can be seen in Iran and women are considered inept and incapable of doing the tasks and handling the responsibilities (Moinipour, 2022). A national report on the status of women in Iran shows that women empowerment is the basic prerequisite in Iran and women face different issues based on gender. The report asks for the reduction of disparities that women face in Iran and suggests some effective measures too (Office of International Affairs, 2016).

In the Eastern context, in countries like Iran, women have played pivotal roles in social protests, advocating for gender equality, human rights, and political reforms. Despite facing significant obstacles, including restrictive legal frameworks and cultural norms, Iranian women have demonstrated resilience and determination in challenging systemic injustices through various forms of activism. Historically, Iranian women have been active participants in social movements, from the Constitutional Revolution of the early 20th century to the Green Movement of 2009. These movements have highlighted the intersectionality of women's struggles, encompassing issues such as access to education, employment opportunities, and freedom of expression (Moghanizadeh (2013).

The ideologies of post-modernism and post-revolution have their impacts on Iran. Gender discourses of Iran like Islamic fundamentalism, secular feminism and religious reformism have been influenced by the former ideological shifts. As discrimination against women in Iran is mostly legitimized through manipulations on legal and institutional perspectives, the post-revolution era also made their circle limited and kept them away from social and political. The Green Revolution of 2009 also suppressed women in different spheres of life. Gender discrimination is established through a legalist and institutional way and different social constructions and stereotypes are made to support their stance. This has led to the uprising of women against the practices that ignore women in many walks of life. Women's issues are political issues and they need to be understood and solved politically. The social norms, political and social discourses and other misinterpretations stop women from participation in social and political affairs. Thus, these issues and deprivations led to women's activism in Iran where women came out to streets to combat the false narratives. They used visuals and other means to fight for their rights (Sadeghi, 2018).

The effects of post-election of 2009 in Iran are significant to notice. The crackdown on Iranian women by the government in the election and in post-election time made the situations worse. A reaction was seen in women all across the country. The crackdown worked as stimulus for women's activism in Iran and caused the women to call for their rights. They came out to streets with visuals and banners and challenged the patriarchal norms, social practice and policies. The repression of women was openly challenged after the atrocities in the elections and this gave a new and vibrant wave of resistance to Iranian women for claiming their due rights. Different strategies, ways, platforms and tactics are used to mobilize women for their rights and hold real women activism across the country. The women of Iran showed competency in challenging discriminatory behavior, subjugation and other social ills on all platforms and especially on political grounds (Samuels, 2018).

The status of women in Iran has fluctuated and various kinds of developmental periods have happened through the course of history. The comparison can best explain the status of women especially in reform movement and in green movement. There were social fragmentation, women's subjugation and lack of freedom and other false social trends that lowered women status. The reform movement brought some changes through the resistance that women showed in street protests, campaigns and through other platforms. The green movements have also brought diversity, tolerance, political change, freedom and independence, coalition and collaboration which gave some space to women. Thus, women's movements in Iran got strength and women have been active in pursuing their rights and fighting the patriarchal norms. Women have been fighting for gender equality for more than a century and they are being successful in making a considerable shift in the social mentality of the people. They have been using social media platforms, print media and other source to speak up for their rights. Street activism has been very common where they use visuals and other tools to oppose the narratives which subordinate them on the basis of their gender (Tekil & Burcu, 2020).

Iranian newspapers, films, literature and legislation played a very crucial role in women liberation movements and protests. They are the platforms which decide the fate of a person, a group of people or of a society. Various kinds of discourses are produced, propagated and challenged through these platforms. The digital and print media matter a

lot in this regard. The norms, history, religion, constitution etc. are reserved through these sources and platforms. Thus, Iranian women are enchained through different implicit and explicit ways. In addition to these, UN human development preamble is also there to stop any sort of violation. Different organizations, unlike the past, are formed by Iranian women and they use them as their agencies and platforms to claim their rights. Women's protests, feminist waves and modernism have their impacts on women in Iran. This shows that world has become an integrated village where such issues transcend beyond physical borders. People from around the globe watch, judge and appreciate or condemn actions. The women of Iran are, therefore, using different platforms and various strategies to make their messages clearly heard around the globe (Brightbill & Grayson, 2021).

Within the Iranian context, social protests often employ a range of multimodal communication strategies, including visual symbols, slogans, and social media campaigns, to amplify their messages and mobilize support. The use of symbolism, such as the hijab as a symbol of resistance, reflects the complex interplay between cultural traditions and political activism (Moghanizadeh, 2013).

The Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations serve as a recent example of women's activism in Iran, sparked by instances of gender-based violence and discrimination. These protests not only underscore the persistent challenges faced by Iranian women but also shed light on the collective strength and solidarity within the women's movement. Analyzing the semiotics of social protests in Iran offers valuable insights into the dynamics of women's activism and its impact on social change. By examining how Iranian women utilize various communication methods to challenge patriarchal structures and advocate for their rights, we can gain a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of activism in the region.

Despite the growing body of research on multimodal discourse analysis, feminist linguistics, and social movement studies, a significant gap remains in understanding the complex dynamics of social protests in Iran, particularly from a feminist perspective. While existing studies have explored various aspects of social movements globally and in Iran, the Iranian context remains under-examined, with limited attention given to the multimodal strategies employed by the protesters in these demonstrations. Furthermore, the intersections of language, visual, and spatiality in Iranian social movements have not

been comprehensively analyzed, leaving a gap in our understanding of the ways in which protesters harness multimodal discourses to challenge dominant narratives and shape social change. This study aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth examination of the 2022 Iranian women's protests, shedding light on the intricate interplay of street activism, feminist politics, and social change in Iran.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

This section talks about the framework used for the analysis of the data. An integrated analytical approach—combining multimodal analysis of Kress and Leweeuen and a feminist theory—is employed in this study. The blend of these two examines the visuals of Mahsa Amini women's protest demonstrations. Their details are in the following paragraphs.

2.6.1. Multimodal Analysis and Visual Grammar

Multimodal analysis is used to analyze the visuals of the study. It helps to decode the multimodal data of the visuals which is designed to construct certain messages. Kress and Leweeuen's visual grammar helps in deciphering the visuals. Furthermore, Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectional feminism is employed in blend with multimodality to reach the objectives of the study. The integrated framework is thus used to analyze the multimodal data of the protests.

Multimodality refers to the mixing and assimilation of various channels or modes of meaning-making process or communication, such as text, visual art or images, audio and gestures. These modes are used to put into words certain meaning and generate messages and senses. By using various strategies and modes, creators attempt to improve understanding, grab concentration and attention and further involvement thereby creating more efficient and appealing experiences. Multimodality helps in communicating through diverse ways to achieve the target goals (Kress, 2010).

Multimodal communications use different strategies in making different discourses. Multimodality is used to show different social protests by encoding different visuals. Through effective use of signifiers and symbols, the activists make and convey different complex messages thereby mobilizing public support. By examining different

modes and semiotic features, it can give valuable insight into the understanding of social protests and their impacts on fostering certain messages (Bezemer et al., 2012)

Different ways and methodologies are used to design various types of discourses through multimodality. Various strategies are used to construct meanings through multimodality. In the same way, technology is used to construct and manipulate various discourses in the current age. In contemporary times, technology has revolutionized all sectors of human life and social issues are effectively presented through different unique ways. It also affects the modes and features of communication. This has brought different ways to communication and has made communication more effective and efficient (Biowe, 2019). In their book, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) posit that visuals are linguistic images containing meaning and true senses (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The combination of various semiotics situated in different social, political and cultural context is used through compositional ways to form meaning and shape different discourses. Kress & Leeuwen (2006) proposed three ways and forms of making any discourse through multimodality in visual grammar.

There are three types of meaning making processes through multimodality. They are representational, interactive and compositional meaning making processes. Their detail is provided in the following paragraphs.

The first one is the representational meaning making process which says that “any semiotic and visual system has to be able to represent, in a referential or pseudo-referential sense, various aspects of the experiential world outside its particular system of symbols and signs” (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006, p.38). It is to put that the semiotic system should be developed and capably designed so that it must represent different objects and their mutual relationship has to be able to represent objects and their relations in the world outside the representational system. Representational meaning in visual grammar focuses on the represented participants of the images. Different participants are used and employed for representation (such as people, figures or things). These participants form a visual syntax of any concept or of the given image by making those participants interact with each other thereby relating different aspects of the visuals.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) divide the participants into two types, the first being the represented participants, and the second being interactive participants.

Represented participants are those who are represented in the visuals, interactive participants, on the contrary, are the ones who view the visuals or they are the viewers of the visuals and how they perceive a specific image. Represented participants are further divided into two kinds: narrative processes and conceptual processes. This division is caused by the distinction of vectors. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) state that "...in pictures, these vectors are formed by depicted elements that form an oblique line, often a quite strong, diagonal line (p. 59)". They write that the presence of vectors mark the narrative process that is shown in the form of a visual story. Narrative processes can be marked by the presence of vectors and usually appear in the form of story images.

The second process of meaning making is interactive meaning making process which states that any semiotic system must be capable of making and properly projecting the relations between the producer and the receiver of any sign which has been made using multimodality. Hastam (2021) puts it as any semiotic system should be able to construct and perfectly project a specific social relation among the producer of the image or visual, the viewer of that image and the object or many objects conveyed in the visual. This representation presents the relations between the viewers and the represented participants to know what discourse has been made and what message has been conveyed through them (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Interaction is built through the viewers' point of view when they come across through any image constructed by the producer thereby conveying any specific message or ideology. How the image is made by the producer and how it is perceived and interpreted by the viewers lead to the interactive meaning. Gaze, perspective and size of frame are the three main elements of the interactive meaning of any visuals. Gaze means what the picture demands and offers. A demand by or of any visual means that the participants represented in the visual directly look at the viewer's eyes and communicate with the readers in an effective way. The demand of an image or a visual implies that the producers of the images want an action from the viewers. It instigates the viewers for a reaction about the demand of the visual. An offer of the image shows that the participants represented in the picture do not look at the viewers directly like the demand (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

The size or distance element has different meanings and social implications between the viewers and the participants shown in the picture. The distance, length and

salience being given through closeness or erasure produced through creating distance have their meanings and implications thereby focusing on any aspect or ignoring any dimension. “Social distance is the distance from which people, places and things are shown and creates a visual correlate of physical proximity in everyday interactions” (Macken & Horarik, 2004. p. 14). Perspective which is also the basic element is to show the position of how viewers see or analyze an image and from which angle (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Perspective determines the point of angle and the assemblage of different aspects that show different meanings.

The last process is compositional meaning making process that discusses that any text has to create a certain meaning. Likewise, any semiotic system must be rich enough in sense. It should have the ability to create meaning and well-formed cohesive signs that could come closer to making a meaningful whole. The compositional component combines these signs consistently and uniformly to make a meaningful discourse (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). This component also highlights the social and contextual background of making any discourse. Representational and interactive elements are brought together by compositional aspects thereby making a meaningful whole that conveys certain ideologies. This is done through combining different modes and semiotic features (text, images, symbols, signs etc.) in a multimodal discourse. The integration of all these aspects makes a meaningful whole (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 78) posit that “compositional meaning is reliant on three primary systems: information value, salience, and framing. Information value concerns the placement of elements within the image, with certain elements receiving more prominent placement to draw attention to them. Salience refers to the level of visual prominence of a given element within the image, with some elements being made more visually striking to convey their importance. Framing pertains to the overall organization of the elements within the image and can be used to convey particular meanings and perspectives.”

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) by examining and knowing how different aspects and elements are brought together, combined and represented show what elements are made more important and which are made least important or negligible. The compositional aspect shows how different elements are used to form an image that can

effectively convey a message. It takes the careful process of selecting certain aspects thereby making a clear and vivid visual composition (p.80).

Some of the relevant studies that have been done by using visual grammar are important to be cited. This is going to assist me in the analysis of my study that how different modes are used to make certain discourses. This shows that what strategies are used and which aspects are analyzed to decode the visuals of the given case. A random set of studies are cited to know that how multimodality is implied for making various sorts of discourses. Some of them are given below.

Meaning-making process is carried out through using various semiotic modes. Three types of meanings—reproductive, interactive and compositional are used in combination to produce any meaningful discourse. The function of different modes and symbols is to construct a message or pass on communication. These discourses have social and political implications. The visuals are used to interact with society and different themes are created through them to the target audience. A study has been carried out on the visuals of news to decode the intended meaning of the news visuals. Different visuals of news are studied as how numerous symbols interact that convey meaning and make certain discourses. Through Kress and Leeuwen's hypothesis, the colors, patterns, directions and other dimensions of the pictures were analyzed. Through semiotic strategies, the strong and powerful narratives were promoted and made salient for some aims and goals (Bi, 2019).

Text and visuals are used in combination to form ideography and visual art. Different modes and semiotic strategies play roles in the formation of such discourses. The textual expressions and visual imagery are used in combination to create an impact. The representational, interactive, and compositional meanings have different arrangements and connotations and they have their distinct roles in forming any multimodal discourse. To exemplify it and make it more certain, the badges of a school in Xi'an Jiao Tong University China are analyzed and it is found that these badges have different connotations and yet different meanings and have different senses attached to them. This all has been done through multimodality and the analysis was done through the visual communication grammar of Kress and Leeuwen (2006). Thus, through multi-

modes, different badges were designed and different interpretations of these badges were identified through the framework being used (Yang, 2018).

Various kinds of ads are designed through multimodality. Certain things are intentionally made salient while other are erased through various semiotic techniques. The editorials of Covid-19 were designed through same way. Fifty editorials from ten different websites in Pakistan were selected and analyzed through multimodality in combination with Systemic Functional Linguistics. Through analysis from an eco-linguistic prism using the framework of multimodality, the elements of fear were shown in the editorials of Covid-19. It was found that the editorials showed and propagated fear and xenophobia. Thus, through different discourses and modes, different ideologies, narratives and concepts are constructed and propagated (Gul et al., 2021).

Multi-modality is used to produce discourses that aim to catch the attention of the target audience and get more engagements. It has been used to form the discourses of three different institutions: a hospital, a school and a museum. The visuals of these institutions are designed through different semiotic ways. Different concepts of pedagogy, treatment of patients and technological advancements, which are designed through multi-modality, act as data. All modes and strategies mean to make meaning. Multi-modality brings different modes, perspectives and resources to one frame thereby conveying the intended meaning more effectively and vividly to be understood. Different modes like text (writing), posture, gesture, colors etc. are the various kinds of modes that are used in various books, notebooks, pamphlets, manuals and other instruction books. This makes multi-modality very important for learning, spreading awareness and making meaning regarding social issues in pedagogy, health sectors and in other disciplines (Bezemer et al., 2012).

The multimodal study of the advertisements of real estate in Pakistan was conducted by Khan (2020). The lexical choices and the visual images related to real estate were analyzed. Almost thirty-five ads of Gulberg were selected for the analysis through multi-modality. A two-fold analysis was done and the model of Kress, Blackmore and Holme's models were used. These models were used for the analysis of the visuals. The two models assisted in understanding the real meaning of the ads and decoding the ideologies behind the ads. The hidden meanings of the ads were decoded

through multimodality. The linguistic frames, at first, were analyzed and different discourses and semantic and syntactic features were identified and different techniques were founded. Different values and words were identified through the help of multimodality. The words that triggered people's attention towards the advertisements were also analyzed. The aim of getting more wealth and getting more views was done through creating different discourses. Different values that were connected with these ads were also framed through different multi-modes. The values identified were categorized as either intrinsic or extrinsic. The extrinsic values were to boost the economic sector while the intrinsic values dealt with the society. The focus was to know that how these different values were created for different economic aims. The target audience and viewers were attracted to and impacted by these ads. The ads invoked the emotions of the viewers thereby created misleading impressions. Moreover, the researcher also investigated that how different modes were used to create different impressions and meanings and how viewers were caught through different ways of constructing various discourses for economic aims. The advertisements were designed in such a way that they effectively conveyed the desired message. It was founded that the relationship and interconnectivity between those who make and design these ads are built with the target audience through different discourses constructed through different modes and visuals.

As shown in the aforementioned literature, it is evident that protests are used to convey messages regarding different social issues and for targeted goals. More importantly, through social activism through protests, women's rights are addressed and the grievances that women face all across the globe and specifically in Iran are taken into account. The semiotics of these protests addresses social issues and mainly women-related disparities. These protests promote women's activism and empowerment and challenge the dominant power structure of the concerned societies. They foster an inclusive social change and call for a shift in the patriarchal norms that engender different issues for women. By thoroughly analyzing and examining different modes of communication, activists, research scholars and other experts have conducted these research studies. These studies give a base to my work and provide me with enough insight and understanding to analyze this very important issue from a feminist multimodal perspective.

2.6.2. Feminist Perspective

The framework of Intersectional feminism of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) has been used for the analysis of the data. The legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 to describe how systems of oppression overlap to create distinct experiences for people with multiple identity categories. Although intersectional theory and activism today are far-flung and embrace a wide variety of people, Crenshaw began with Black women, whose oppression could not be encompassed exclusively with the terms “racism” or “sexism,” if they were framed as an either/or proposition (Hawk, 2016).

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that explains how different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and classism, intersect and overlap to create unique experiences of discrimination and marginalization. This theory recognizes that individuals have multiple identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, which interact and intersect to shape their experiences. As a result, individuals with multiple marginalized identities may face multiple forms of oppression, leading to complex and nuanced experiences of marginalization. At its core, intersectionality challenges the idea that individuals experience oppression in a single, isolated way. Instead, it highlights the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect and compound, creating unique experiences of marginalization. For example, a black woman may experience both racism and sexism, leading to a unique experience of marginalization that is different from that experienced by a white woman or a black man. By recognizing these intersections, intersectionality provides a more nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which oppression operates (Davis, 2014).

Intersectionality also emphasizes the importance of considering the social, cultural, and historical context in which individuals experience oppression. This means taking into account the ways in which different forms of oppression have evolved over time and are shaped by specific social and cultural contexts. By considering these contexts, intersectionality provides a more detailed understanding of the ways in which oppression operates and how it can be challenged. Overall, intersectionality is a powerful tool for understanding the complex ways in which oppression operates and for developing more effective strategies for challenging and overcoming it (Carastathis, 2014).

The data is analyzed through the integrated framework of multimodality and intersectional feminism. Taking the feminist theory that could better analyze the findings and data, the intersectional feminist theoretical lens of Kimberley Crenshaw (1989) is taken into account. This framework intersects gender with other social categories like social class, race and sexuality. Carastathis (2014) writes in her research study about intersectional feminism, "...Inter-sectionality insists that multiple co-constituting analytic categories are operative and equally salient in constructing institutionalized practices and lived experiences (p.308)". The researcher further adds that intersectionality acts as a protection against the white solipsism, dominance and heteronormativity. It makes social experiences visible from different angles and takes into account all dimensions thereby shows its inclusivity. How the word "women" is taken by society and how it is perceived can be better decoded with the help of intersectional feminism. The intersection of gender with another perspective can better explain how different discourses are constructed and what they mean. This perspective helps in interpreting the discourses and challenging the traditional patriarchal norms and power structures and shows how gender is located and what roles are assigned to different genders (Witteloostuijn, 2020).

Intersectional feminism connects all aspects and dimensions—race, color, social class, gender and ethnicity. All these aspects apply to an individual in any society and an individual is affected by these forces or dimensions. They create an identity of an individual and work in a whole. The focus of intersectionality is to find various forces or factors of discrimination that combine together to give an identity to someone and locate one in his/her society (Hawk, 2016). The research writes, "...adding intersectionality to feminism is important to the movement because it allows the fight for gender equality to become inclusive (p.11)."

Gender is not something to be studied or understood in isolation. It is rather the combination of race, class, sexuality and other aspects and act in a whole (Smiet, 2017). It is the binary relationship of different aspects, dimensions and identities that intersect to form a whole identity (McCall, 2005).

Inter-sectionality can better describe my data and helps me with the analysis of my data. The theory addresses my questions and helps me analyze the data from different feminist angles. It assists in achieving my objectives and answering my research

questions. Intersectional feminism, therefore, is a better theory for analyzing the data of Mahsa Amini women's protests. The theory takes into account different perspectives, dimensions, and social and cultural aspects of the protests thereby easing the process of analysis of data and making a deep understanding of the protests.

The integration of multimodality and intersectional feminism provides a robust framework for the analysis of the data. It is an effective way of looking at every visual from two ways—multimodality glass and feminist analysis. Multimodality glass helps to decode how different visuals are made and what are the ways the visuals communicate (images, colors, words, etc.). While intersectional feminism helps to see how the visuals affect various groups of common people—men, women etc. By applying the integration of both, it is easier and more appropriate to see the whole visual and understand its impact in a better way.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 General Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology of that how this study is carried out. The selection of data, general categorization of the data, data sources and other details are discussed in this chapter. The whole scheme of data analysis and the way through which this study is planned is discussed in this chapter.

The research study utilizes a qualitative approach and adopts an integrated framework (Gunthar Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar framework of multimodality and intersectional feminism by Kimberlé Crenshaw) as explained in detail in the literature review section. The integrated framework is used to examine the visual data from the selected placards used during the 2022 (from September 2022 till 2025) women's protests in Iran, which were organized in response to the murder of Mahsa Amini by religious morality police. The study focuses on forty selected visual images. The study chooses the data through purposive sampling (selecting those placards that are most suitable and relevant to the research objectives and help in answering the research questions). The placards that are original, most relevant, impactful, most widely distributed, and easily available on authentic social media platforms, Google as well as those that are prominently featured in news outlets are prioritized.

3.2 Selection of Data

As stated, the selection of placards is on a clear rationale and there is a categorization in the selection of the visuals. Those visuals that aptly align with the research questions/objectives are selected. The visuals that use linguistic and visual strategies, such as juxtaposition of images and text, metaphors, or symbolic representations, to present the stance of the protesters effectively are prioritized. The visuals that employ images and language to call for women's rights, challenge gender disparities, and talk about social change, specifically focusing on themes of women's empowerment and subverting patriarchal norms, are selected for the analysis. Moreover, the visuals that use different modes to represent diverse identities and genders, including

varied age groups, ethnicities, and abilities, are chosen. Those visuals are preferred and selected for the analysis which highlight that how power dynamics and the existing norms are challenged through the use of different strategies. Also, the visuals which are designed through multimodality, utilizing semiotic resources like color, typography, and spatial arrangement are taken into account for this study.

Furthermore, the selection of visuals from protests in multiple countries beyond Iran is a deliberate attempt to capture the transnational dimensions of the women's rights movement of Iran. By incorporating visuals from diverse cultural contexts, this research aims to highlight the universal importance and resonance of the protests while also acknowledging the unique cultural conceptions of women's status that shape the movement's manifestation in different countries. The inclusion of visuals from various countries serves several purposes. Firstly, it underscores the global solidarity and shared demands for women's rights that transcend national borders. Secondly, it provides a nuanced understanding of how cultural diversity influences the representation and perception of women's roles and rights. Thirdly, it presents the issue of women as a universal issue that needs the attention and solidarity of every person living anywhere. Finally, it allows for a richer analysis of the intersectionalities at play, as women from different cultural backgrounds navigate multiple forms of oppression and marginalization. As Iran is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), it is important to transcend this issue beyond physical borders and consider the visuals presented in different countries.

The study includes certain aspects of the visuals that answer the research questions. Linguistic elements (slogans, logos, phrases, words and chants), visual elements (colors, symbols and images), multimodal interactions (integration of language and gesture, text and images), the portrayal of women in the visuals and the representation of the messages and objectives of the protests are included in the analysis. On the contrary, the detailed cultural, historical, political and social factors are excluded from the analysis.

3.3 Data Sources

Data is obtained from various social media platforms, including Google sources, Twitter (from the commencement of the protests till present day) tweets, hash tags, images etc.), Instagram (posts, hash tags, stories and images), Online news sources and outlets (BBC, Al-Jazeera, CNN etc.), Protests websites and blogs, and Facebook, as well as different local and international newspapers (The New York Times, The Guardian, Washington Post, Al-Riyadh, Al-Sharq, Tehran Times, Dawn etc.). These sources provide a detailed and diverse collection of data (visuals and visual placards). The sources offer enough data on the ideologies, discourses, messages, sentiments, themes and demands that the protesters create through their visuals.

3.4 Scheme of Data Analysis

The procedure for the analysis of data is developed after a thorough reading of different research studies. The literature studied and cited in the literature review chapter helps in developing the strategy for the analysis of the data. The strategy aligns with the research questions and objectives in a better way. The strategy is developed in consideration of the theoretical framework (the integrated framework of multimodality and intersectional feminism). The data has been broadly divided into three categories on the basis of places/countries where the protests took place. It has broadly been obtained from Iran, Europe, and from other countries like Canada, US, etc. The available literature, the framework and the other dimensions enable me to define the strategy for the analysis of the data. Thus, data analysis takes into account different steps and considerations. They are as follows.

3.4.1 Contextual Anchoring

The protest unfolds within a specific socio-historical context, briefly encompassing historical, societal, and political dimensions. The research work does not go into the details of these aspects, but without contextual background, it is not feasible to analyze the data effectively. This contextual foundation facilitates a nuanced interpretation of the protest's visual language and the research study takes into account all these perspectives. The past movements of women's rights are also studied and a historical and contextual link is made which makes the study more authentic and

intellectual. In this study, I briefly examine the cultural, political and other associations that the visuals show and evoke as their intersection plays a vital role in defining the current status of women in Iran.

3.4.2 Multimodal Analysis Tool

Multimodal discourse analysis is the tool of making a comprehensive and thorough assessment and analysis of diverse modes of communication and meaning-making. It analyzes textual language, visuals, auditory discourses or sounds and gestures that are used in connection to make certain discourses and encode meaning. It is an attempt to decode the strategies and dimensions in which these modes come together and make effective discourses. Multimodality presents an approach to understand that how meaningful communication are produced that operates in a range of situations and contexts. With the help of multimodal analysis, we get insights into the religious, social, political, institutional and cultural dynamics that inspire and bring about various communications (Leeuwen & Kress, 2010).

As said earlier, Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal framework remains central to my analysis and it functions as a basic analytical tool to analyze the visuals in a better way. This framework equips me to dissect the protest's visual and textual elements, including design, color, composition, and textual nuances. It helps in describing the visuals to identify their literal meaning (denotation). This analytical tool helps me decipher the visual data and explore the hidden meaning created through various semiotic strategies. It is implied on each visual to decode every aspect of the visual data and reach the objectives of the study. The details about multimodality have been provided in the previous chapter.

3.4.3 Feminist Theoretical Lens

Intersectionality discloses that individuals' identities, status and experiences are formed by many, intersecting characteristics like ethnicity, race, gender, social class, political and filial background and sexuality. These inter-linked identities lead to distinctive types of marginalization, where groups and individuals confront complex and multifaceted cruelties and oppression that cannot be recognized by examining and knowing one aspect in separation from other intersecting identities. By admitting these inter-connections of various identities, we get a true comprehension of how systemic

inequalities work and affect individuals in multifarious manners. This necessitates a need for a deeper and effective approach to highlight and confront these discrepancies and injustices. This intersection of different identities highlights and openly denies one-dimensional and simple analysis and observation of coercion. Rather it lays emphasis on the convoluted and complex maze and web of discriminations, prejudices, favoritism, and obstacles that form people's identities and lives (Crenshaw, 1989).

Guided by feminist theories, the study delves into gender constructs, women's agency, and identity intersections. This theoretical lens (intersectional feminist perspective) guides my exploration of how women utilize visual means to convey their perspectives. This shows how women are treated in that society and what rights they claim in these protests. The concepts of gender construction are also made clear through this lens. Here, the study examines how the visuals relate to the message of the protests and how they challenge the existing norms and power dynamics. Some themes and patterns (resistance and defiance, unity and solidarity, gender and identity, political struggle and awakening, challenge to patriarchal norms, authority and traditions etc.) are also identified in this section.

Thus, an integrated theoretical framework is used to analyze the data. The visual data is analyzed with the help of the framework to know what each visual means and what messages/themes a visual conveys. These trends, themes and patterns are founded through the analysis of data which are then discussed in the other chapter—discussion.

3.5 Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion Chapter

After the thorough analysis of the visuals with the help of the framework as mentioned before and in detail in Chapter 2, the study finds some themes, core points, patterns and common ideologies and discourses in the visuals. These aspects are studied in the conclusion and discussion chapter what are the common themes and patterns that are found from the analysis of the data and what are the findings of the study. This chapter deals with finding the common themes, trends and ideologies that are portrayed through different visuals of the Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations. The chapter takes into consideration the research questions and objectives and answers them.

3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the integrated framework (Kress and Leeuwen's Multimodality tool and Intersectional feminism) serves as a compass, facilitating a structured exploration of Mahsa Amini Women's Protests as a powerful visual language of civil protest. The findings are going to contribute to a deeper comprehension of women's agency in protests and enrich the evolving field of multimodal communication analysis in civil dissent.

Overall, this methodology ensures a systematic and rigorous analysis of the visual data from the women's protests in Iran, providing valuable insights into the use of visuals as a language in civil protests.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Visuals are so powerful and effective in shaping our thoughts and perceptions about any idea or belief (Kress, 2006). Analyzing the visuals is critical to uncover the hidden messages embedded in them which are created through different ways of multimodality. The visuals are specially designed to communicate certain messages and convey certain discourses to the target audience. Visual data, is, therefore, very effective and all-embracing in creating the desired discourses and conveying the intended messages (Sikorski, 2023). Corazza & Macaуда (2021) research the role of visuals in the formation of concepts and meaning in social and scientific research. They find that in effective communication, multimodality plays a vital role in social sciences and natural science and the research related to them.

It is also important to note that to ensure accurate translation of visuals with unfamiliar languages; I utilized a combination of reputable translation software like google translator, and consultations with native language speakers (mostly some of my Persian speaking friends). This dual approach allowed me to verify the translations and gain a deeper understanding of the nuances and context-specific meanings. By cross-checking the translations, I found it feasible to increase the validity and reliability of my findings.

In the context of the Mahsa Amini women's protests, images from other countries attempt to show solidarity with the Iranian women in the cause of women's rights. Demonstrations in other countries may highlight international support for the women's rights movement in Iran. Images from global protests can emphasize the universal relevance of the movement's goals and the solidarity of women and human rights advocates worldwide. By showing protests in multiple countries, the images may underscore the international resonance of the Mahsa Amini protests and the broader implications for women's rights.

In addition to showing solidarity and amplifying the message, images from other countries in the context of the Mahsa Amini women's protests may also demonstrate global awareness. Images of protests in various countries indicate international awareness

of the issues surrounding women's rights in Iran. By highlighting global support, these images may contribute to building international pressure on governments or entities to address the concerns raised by the protesters. Images from different countries can illustrate that the support for the Mahsa Amini movement is not limited to one region or culture, but is a movement with international backing. These images may underscore that struggles for women's rights in Iran resonate with similar struggles or values in other parts of the world.

In conducting the analysis of visuals from various media channels related to the Mahsa Amini women's protests, differences in media channels from which visuals were sourced were acknowledged. The focus, however, remained on analyzing the portrayal of women in the visuals of the Mahsa Amini protests, without consideration of the channels' ideologies or agendas. By maintaining this focus, the analysis centered on understanding the representation of women in these protests as conveyed through the visuals, irrespective of the media channel.

To analyze the visual data, a categorization process is implemented to identify common themes or messages within the selected visuals that are discussed in the conclusion and discussion chapter. A set of categories is developed based on the research questions and hypotheses to know that what themes and patterns are presented in the visuals of the protests. Some potential categories include a) demand for women's liberation and rights (feminist themes), b) tribute to Mahsa Amini, c) unity and solidarity, d) criticism of the existing system and social norms, e) women empowerment, f) and hope and future-oriented discourses. Other categories (global solidarity, critique of the government policies, religious interpretations and social norms etc.) are also found to help in the nuanced understanding of the visuals of the demonstrations. Moreover, the visual data is divided in three categories on the basis of the countries where the protests hold.

The analysis of the visuals of Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations through the multi-modality of Kress and Leewuen's (2006) and from the feminist point of view (Intersectional feminism) is in the following paragraphs. Based on the Mahsa Amini women's protests, most of the protests and demonstrations were held in Iran (Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and other major cities), in European cities with significant Iranian

communities, such as London, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam etc. and in some other cities like New York, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Sydney etc. Thus, in order to analyze the visual representations of the Mahsa Amini women's protests, I categorized the data into distinct groups based on the countries where the protests occurred.

4.1 Visuals from Iran

This section contains the visuals that are taken from different localities of Iran. The visuals of the demonstrations that took place in Iran are selected and analyzed in this section. Thirteen visuals, from different cities of Iran, are analyzed in this section.

Figure 1



Note: The visual is taken from 'The Economic Times, 2022'. The visual was not named in the original source, and was named by the researcher as 'Women's March for Freedom'.

<https://m.economictimes.com/>.

Referring to Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal analysis, it can be seen that the above image is designed through the combination many modes. Almost six to seven female participants are shown in the image. The background also shows that women are

shouting and marching forward holding placards in their hands. Placards are foregrounded with different words and phrases like “How Many More Lives?”, “Our Hearts and Thoughts are with Iran”, “Free Iran”, “1400 years of lies” or “Free women”. All these phrases show that women are on roads for a cause and change. Most of the words are written in bold with vibrant colors in large font size to make them grab the attention. The location—streets—also shows that they are in public spaces making the issue more important and widely heard. The whole image is covered by the protesters thereby dominating the whole visual and giving weight to the image. The image and the placards are well-lit and in focus. The participants are centrally placed and are, therefore, eye-catching and attention-grabber. All these factors show that the image is simple yet so important and vivid to be noticed. It gives insight to the readers to pay attention to it and understand what is happening in the picture. The placards and their composition through multimodality persuade the reader or audience (Witteloostuijn 2020).

There images on placards bring the attention of the viewers to the atrocious way in which Mahsa Amini was killed. Images of hands are in red showing that people who killed her have their hands full of her blood. The colors on the placards-- red, black, and white and the symbols on the placards – red hands, a picture of the killed lady, Mahsa Amini, the red hands and the other symbols show to the audience clearly that women are subjugated and suppressed. The fore-grounded participants are shown as active and vibrant and the white background of the placards with red and black writing highlights the importance of the words and the issue. Women of all ages seem to move towards a goal and get forward to claim for what they came out to the streets. The placards and participants are centrally positioned which highlights the salience of the issue with more vividness. The participants and the placards –their colors, words, font size, clarity and simplicity—grab viewers’ attention (Sadeghi, 2018).

From feminist point of view, it is clear that women are shouting for their rights and due share in the affairs of society. The red hands show that women are ill treated and they have been the victims of gender discrimination. Patriarchy and male dominance have taken their rights to live and other fair rights that they deserve as human beings. They also show that through unity and solidarity they can challenge the norms of the existing social structure. The participants and their zeal and the salience that has been

given to the images, words, sentences and symbols highlight that women have been active in pursuing their rights in different spheres of life. The phenomenon of women subjugation is not limited to one walk of social affairs but it has been a multi-pronged issue which needs to be uprooted. Through feminist perspective, the old concepts are clearly objected in the placards and the women seem active in claiming their rights with full force and strength. It defines that how different factors (race, gender, social class etc.) meet to discriminate among humans. In this case, women are discriminated on the basis of their gender and are ill-treated just because of their gender and social class being assigned to them (Baig et al., 2020).

Figure 02



Note: The visual is taken from *CNN News*. It was not named and is named by the researcher as *Tehran's Women in Motion*.

<https://edition.cnn.com/>.

In the above image, the participants and the placards are made salient through foregrounding strategy. They cover almost the whole of the visual thus attempts to give importance and weight to the visual. The participants and the placards are centrally positioned. This tries to create an impact on the viewers and readers of the image. The

screams of the lady, as shown in the visual, attempts to gain sympathy from the viewers and also tries to make an impact to show the seriousness and grief of the lady about the issue. The red color ink that is used for the writing on the placards creates an impact on the readers. The bold font and the background of the placards appeal to the eyes of the viewers. The background shows that the protest is held in a public space and is joined by men thus creating collective efforts and inclusivity. The lighting of fire by the lady also shows the intense opposition of the protesters to the existing norms. These all settings are deliberately done to create an impression on the minds of the readers. These ways are used to attract readers and create certain messages clearer and easily catchable. Simple text cannot produce this impact. Therefore, different modes and semiotic strategies are used to convey the message impressively (Effiong, 2020).

To look at the visual from the intersectional feminist perspective, it can be seen that the image is a clear depiction of open resistance. Both men and women are out to oppose the state's laws that took many lives of Iranian women. Killing Mahsa Amini is one of its recent instances showing that the intersection of various identities has given lower status to women. The false policies, which undermine women through one way or another, are fully practiced and are legitimized by the state and the traditions of the people. Women are still treated harshly in Iran and the lady whose murder sparked these intense protests was killed by a morality police for not wearing hijab. This shows that the government policies are brutal especially when it comes to the treatment of women. Women reject those laws and want their due rights that they should not be considered inferior or absurd just because of their gender. The phrases, the texts and the colors—all contribute to the struggle of fighting for the rights of women (Carastathis, 2014).

Figure 03



Note: The visual is taken from *CNBC*. It was named and has been titled by the researcher as ‘*Breaking Barriers Down*’.

<https://www.cnn.com/>.

The image has so many things to notice and analyze. From visual grammar of Kress and Leewuen (2006), the visual shows that there are more than ten male and female participants. Most of the participants have placards in their hands and are marching forwards (to the target) while shouting. The gestures and hands of the participants try to show their serious attitude regarding the issue. The intentional writing of ‘Mahsa Amini’ and the phrase ‘women, life, freedom’ show that the participants represent the problem—killing of Mahsa Amini and the demand—the freedom of women—in a single placard thereby making their stance even clearer. The colors of the placards (white, red and off-white) are deliberately used trying to show the messages written on them neatly and clearly that may grab the attention effectively (Konde, 2022).

Salience has been given to the phrases written on the placards through the combination of different colors. The phrases on the placards are written in uppercase letters to give more prominence to the messages that the participants want to convey. The phrases, “women, life, freedom”, “we want freedom of choice”, “death to dictator”, “be the voice...”, “mahsa amini”, “are we not....” and the phrases in Persian language attempt to show that the participants move and shout for a goal—emancipating women from the persecution. Salience is given to the placards by holding them above the heads and by designing the placards neatly and with vivid combination of various colors—red, black, white. The participants and the placards cover the whole visual leaving no space. It is the deliberate arrangement of the visual trying to make certain impact to the viewers. The red and black colors, as understood generally, show the repressions, cruelties and discriminations. The participants are centrally placed and all of the participants and the placards are well-lit. The whole image is covered by the protesters and the placards thereby dominating the picture and giving weight and importance to the issue presented in the visual. The participants want to convey their message through these colors thereby using different colors, font size, structures and images (multi-modes) to represent their ideas more effectively (Laxmidevi, 2018).

From Crenshaw’s feminist point of view, it is evident from the placards and the phrases that women are the victims of various discriminations in Iran. Historically, women of Iran have been through ups and downs in the reigns of different kings (kings), (Vogel, 2018). This inferior status has been created through the intersection of various identities based on the interpretations and concepts that developed through time. The phrases, colors and participants show that women are awake in combating patriarchal norms. The participants call for women freedom. They do not want to live under the patriarchal social structure that takes the lives of women and enforces the practice of hijab. The slogans, the phrases, the modes that are used and the colors show that women are no longer ready to accept the dominance of men. There seems a collection of women and men that march in the streets and act as active agents. Women are, therefore, discriminated on the basis of gender and other aspects and they are made suppressed just because of their gender and race. The protesters are out in streets to put an end to the identities and discriminations created by men through patriarchal norms and practices.

Figure 04

Note: The visual is taken from *Bridge Initiative, Georgetown*. The visual was not titled and has been titled by the researcher as ‘*United for Change*’.

<https://bridge.georgetown.edu/>.

The image uses different modes to form meaning. The whole image is covered by the participants and the placards they are holding, thus, attempts to give weight to the visual. The participants in the visual and the placards are centrally positioned making them easily noticeable. The placards are specially designed in different colors—green, black, white and black. The combination of these colors is an attempt to give a glittering effect to the audience thus grabbing the attention of the audience. The picture of the killed lady is also shown while she is lying on the bed and is wounded. This image tries to attract the sympathy and concern of the viewers. The participants of the visual look straight at the viewers and readers of the picture. They communicate directly with the audience through their direct gaze. The background shows that there are more protesters behind and the protest is taking place in a public spot. The phrases—‘zan, zindage, azadi’, ‘Mahsa Amini’ etc. show that the women in the protest convey a clear message regarding women’s rights and their true emancipation from the chains of patriarchy that enslave them in all walks of life and even take their lives. Different semiotic strategies are thus used to make the visual vivid (Vogel, 2018).

Intersectional feminism is about the intersection of different social and political narratives that suppress women in the post-modern age Carastathis (2014). Women in

Iran are also the victims of these narratives. They are out in the streets after the brutal killing of Mahsa Amini. The visual above shows her picture when she was on the bed to die. The resistance of women actively started after her death. The protesters want the investigation of her case and most importantly the ending of those brutal laws and social practices that undermine women just based on their gender. The intersection of various identities which position women lower in the society is challenged. The women are holding the placards and the images to make their stance more valid and prominent to the whole world. They are shouting against the flawed laws, identities and practices that do not leave them at rest. The combination of social practices, intersectional identities and state policies amplifies the issue further and gives tough time to the women. Women are, thus, in the street in full swing to counter these laws and practices (Moghanizadeh, 2013).

Figure 05



Note: The visual has been taken from ‘*The News International*’ titled as ‘*The Women’s Liberation Front*’ in the original source.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/>.

The visual is designed well with the help of semiotic strategies. The participants and the placards are centrally positioned which occupy the bulk of the image. This is an

attempt to give weight and importance to the image. The visual is well-lit, clear and vivid. The participants and the placards are fore-grounded thereby making the discourses on the placards more prominent. The combination of different colors makes the picture appealing to the audience. The distance of the shot is closed and looks wide to the eyes of the viewers (Revillard, 2019).

The Persian phrase, ‘zan, zindage, azadi’ means women, life and freedom. They are written centrally bold with red color having white background. This gives vividness to the words and the placard is also centrally placed and well-lit. Some of the placards in the background are also systematically designed that give an apparent look though they are in the background. This impact is deliberately made to grab the attention of the viewers (Bereni, 2019).

To analyze it from intersectional feminist point of view, the content obtained through visual grammar shows that the participants actively march against the patriarchal norms that suppress them. Political, social and other factors contribute to make the social fabric of Iran that resists women’s participation in the affairs of Iran. The laws and political structure allowed the morality police to kill the lady (Mahsa Amini) on the issue of not wearing complete hijab as per the authentic reports and news channels. The women of Iran are stimulated by this very incident. The history of Iran is also very tough in rendering women their due rights and women have been given different identities. The phrases, the colors, the composition and the overall structure of the visual show that women are committed to counter the false narratives that are created by the intersection of different aspects and dimensions or categories—sex, race, social class etc.

Figure 06



Note: The visual has been taken from ‘*The Iran Premier*’. It has not been named in the original source and has been named by the researcher as ‘*Tehran Protest scenes*’.

<http://iranprimer.com/>.

The visual shows a full demonstration taking place in a wide public space. Multi modes are used to design different placards to convey the message effectively to the viewers. A lot of participants are seen in the visual which shows an attempt to give weight and importance to the visual. The protesters are shouting in the streets for the due rights of women showing their seriousness and commitment. The whole image, the participants and the placards are well-lit and clear which imprints on the minds of the readers of the image. The participants and the placards are centrally placed thereby making a deliberate attempt to attract the audience or readers (Bruggeilles, 2009).

Attempts are done to give prominence to the placards and the words written on them through their large size and different colors. The phrases—‘freedom for the Iranian people’, women, life and liberty’ and the other phrases in the Persian language try to show that the discourses are specially written through different colors. This is deliberately done to look eye-catching to attract the target audience. The placards are designed prominently through different colors and attractive backgrounds that may create an impact on the minds of the readers. The gestures of the protesters are also noticeable trying to show determination and forwardness towards their cause—the liberation of

women. All the visual is specially designed through various semiotic strategies aiming to make strong impact (Cromer, 2009).

The intersectional feminist perspective sees the visual as a symbol of open resistance and awakening of the people about women's liberty. They are active in the streets with strong discourses that openly oppose the social norms, intersectional identities and misconceptions about women. The words show that women are united in combating the social and political narratives that undermine them merely because of their gender which is socially constructed. These are widespread demonstrations that get solidarity from men and people around the globe as seen in the visuals. The ideas of the society and policies of the state regarding the state are no longer tolerated. The intersection of different dogmas of narratives that keep women subordinate is openly challenged and rejected by the women of Iran through their protests.

Figure 07



Note: The visual is taken from 'First Post'. It has not been named in the original source. The researcher has titled it as 'Women's Rights Revolutionaries'.

<https://www.firstpost.com/amp/>.

This image also tells many things if we analyze it through multimodal analysis. The participants and the placards are centrally positioned and importance is given to them through the strategy of salience. The placards and the whole visual is well-lit and bright

giving vividness to the whole setting of the visual. The placards and the colors are foregrounded thus attempts to make them prominent to the viewers. The gaze of the participants is down trying to show grief and disparity. The background of the protest shows that is taking place in a public space thereby gaining more public engagement (Olowu & Olajoke, (2015).

Looking at the phrases written on the placards, it can be seen that they are written in black with a white background. The words are written in large font size. They are above all, quite dominant in the visual. All these settings are deliberately done trying to attract the attention of the audience and make a good impact on the viewers and their minds.

From the perspective of intersectional feminism, we see that the participants look as active agents and advocates of women's rights and freedom. The discourses and messages they produce call for the elimination of discrimination based on gender or race. The gestures and gazes show that they want to get rid of the suppressions they face just because of their gender. This mentality takes the rights and lives of many women including Mahsa Amini. They seem committed to opposing the intersection of different categories (social, political, religious) that deny providing or allowing due rights to women.

Figure 08



Note: The visual has been taken from *'The Independent Post'*, and has not been named in the original source. The researcher has named it as *'Iranian Women's Strengths'*.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/post>.

To convey effective meaning, the visual is properly structured through multimodality. Almost the whole image is covered by the participants and the placards they are holding. This is a deliberate attempt to give weight and an effect to the image. The participants and placards are centrally positioned thus giving salience to them. This tries to attract the readers and makes it easily understandable for the viewers. The gaze of the ladies is straight. They directly communicate with the reader gaining a sense of sympathy and care from the readers and viewers. Salience is given to the participants, placards, texts and images of the murdered lady—Mahsa Amini. The background of the image shows that the setting of the protest is a public spot and other protesters are following the march (Memon, 2021).

The textual words—‘Did you know that letting your hair blow in the wind is a crime in Iran’ try to create the discourse of resistance of the protesters against the prevailing norms of Iran regarding women. The black ink of the writing and its light red background make the words appear vivid. The large font size and writing in the capital letters are deliberately done to look catchy and attract the audience so that they may read and understand easily. The placards are fore-grounded and made clear and bigger so that they attract the attention of the readers effectively.

To know what it means from the angle of intersectional feminism, the whole image, the colors, the texts and colors etc. show the robust resistance of women against patriarchal norms various identities attached with women. The words written on the placards show that women are not treated fairly. Their rights are snatched by the decisions of the people and government. Women are fed off of these social and political practices and they no longer tolerate male dominancy. They openly condemn the brutal killing of Mahsa Amini. The visuals show a strong move of open resistance against the patriarchal structure of society and the state. They seem committed, determined and vibrant in claiming their due rights. Some men, we see in most placards, appear in the protests and they support the idea of rendering women their legal rights. The intersection of political and social categories and practices snatch the rights of women. Women are, therefore, in the streets to resist these dogmas and social identities which are based on stereotypes and misinterpretations (Memon, 2021).

Figure 09



Note: The visual has been taken from '*The Vanity Fair*' which was not named in the original source. The researcher has titled it as *Fighting for Freedom of Women*'.

<https://www.vanityfair.com/?srsltid=AfmBOopvruiiOpnyELxWASYe-6CEfGTGDvixW7xD0Lldx2FvXWGkprB>.

The visual contains participants who are holding placards that are designed through multimodality. The participants and the placards occupy the bulk of the visual which is an attempt from the protesters to give weight to the whole visual. The participants are centrally positioned which gives salience to the placards and the whole discourse of the protest. The image of the murdered lady is intentionally fore-grounded and positioned centrally. The gaze of the participants is directly on the readers communicating directly with the readers. The colors—red, black and white—are used and organized that they may catch the attention of the readers. The look and the gestures make an attempt to show the grief and gloominess of the women regarding the issue. The words on the placard show that the women want to liberate themselves from the chains of patriarchy. All this is done through semiotic strategies in order to communicate the message effectively with the readers (Texier, 2019).

Looking at the picture from intersectional feminism, it is crystal clear that the issue of women's discrimination is social and political and it needs to be solved on these

grounds. Different identities and stereotypes are attributed with women through biased discourses. The social norms are designed in such a way that they discriminate against women just based on their gender. Women are considered fragile and their ill-treatment is considered normal. This mindset took the life of Mahsa Amini. A morality police killed her just because of not wearing a full hijab. Her image in the above placard and each visual of the protests show that she has been killed illegally. This kind of worst dominance by men is no longer accepted. Through these protests, the women of Iran are united to fight for their rights (Sadeghi, 2018).

Figure 10



Note: The visual has been chosen from 'The City News Montreal'. The visual was not titled in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as 'Unstoppable Women'.

<https://montreal.citynews.ca/>.

The visual is well-lit, clear and appeals to the viewers. The background and the whole organization are vibrant and systematic. Men and women can be seen in the background that are holding placards and visuals related to the agenda of the protest. The lady and the placard that she is holding are intentionally fore-grounded and made prominent. They are centrally placed and cover a big part of the whole image. This gives

the lady and the placard centrality and importance. The colors and their composition and combination are also well organized and attain the attention of the viewers. The gaze of the lady is forward trying to create an impact to show her concern about women's rights in Iran (Coskun, 2015).

The painting of the lady on the placard is a deliberate attempt trying to give a sense of despair and grief. The painting is made in such a way that it tries to attract the sympathy and concern of the viewers or readers. The closed eyes, the upward looking and the scattered hair are the deliberate settings made to show a sort of sadness and disparity. There seems a drop of tears on its face too which, as generally taken, symbolizes suppression, persecution, sadness, hopelessness and grief. The Persian phrase—'zan, zindage, azadai'—means women, freedom and life shows that women are very much concerned about the discrimination and ill-treatment of women based on gender (Baig et al., 2020).

The image is a good example of multimodality and intersectional feminism helps well in its deciphering. The gaze of the lady shows that women are just tired of the existing system that underestimates women in all walks of life. The phrase and the modes show that women are ignored in social spheres. Even they are not been given the right to live or to live on their choices. They are in social, political and institutional chains which keep them suppressed and in narrow limits. This all happens with women just because of the combined effect of social and political narratives that have legitimized the brutal treatment of women. The intersection of various identities gives them lower position in the society wherein they live.

Figure 11



Note: The image has been selected from a research center 'The Arab Centre Washington' official site which was titled as 'Women's Empowerment Demonstration' in the original source.

<https://arabcenterdc.org/>.

The above image uses multimodal communication and semiotic strategies to create meaning and through images, text, color and composition. The placards are deliberately positioned centrally to grab the attention of the viewers. The colors are systematically and intentionally designed and arranged to make them look eye-catching so that the readers may pay attention to and take interest in the placards. The image of the killed lady is positioned central and above to make it more prominent and easily noticeable. Her image is painted in proper hijab which attempts to show that she is observing hijab, but she was still killed. The participants and the placards they are holding occupy the bulk of the visual. This tries to give weight to the visual and helps the readers to easily catch the idea of how the protest and its visuals are arranged. The whole visual is prominent and well-lit thereby attracting the target audience (MacGlashan, 2012).

Analyzing the data gained through the multimodal analysis of the visual with the help of intersectional feminism, we see that attempt has been done to make the whole visual a depiction of open resistance against the atrocities that women face. The combination of black and white colors and the text written on them try to show that women are using different discourses in Persian and English to reject the atrocities that they face just based on their gender. The identities that are formed through the intersection of various discourses limit the women in the social spheres and in other public and official places and they are the main causes of women suppression. Women want to put an end to these identities and claim freedom in all spheres where they can work. The mindset that the public holds about women is rejected in the street and openly. Women are, therefore, the true and active agents of women's rights (Davis, 2014).

Figure 12



Note: The visual has been taken from the official website of the 'Sky News'. It was not named in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as '*Iranian Women's Awakening*'.

<https://news.sky.com/>.

The visual is designed with the help of different modes. The visual grammar of Kress and Leeuwen (2006) can help in decoding its discourses. The whole setting of the image is specially designed foregrounding the participants and the placards. The participants and the placards they are holding are centrally placed thus making an attempt

to grab the attention of the readers and the audience. The visual is in focus and the text is written in bold and is central on the placards. The intentional combination of colors is attractive and the background of the placard makes the text prominent to be noticed by the target audience. The deliberate use of various colors also creates a meaningful impact and it try to imprint the discourses on the minds of the readers. The gaze of the participants is directly on the viewers thus communicating directly with the viewers (Ciaschi, 2000).

From the intersectional feminism point of view, we see that the women create certain meanings and ideologies through the placards they are holding. The placards are specially designed to grab the attention of the readers to the lasting issue of discrimination and the killing of women based on gender and race. The phrase—women, life, freedom’—shows that women are in the streets as the issue is social and political and its solution needs combined efforts on different platforms. Women are, therefore, in the social arenas to challenge the false and brutal decisions and social practices of their society. They have intentionally removed hijabs and in some placards, they cut their hair in open public spaces giving a message that women have the right and freedom to do what they want. They oppose and reject the dogmas of the state to suppress and control women of different names. They openly shout that women are not inferior to men. Both women and men are the same human beings and they have got equal potentials. It is the state, the society and the other flawed concepts and ideologies that underestimate women just based on their gender. Women, as the protests and the visuals show, are not weak, passive or inert and they want freedom to play their role in the building of society (McCall, 2005).

Figure 13



Note: The visual is taken from the official page of 'Alamy' which was not titled. The researcher has given title to it naming it 'Public March for women's rights'.

<https://www.alamy.com/>.

The image shows a widespread protest that is taking place on a road in a public space. The visual is well-lit, prominent and eye-catching. The participants of the visual are centrally positioned and they cover the bulk of the image. This tries to give weight and importance to the visual. It attempts to portray that what for the protests are about and what kind of messages the protesters convey. The placards are specially designed with the help of different colors, images and words. The gaze of the participants show that they are looking straight at the readers of the visual thereby showing that they are communicating directly with the readers (Kress, 2009).

The textual discourses show clearly that the women of Iran seek their true freedom and want their due rights that the women of other societies and countries have. The phrases—'Did you know that letting your hair blow in the air is a crime in Iran', zin, zindage, azadi means women, life and freedom', 'Mahsa Amini' etc. are the clear messages that reject women suppression. They show that even an act of one's freedom, as said in the first case, is considered a crime in Iran. This implies that what a woman does

in Iran is taken as a crime and she is not given the right to live her own life (Janghorban et al., 2014).

Decoding the discourses from the feminist perspective, we see that what a woman does is considered wrong. Women's actions, status, positions and potentials are defined through the biased and prejudiced parameters of various identities constructed on the basis of stereotypes and misinterpretations. Man-made standards and parameters are made to judge a woman and hold her responsible of doing crimes. A woman is not allowed to make her own decisions or take a small step herself otherwise she will be punished, banned or killed by the laws or the social standards and mentality will not leave her to live her own life. Different tags are manipulated to blame women by either holding them responsible of the crimes that women are disturbing social norms or challenging state laws or religious injunctions. Intersectional feminism insists that the combination of these self-made laws, interpretations and social practices works to discriminate against women based on their gender. Intersectional feminism is the type of feminism to find out these narratives and challenge them on rational and legal grounds (Kong & Youjin, 2019). Iranian women do the same. They challenge the patriarchal social norms and the illegal political decisions that snatch their rights and even kill them on very minute issues.

4.2 Visuals from Europe

This section takes stock of the visuals of the protests which took place in various countries of Europe. As the demonstrations transcended beyond physical borders and people from around the globe showed their solidarity with the protestors of Iran, it is, therefore, important to take into account some visuals from outside countries too. This section selects ten visuals of Mahsa Amin in women's demonstrations from European countries and analyzes it through the proposed framework.

Figure 14



Note: The visual is taken from 'BBC News' and the title--*Iranian Women's Empowerment Surge*-- has been taken from the original source.

<https://www.bbc.com/news>.

From a multimodal angle, the image shows that there are more than fifteen participants including men and women. They are holding placards and are marching forward while shouting. Some of the participants are looking straight thereby interacting with the viewers. This creates an impact to the readers. The background shows that the locality is like an office or other public place which depicts that the protesters are marching in a public and well organized place. This may lead to more public interaction as the protest holds in a public space. On one hand, the participants have the images of the killed lady—Mahsa Amini, while they also have the placards that call for women's freedom. This deliberate contrast shows the audience the problem and the demands that the protesters have (Asriyama & Sari, 2022).

The placards are fore-grounded and salience is given to the visual by designing them through multimodality. Different vivid colors—black, red and white are used. The

placards are well-lit and prominent. Different slogans, phrases and words are intentionally written in bold in order to make them more apparent and clearer to the audience. Some of the participants' shirts have the slogans of the protests. The phrases like, "freedom for women", "free Iran women, "mahsa amini", free women..."etc. try to show that the participants are the active agents in portraying their message. The placards are fore-grounded that they may easily be seen and read. The participants are centrally placed in the visuals arranged in order to attract the attention of the audience easily. The protesters cover the whole visuals and are centrally positioned. The white background of some placards with bold black writing on it is made so to attract viewers' attention. This is how different modes and colors are used to construct various discourses and to grab the attention of the target audience. The gestures of the participants and the whole structure of the visual try to depict that the participants are seriously concerned about the issue. All this has been deliberately done through semiotic strategies to present the stance of the protesters in an effective way and get more engagements (Bezemer et al., 2012).

Looking at the visuals and the discourses from intersectional feminist perspective, it shows that the participants in the visuals are gathered for one cause—to call for the freedom of women. The colors, slogans, frames, composition and phrases are presented for the emancipation of women. Women want to be liberated in all walks of life. They do not want to be subjugated by men and men-made policies. The various identities which intersect to portray women weak and dependent are opposed in the visuals. They clearly shout that the killing of the innocent lady—Mahsa Amini—was illegal and they condemn it through the protests. The discourses produced in the visuals reject all types of segregations and discriminations on the basis of gender. The gestures and position of the participants show their commitment that they reject the illegal and unfair treatment of women on the basis of gender. Different aspects and dimensions are used to consider a sect of society inferior to another. Women are considered lower than men just because of their gender while entirely ignoring their mental capacities and the positive role that women play in a society. This mindset has been made and propagated through the intersection of various identities that base on false narratives, misinterpretations and stereotypes. To counter this distinction on the basis of gender, the protesters are in the streets in full swing (Creshnaw, 2011).

Figure 15



Note: The visual is taken from the *CNN World*. The visual was not titled and was named by the researcher as ‘*Protest with Passion*’.

<https://www.cnn.com/world>.

The image is made special through multimodality. The participants are holding placards and are deliberately centrally placed. The participants and their placards cover the whole image thereby attempts to give weight to the image. The frame of the visual focuses on the participants and their placards. The setting and the background of the visual show that the protest is taking place in an open public space. The colors—red, white, black, green—try to create an impact to the target audience. The participants are moving forward. The victory symbols and other gestures are also noticeable. The visual is very clear, in focus and well-lit. The background and the whole composition of the image are very attractive. All these features are done through the usage of multi-modes and semiotic strategies and all of them have certain meanings. The whole composition of the image makes it more attractive and eye-catching (Haider & Loureiro (2021).

The phrases and words written on the placards are also very noticeable and important to be interpreted. Phrases like—‘Mahsa Jina, 22YO’, ‘Free Iran’, ‘women, life, freedom’, and other Persian phrases are of much importance and they clearly communicate a message to the target audience.

From the intersectional feminist perspective, it is clear that the participants of the image and the placards talk about the illegal killing of Mahsa Amini. The women are now on the streets to condemn the act of murdering the innocent soul. They utterly reject the prevailed norms of the state which deprive women of their due rights. This distinction in different walks of life on the basis of gender is no more acceptable to the women of Iran, as the visual shows. The slogans clearly call to end the discrimination on the basis of gender. The red color on one placard symbolizes blood. This in turn shows that women are persecuted and even killed. The overall visual calls to put an end to this brutality. As seen, different dimensions are used to consider women as inferior, passive, useless and fragile. Women are in the streets to reject all these fall notions and shout for their due rights—the rights that every human (man or woman) possesses since birth and no one have the right to snatch them. The placards, therefore, clearly communicate that women of Iran are no more ready to live under these laws made and implemented by the government and its institution on the basis of various false identities attributed with women (Mahfouz (2021).

Figure 16



Note: the visual is taken from *The World Politics Review* journal. The visual was not named in the original source and has been named by the researcher as '*Rise with the Women of Iran*'.

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/>.

The visual is specially designed by placing each thing—word, color etc.—on appropriate place. With the help of visual grammar of Kress and Leewuen (2006), we can effectively analyze the visual. The participants of the visuals are women and a boy. The participants and the placards are intentionally centrally placed which tries to give prominence to them. The image is well-organized and well-lit which makes it eye-catching. The colors—red, black and white—also have deep impacts on the audience and attempt to make certain meaning for the audience. Moreover, they are more clear and vivid creating an imprint on the minds of audience. The background shows that the place is a public or official place which makes the issue importance. The gestures and gaze try to show that the participants are in grief (Kress and Leewuen, 2006).

The phrases on the placards—'rise with the women of Iran', 'say her name, Mahsa Amini etc. try to show that the beholders of the placards are against the murder of the lady and they openly oppose any brutality. The red color on the black background in one of the placards symbolizes blood which attempts to convey unfairness, brutality, grief and suppressions. The colors of the words, the font size, the boldness of the letters and the writing in the uppercase letters, which are made so intentionally, make the words more prominent. These all intentional techniques attract the attention of the audience and leave an imprint on the minds of the viewers (Stein, 1962).

To analyze the data from a feminist perspective, it can be seen that the participants call and shout for women rights. They want to end the suppression on women by anyone. They show the brutalities on women through different colors, phrases and discourses that are made through multimodality. The gestures and position of the participants in the visual depict women as active agents and advocates of women's rights who claim for their rights. Women portray through their placards and gestures that they have been discriminated through their gender by the patriarchal norms and they want to break the chains of man-made slavery. The intersection of misinterpretations, traditional norms, stereotypes, false beliefs and notions, patriarchal narratives and misconceptions

defines the status and position of women which is miserable and saddening (Perrot, 1974).

Figure 17



Note: The visual is taken from *Reuters* which was not named in the original sources. The researcher has titled it as ‘*United for a Cause*’.

<https://www.reuters.com/>.

The above visual creates certain meanings and discourses through different modes. The image is specially designed that it may attract the audience on its first look. The protesters occupy the whole picture thereby attempting to give weight to the image limiting it totally to the issue. The participants are centrally positioned in order to give them salience and grab the attention of the audience. The gaze of the protesters is on a goal and communicates with the audience. Some of the protesters directly see to the viewers thereby communicate their message directly with the audience. The image is well-lit and clear. The background shows that the protest is happening in an open space (Marefata & Marzban, 2014).

The colors—red, white and black—show certain meaning. Red is commonly understood as the color of passion, energy, anger, resistance, warning and alert, solidarity and unity. The black color normally symbolizes rebel, resistance, grief etc. The white color is understood as the symbol of peace, nonviolence, innocence, purity and neutrality.

Their combination is specially made to depict the bravery of women against any hardship. The phrases on the placards—‘Mahsa...’, ‘women, life, freedom’ etc. reflect a clear message from the protesters. The font size of the letters and the background colors of the phrases make them vivid and more grabbing. They stick to mind on first look and are intentionally fore-grounded and centrally positioned. All these features are deliberate which try to make the visual attention-grabbing and catchy (Kress, 2006).

From the intersectional feminist point of view, it is seen that the participants are the active agents of women’s rights who reject the intersection of various identities. The placards, colors and the slogans show that women are on the streets to claim their rights and reject the patriarchal norms that reign therein. The red and black colors show that women are no longer ready to live under the suppression of the state and they resist any type of oppression by the state or the institution. Social, political and religious concepts have made the status of women miserable in Iran and the women are out to challenge those false notions and identities through which women are known. This discrimination on the basis of gender is unfair and illicit as the discourses of the protests show. Different factors of intersection (social and religious norms, political and legal policies) are, thus, combined to construct an intersection and a whole impact that affects one’s life (Hareera, 1985).

Figure 18



Note: The visual is taken from *CBC News Channel*. The visual was named as '*Iranian Women's Uprising Unleashed*' in the original source.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news>.

To analyze the visual with the visual grammar of Kress and Leeuwen (2006), it can be seen that the participants and the placards occupy the whole visual. It is done so deliberately, trying to give prominence and weight the visual. The gaze of the lady is straight to the viewers. The gaze attempts to communicate with the viewers and looks cool, committed and satisfied. This shows a message of commitment and determination of the lady. The visual is well-lit, clear and specially designed. The participants and the placards are intentionally centrally positioned that gives salience to the placards and the participants holding them. The participants and the placards are deliberately foregrounded that grabs the attention of the audience more effectively. The background is not shown that prominently, but it shows that the participants are standing in a public space. All these semiotic features are arranged and combined deliberately to catch the attention of the audience (Bi, 2019).

The words—'free Iran women'—show that women in Iran are not yet completely free and they need the real freedom. The white background of the placard and the bold and clear writing on it makes the writing more prominent and grabs the attention at first sight. The well-lit picture of the killed lady also shows her picture clear and focused thereby catches eyes on first sight (Gul et al., 2021).

To analyze the discourses of multimodality, intersectional feminism better decodes the discourses produced by the protesters through multimodality. Intersectional feminism is about the combination of various social categories—race, gender, social class etc.—to create certain types of distinctions (Hawk, 2016). Through the intersection of these categories, discrimination is made in Iran and the protesters are in the streets, public spaces, parks, and other public arenas to fight against this discrimination on the basis of gender. The participants in the visual clearly reject all these discrimination through their march's discourses, pictures and words. The identities which are stick to women on the basis of stereotypes are countered through semiotic strategies and texts used in the visual (Bezemer et al., 2012).

Figure 19



Note: The visual image is taken from the page of *Point-of-View-Post*. It was not named in the original source and is named by the researcher as '*Fearless Women*'.

<https://postnewspapers.com.au/>.

The visual grammar of Kress and Leeuwen (2006) helps in analyzing this visuals that how different modes are planned and appropriately used to create meaning. The visual is well-lit and the participants are centrally placed. Salience is given to the participants and the placards they are holding. The participants and the placards cover the whole visual which helps in giving more importance to the issue about which the protests take place. The protesters and the placards are fore-grounded. The background and the setting show that the protests took place somewhere in public place. All these features are done deliberately to create an impressive impact on the minds of the readers and viewers (Biowe, 2019).

Coming towards its phrases, the words and phrases written on the placards are simple in conveying the meaning, but they are intentionally written with uppercase letters and in bold to create an impactful effect. The white background of the placards with black bold writing, which has been deliberately organized like this, grabs the eyes on first

glance and imprints on the mind of the readers. Phrases like—‘say her name’, ‘Mahsa Amini’, ‘women, life, freedom’, ‘be the voice of Iran women’, ‘be with the people of Iran’ etc. try to create and convey a clear message that women want freedom through textual and visual discourses that are created in the protests (Samuels, 2018).

From the perspective of intersectional feminism, men use different forms of inequalities and identities that combine to reinforce each other and make the issue bigger and multipronged. The image talks about the inequalities and the women shout against these inequalities based on gender and race. The pattern and the whole composition create a message and meaning that women are the active agents in claiming their rights and they do not want to live under this discrimination. They believe that women are the same humans as men and they have status, potentials and abilities like men. Their intellect must be appreciated and their rights must not be snatched merely on the point that they are women. Biological attributes must not lower them. Women are, therefore, on the streets to challenge this patriarchal mentality that women do not deserve freedom and rights. All the discourses of the placards and visuals show that they are in grief yet committed to fighting for their rights. The issue, as intersectional feminism says, is not simple. It is rather a multifold issue encompassing all the domains and aspects of the society (Hastam, 2021).

Figure 20



Note: The visual has been taken from *X (Twitter)*. The trend on X about Mahsa Amini presented a movement against her killing. The hash tag *#MahsaAmini* was used on X.

The image is a clear and an excellent depiction of multimodality and shows that how different modes are intentionally used to convey the message to the target audience. The lady and the placards fully occupy the visual which tries to make an impact in order to fully grab the attention of the audience. The bulk of the image is about the lady and the placard that she is holding and both of them show a closeness of the shot to the audience thereby making an attempt to invite and involve the reader or audience of the image. The lady looks straight establishing eye contact with the reader or viewer of the image. The reader and the image seem to be on the same level. The lady and the placards are deliberately centrally positioned thereby trying to make the whole image eye-catching. The gaze of the lady is directly on the reader which tries to draw the reader's attention and sympathy. The eyes show a kind of invitation to the reader to pay attention to the placard, the words and the issue. The face of the lady occupies the bulk of the visual and

it attempts to show to the viewers that she is suppressed and in grief thereby trying to grab the sympathy of the readers or viewers of the image (Kress, 2010).

The text on the placard is deliberately written in uppercase letters. It is bold, large and with a clear background thus creating an impact to the readers. The phrases—‘say her name’ or ‘woman, life, freedom’ try to create and convey clear message of women's empowerment and emancipation from the chains of patriarchy and male dominance. The text on the placard is intentionally centrally placed and made bold so that it may effectively get the attention of the target audience. The placard is fore-grounded to make it more salient.

From the Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectional feminist point of view, the visual shows that the lady is concerned about the existing social and political structures of Iran that make women subordinate to men just because of their gender. Gender is a social construct and many misinterpretations intersect to produce such false narratives which undermine women on the basis of their physique while entirely ignoring their mental capabilities and roles that they play in a society. Male dominancy in all spheres of life, in Iran in this study, caused her to come out to the street to reject the illicit killing of women on minute and null issues. The modes that the visual used, and the message and words that the lady convey reject the social structures of the society that snatch the due rights of women based on gender and race (Acha, 1985).

Figure 21



Note: The visual image has been taken from *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, RFL/RL*. It was not named in the original source and has been named by the researcher as '*Women's Rights Now*'.

<https://www.rferl.org/>.

The visual is special in conveying its meaning and message and is taken and designed through semiotic strategies to effectively fulfill its aim. The images, placards and texts cover the bulk of the visual thereby dominating the whole visual. The visual is deliberately designed so in order to appeal to the eyes of the viewers and attracts their attention. The whole visual is well-lit and vivid. The participants and the placards are intentionally centrally positioned and made salient. The background of the image shows that the protest is taking place in a public place thereby making more public engagements. The gaze of the lady tries to symbolize her grief and sadness about the unfair treatment of women by the state. The cutting of hair attempts to show the resistance of the lady against the unlawful laws and enforced hijab and other practices by the state's policies. Through this, the lady tries to show open resistance against the political decisions and social traditions of the state. The colors of the visual, the font size of the text written on the placards, the salience of the placards and their orientation are deliberately designed to create salience and grab the attention of the target audience and readers (Ledin, 2018).

The intersection of political, social and legal practices tries to form the mindset that treats women brutally and discriminates on the basis of gender and race. Intersectional feminism highlights these various identities which intersect to form a concept about any individual or group of people. Steinmetz (2018) writes in the Times about intersectional feminism, "Intersectional feminism is a prism for seeing how various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbates each other." Thus, the combination of these categories forms certain discourses that suppress the women of Iran and the women are out in the streets to fight against the state's policies and social mindset. They suffered for so long and lived under the patriarchy of society for so long. The discourses of the visual show that the women of Iran are no longer ready to live under the existing flawed laws. They reject the laws of the state that undermine the due rights of women and keep them inert in social and political spheres (Crenshaw, 1985).

Figure 22



Note: The visual has been taken from *Euro-News*, which was not titled in the original source. The researcher has titled it as ‘*Marching for Equality*’.

<https://www.euronews.com/>.

The visual is a good instance of Mahsa Amini women’s demonstrations and is specially designed through multimodality. The background of the image depicts that the protest is taking place in an open public space. The participants in the visual and the placards they are holding are centrally positioned thus attempts to give weight to the visual. One of the ladies is fore-grounded in the visual. Her white dress is polluted with red color making an attempt to show the atrocities that the women face in Iran under patriarchal norms and laws. Her one hand is also red tries to give the look of blood. She holds an image of the murdered lady in her other hand and tries to make a posture of boldness and commitment against the harsh and inhumane treatment of women by society. The placards are intentionally centrally positioned trying to make an impact on the minds of the readers. They are specially designed through multimodality and look eye-catching and attention-grabber. The look of the participants attempts to show that

they are in grief and dejection. The text on the placards also tries to show that women oppose all sorts of oppressions by society or the state (Stien, 2019).

The feminist analysis of the visual shows that the women are in full strength supported by men to fight for their due rights and challenge the wrong approach of the state towards them. The images, placards and texts that they produce and convey through their protests show a clear opposition to the existing norms that undermine women and consider women as the property of men to be used. This mentality is many-fold and compounded and is created, promoted and installed by social norms and political policies. They need robust efforts to be uprooted and we see in the visuals that the women are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sole cause of women's liberty in its true sense. The pose of the fore-grounded lady shows that women have been through very tough situations in Iran and they have been dealt with brutally. This caused the women of Iran to rise for their rights. The brutal policies of the state and the patriarchal norms of the society took the life of an innocent soul—Mahsa Amini, which sparked the women's demonstrations in Iran. The demonstrations happen all around the globe and the issue gets global support. People from different societies showed their solidarity with Iranian women and all this happened due to the widespread demonstrations of Iranian women where they openly challenged the patriarchy that resides therein (Smith, 2021).

Figure 23



Note: The visual has been taken from *Alamy, Britain* which was not named in the original source. The researcher has titled it as '*Women's demonstration against gender-based violence*'.

<https://www.almay.com/>.

The visual shows that it has been made through the use of different colors and texts. The represented participants are deliberately centrally positioned and salience has been given to them. The whole visual is well-lit and prominent. The participants are shown special. The white dresses of the ladies are made dirty with the red color which attempts to show that women are treated very unfairly and they are killed unlawfully. The red color, as generally taken, symbolizes blood which in turn tries to imply atrocities, suppressions, violence and killing. The gaze of the women is forward aiming to show their seriousness towards their goal.

The phrases—'they killed me because I didn't sing along', 'for women, for life, for freedom', 'your sensitive content is our daily lives...'etc. try to expose and indicate that the textual discourses are against the policies and practices of the society. Women just want a shift in these trends and they seek real liberty (Kress, 2010).

Looking at the visual from the intersectional feminism of Kimberlé Crenshaw, we see that the protesters are marching in a public space to challenge the social norms and political decisions of the state. Various identities operate to subordinate women. The slogans and words depict clearly that women are no longer ready to suffer from the discriminatory behavior of the state. With the help of their discourses, they openly challenge the social norms, practices and political decisions that undermine women in all spheres of lives and leave them at men's mercy. The whole movement is about challenging this intersection of the state policies, political structure and social order that discriminates against women due to their gender (Mehfouz, 2007).

4.3 Visuals from Other Countries (U.S., Canada, KSA etc.)

This section takes the visuals of Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations from U.S., Canada, KSA etc. to analyze them with the framework of the study. Almost sixteen visuals are selected from various sources of these countries which highlight the issue of women in Iran.

Figure 24



Note: The visual has been taken from *Arab Center, Washington DC*. The visual was not named in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as '*United for Equality*'.

<https://arabcenterdc.org/>.

The image depicts that the protest is taking place in a public place as the background and the setting of the image show. The participants and the placards are centrally placed thereby making an effort to show them salient and prominent to the viewers. The deliberate combinations of the colors in designing the placards also create a sort of sense and meaning. The black color, as generally perceived, symbolizes suppression and the white, hope. Moreover, the intentional combination of these colors makes the placards more apparent. The image of the killed lady—Mahsa Amini—is deliberately fore-grounded that highlights and puts emphasis on the incident of the illegitimate murdering of the innocent soul by the morality police (Olowu, 2015).

The phrase on the placards—‘no to compulsory hijab’ makes an effort to show something really deep and important. This tries to seek the rejection of the intersection of different social, institutional and political categories which makes wearing hijab compulsory. It is the integration of all these aspects of society which forms different discourses and allows or bans its practice. The issue of women’s rights and freedom is also one of them in Iran as the historical background shows in Chapter 1. The

combination of colors, texts and other features show that women are in the streets against these social standards that differentiate women from men based on gender. This notion is openly challenged in the protests and in the visuals and placards used (Vogel, 2018).

Figure 25



Note: The visual image has been taken from *DW*. The visual was not named in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as '*Protest with Purpose*'.

<https://www.dw.com/en/top-stories/s-9097>.

The visual is designed with texts, colors and pictures encompassing different modes thereby trying to create an impact on the minds of the readers. The bulk of the visual is occupied by the protesters and the placards thereby attempting to give salience to the discourses and messages produced through the special designed placards. Both men and women are present which makes the issue an inclusive one where men stand with women for the rights and true freedom of women. Placards are intentionally centrally positioned that gives salience to them by grabbing the attention of the audience more effectively. The written text on placards is bold and an uppercase letters. The colors used are also vivid and eye-catching. The picture of the killed lady, Mahsa Amini, which has been used deliberately, also shows a message to the target audience as it appears on the front in the placard. The visual and the placard are well-lit and bright which aims to

attract the attention. The colors—red, black and white—are deliberately designed in such a way that it may grab the attention of the readers on the very first look (Ilyas, 2009).

To analyze it from a feminist perspective, it is seen that the protesters are out in the streets holding placards that portray the picture of the murdered lady. The slogans, words, phrases and pictures show that people are against the brutal treatment of women by the society, the states and its policies and political and social structure. The women are themselves out in the streets in large numbers. They sense the severity of the issue and they understand that different factors are responsible in creating and exercising this worst mentality—the mentality and belief of undermining women based on gender and race. This mentality and intersection of different social and political categories are understood and boldly challenged by the protesters in the demonstrations carried out after the illegal killing of Mahsa Amini (Hill, 1988).

Figure 26



Note: The visual has been chosen from *The Arab News Channel*. The visual is named by the original source as ‘*Tehran’s Female Force*’.

<https://www.dw.com/en/top-stories/s-9097>.

The image is a good depiction of the Mahsa Amini women's protests. The whole image is well-lit and prominent. Salience is given to the participants and to the placards they are holding. The background shows that the protest is taking place in a public place. The placard is purposefully fore-grounded having the image of the murdered lady—Mahsa Amini. The placard and the images are consciously centrally placed which gives prominence to the whole image. The gaze of the lady is on the viewers attempting to directly communicate her message with the audience and readers. The visual is, by design, aligned in such a way that the protesters and the viewers of the image are on the same level/place involving the readers with the participants of the visual.

The words on the placards make an effort to show that the women of Iran are on the streets to fight for their true emancipation, due rights and liberation. The colours of the words, the size of the text, the background of the placards and the whole design of the visual strive to show that multimodality helps in creating effective discourses that attract the attention of the readers. The image of the Mahsa Amini is, on purpose, made well-lit, prominent and well painted which attempts to get the attention of the readers on the very first look (Ledin & Machin, 2018).

From a feminist point of view, the visual shows that the killing of the lady gave strength to the momentum of women for their rights and true freedom. The women get inspiration from the lady and her resistance and that guides the women in claiming their rights. She serves as a beacon of hope for the women of Iran. The woman in the visual seems committed and determined. Her victory sign shows that the lady is brave enough to challenge the intersection of political and social suppression that the state has imposed on women (Camara, 2012).

Figure 27



Note: The visual is taken from the official page of Aljazeera News, and has been titled after the main title of the news--*Sisters in Solidarity*.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/>.

The visual is a good depiction of the Mahsa Amini women's protests. The background of the visual shows that the protest is taking place in a public place and many people, including men and women, participate in it thereby showing inclusivity. With the help of multimodality, different modes are willfully used to create an impact on the minds of the readers. Various strategies are used to design the visual. The participants, the placards and the image of the murdered lady are centrally positioned. Saliency is given to the participants and the image. The visual is clear, catchy and well-lit. It tries to attract the viewers and readers at the very first glance and imprints on the mind. The gaze of the participants is on the target and they are marching forward. The gestures and the hair in the hand of the lady attempt to create and convey a message that women no longer live under men's dominance—the dominance that kills the dreams of women and

considers them fragile and useless. The gesture, screams and moment seek to show that women are determined, directional and focused on their goals (Yang, 2019).

To look at the image from the feminist angle (intersectional feminism), the whole setting of the picture shows that the issue is taken seriously by the Iranian women this time and men also help women in these protests. The murdered lady instigated the protests and it is a fact, as shown in the historical background of women's rights in Chapter 1, that Iranian women suffered a lot from discrimination based on gender. The discrimination is manifold and multipronged supported by the state's policies and social practices and somehow backed by religion's interpretation of the issue. The lady, the placards, the text, the hair in the lady's hands, the screams and the march show that women are the active and true agents to fight for their due rights. They reject the combination of the patriarchal norms and policies that suppress them and snatch their rights (Odhiambo & Mutuku, 2022).

Figure 28



Note: The visual image has been taken from *Al Arabiya News* official website. It was not titled in the original source and has been named by the researcher as *Women's Rights Warriors*.

<https://english.alarabiya.net/>.

The above multimodal visual is a complete message of the protest for the viewers or readers. The setting shows that the protest is taking place in a public and important place where the protesters confront the police. The images of the police, as they are shown and taken, look horrific and dreary symbolizing a sense of force and oppression. The lady is shown as pointing and bravely facing the police personnel. The bulk of the visual is occupied by the protesters and the police trying to make a message to the viewers that there is a conflict between the two on the issue of women's rights. The setting of the image tries to depict the lady as oppressed and the police as the oppressors. The pointing finger of the woman tries to show her brave, committed, determined and strong. The placard is also made salient by intentionally holding it above the participants of the visual. The image of the murdered lady, Mahsa Amini, is made on the placard trying to show to the audience that she has been killed without any reason. The image of the lady is, on purpose, shown sad. Her closed eyes and a drop of tears on her face attempt to gain sympathy from the viewers of the image (Tohidi, 2016).

While keenly looking at the description gained through multimodal analysis of the visual, intersectional feminism can help decipher more effectively to know that how women are subjected to various forms of oppression by the state. The horrific look of the police is indeed dreary and frightening shows that the government is not ready to grant women their due rights. There seems confrontation between the protesters and the police. Resistance is seen from the lady who shows a sense of commitment and determination to the Iranian women against the brutal laws of the state. Iranian women are ready to face any resistance from society or the government. The participants believe that it's the social and political traditions, norms and laws which keep them in such a worst position that even their lives are not secured. This type of discrimination is resisted firmly by the protester as we see in the visuals of the protest and the visual above (Watson, 2005).

Figure 29



Note: The visual is taken from the official website of *VOI*. The visual is named by the researcher in reference to the source title as '*Breaking Barriers*'.

<https://www.voi.com/>.

The image uses multimodality to construct meaning for the readers. The participant's placard and the writing (text) cover the bulk of the visual. The colors of the placard and the image make the whole image eye-catching. The black boldly written sentence—'Your sensitive content is Iran's daily life'—makes an effort to show to the readers that women are not treated the way they are treated in the rest of the world. The red hands on the placard attempt to portray the barbarity and oppression that the women go through. They symbolize blood—the killing and wounding of women and the worst situation that they face just because of their gender. On the corner of the placard, there seem three hanging bodies which are placed on purpose. These bodies attempt to portray the concept and meaning of the cruelties that the state is doing through its policies. The hands of the participants also show that they are ready and committed to their cause (Grave, 1996).

The intersectional analysis of the visual shows that it is state policy to treat women that way—to kill, ignore, underestimate and mistreat women just because of their

gender. The hanging bodies from the colors of the flag depict that women are discriminated against and ill-treated by the state and the mentality is constructed, installed and promoted by the state and its institutions. Morality police, whose one member murdered Mahsa Amini, is one of the state's policies to suppress and control women thereby ignoring them in the social and political sphere. This complex phenomenon is understood and now openly challenged by the women of Iran as the visuals show in every case (Hanna, 2020).

Figure 30



Note: the visual has been taken from 'The National Review'. The visual was named in the original source as 'Protest for Justice'.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/>.

The visual is powerful in constructing meaning for the target audience. It uses multimodality to convey its message in different modes. The visual is well-lit and prominent. The participants and the placards occupy the bulk of the visual. Prominence is deliberately given to the placards thereby attracting the readers of the visual. The placards are centrally positioned thus trying to look eye-catching and attractive to the audience.

The background and the whole setting of the visual show that the protest is taking place in an official place to get the attention of the officials and the public.

The placards are specially designed by the use of different colors. The intentional use of bold and uppercase letters tries to attract the attention of the readers effectively. The font size and colors of the words are intentionally used to catch the audience's attention and easily convey the message. The composition of the image and words, which has been designed so intentionally, imprints on one's mind. The background of the placards also helps in making the placards look vivid. The images made are the symbols of women's emancipation and rejection of the atrocities done to women. The gaze of some participants is directly on the audience thus communicating their message directly and involving the audience with themselves (Bi, 2009).

The feminist (intersectional) analysis of the given modes shows that the participants gathered in front of an official place to communicate their words and let the officials take their issues seriously. The phrases—‘Iran, women, life, and freedom’, ‘free Iran’, ‘liberty...’ etc. show that the women do not feel liberty in the social and political arenas of their country. They are discriminated based on their gender and are put below the human category. They are mistreated by the social norms where they reside. The placards, the colors, the words, and the whole setting of the protest involve the readers and gain their sympathy and attention of the readers. All this shows that women face discrimination due to the intersection of social and political ideas that are practiced there to undermine women just because of their gender. The women are, therefore, out in the streets to openly challenge this discrimination based on gender (Crenshaw, 1985).

Figure 31



Note: The visual image is taken from 'New York Times Newspaper' which was not titled in the original source. The researcher has titled it as 'Women's Rights Movement'.

<https://www.nytimes.com/international/>.

The visual is a good demonstration of the multimodality. The background and setting are specially arranged showing that the protest is taking place in a public place thereby getting more public engagements. The represented participants look active and march towards the goal. The participants include both men and women showing inclusivity. The participants and the placards are fore-grounded and centrally positioned attempting to catch the attention of the viewers. The deliberate combination of the green, red and white colors is made in such a way that it attempts to appeal to the eyes and look eye-catching. The phrases written also attempt to gain the sympathy of the readers and make the issue of women's rights diverse and important. The texts written on the placards try to reject the prevailing norms that undermine women in all walks of life. The whole visual is made eye-catching and well-lit (Stein, 1962).

To look at the visual and the discourses gained through the use of different modes, intersectional feminism decodes it as a strong move against the norms of the society wherein the protest takes place. All the features—colors, words, setting, background, gestures, phrases, and the participants are represented to march for women's liberty and rights. The texts—‘Support women of Iran’, ‘Mahsa Amin’, ‘Women, life, freedom’, only the struggle has won’, ‘The system is....’, ‘Not to Iranian dictators’, ‘We won't go....’, ‘you are right to fear...’ etc. show the intensity of the resistance that the women show. It also shows that women are genuinely serious about the ill-treatment and massacre of women based on gender and race. They also reject the dictatorship in Iran which suppresses them and undermines them based on their femininity. All the words show a robust resistance to the combined effects of social, political and other forces that keep them below human rank and kill them on null issues. This intersectional aspect, which takes the lives of women, snatches their rights and discriminates against them based on gender, is forcibly challenged in the visual (Camara, 2012).

Figure 32



Note: The visual has been taken from ‘Ottawa Citizen Newspaper/ Magazine’. The visual has been named in relevance to the title of the original source as ‘Voices for Change’.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/>.

The image shows the women are not wearing hijab which tries to make a message against the patriarchal norms of forcing women to observe hijab. Different colors, words, slogans and a logo are deliberately used thereby trying to catch the attention of the viewers and make them read and understand the visual. The background and the whole setting of the visual show that the represented participants of the visual are in a public place thus attempting to get more engagement from people and gain sympathy from the public and the readers of the placards. The participants and the placards are made salient by bringing them to the front and much of the volume of the visual is covered by them. Through these techniques, the image is made prominent, eye-catching and well-lit. The logo on one of the placards attempts to show that women are united and one force against the cruelties that are done to them by the state, social norms or other forces in their society. The text on the placards is intentionally written in bold and colored to grab the attention of the readers. This feature attracts the eyes of the readers and helps them read the image and the texts thus creating more engagement. A simple text cannot complete this purpose (Moghanizadeh, 2013).

Intersectional feminism helps decode the analysis of the visual grammar of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The visual speaks out about the systematic suppression of women by the political policies and social norms of the society wherein the protest takes place. The pose and dress of the participants show a clear message that they reject the observance of enforced hijab that the government laws and social traditions make them do. The text—‘Women, life, freedom or zan, Zindagi, azadi’ shows that women want freedom from the chins of patriarchy which have kept them imprisoned and dormant. The logo on one placard shows that women are united and they make combined efforts to defeat the norms that prevent them live their own lives. Their gestures, looks, gaze, the combination of their colors to make placards etc. show that women have gathered in all streets and cities within the state and in the states outside to fight for their rights and true freedom. They reject the combination of social, political and historic forces and ideas which keep them limited to their homes and inert in their lives and careers.

Figure 33



Note: The visual has been taken from the official page of 'Boston University'. The visual was not named in the original source. The researcher has titled it as 'A call for change by Iranian women'.

<https://www.bu.edu/>.

The visual is superbly designed with the help of multimodality. They are the different modes which try to present the whole image appealing thereby creating effective meanings. To decode it with the help of Kress and Leewuen's visual grammar (2006), the visual attempt to present and speak many things which are created through different colors and other strategies. The participants are fore-grounded to create an impact by giving salience to the participants, the text, the images and the whole setting of the image. The placards are specially designed and the text is intentionally written in bold with different colors. The participants of the visual and the placards that they are holding are centrally positioned and made prominent with the help of different colors. The gaze and look of the participants are directly on the readers thereby trying to involve the readers in the protest and making the stance even clearer. All these characteristics are deliberately

created in the visual to grasp the attention of the viewers and make an impact on their minds. The text and the slogans are also self-explanatory (Kress, 2010).

Looking at the visual from the angle of intersectional feminism, we see that the whole visual shows a struggle for the liberty of women. It shows the condemnation of the lady who has been killed on the issue of hijab. Women are jubilant and active advocates and are in the streets to combat all those ideologies and discourses that are produced by the social and political platforms of society. They openly resist this racist type of attitude that is backed by the social norms and the state's policies. The phrases, logos, slogans, texts and images show that women are no longer passive and inert. They are active advocates and are also supported by men. They gain sympathy through the visuals and placards that they design through multimodality. They show the real face of their society to the world and how the killing of women is legitimized by the social and political ideologies, narratives and practices of their society and state. They understand that it is the intersection of all these flawed narratives and policies that have made their lives tough and do not allow them to live their lives the way they want (Tafreshi, 2010).

Figure 34



Note: The visual has been taken from the official page of 'Middle East Institute'. The visual was not titled in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as 'Unnamed protest poster'.

<https://www.mei.edu/>.

In order to grab the attention of the viewers and the readers, the multimodal analysis of the picture shows that the participants and the placards are fore-grounded and made salient. They are located centrally in the visual and covers most of the visual thus attempts to give prominence to the whole visual and, more importantly, to the idea and message that the visual conveys. The black color of the writing on the white background is intentionally done so. The red spots on the placard symbolizes blood—the symbol of killing, massacre, brutality and unfair treatment. The image of the murdered lady—Mahsa Amini—attempts to grab the attention of the readers and make the stance more noticeable. The words—‘they kill us in your silence’—speak volumes to the audience. The word ‘us’ is intentionally written with red which symbolizes the suppressions and unfairness done with the women. The word ‘silence’ is intentionally written in bold to awake the audience and gain more sympathy and engagements from the readers. The look of the participants seems sad which also gains the attention and sympathy of the readers (Jewitt, 2017).

To analyze it through a feminist perspective, the whole visual is the demonstration of what is done with women and what are they out for. The participants seem in grief due to unfair treatment of the society with the women. The killing of Mahsa Amini is again called as illegal and unfair and her image is fore-grounded. The words—‘they kill us in your silence’—makes the point clear that the women need public support within their society and from around the globe. They want to break the silence and call for help from the readers and the viewers who see them. The participants grab the attention of the readers and demand for the support from the audience. They want to reject the norms of killing women and mistreating them just on the basis of gender. They look in grief and they seek for help from the audience (Schroder, 2012).

Figure 35



Note: The visual has been taken from *'The National Newspaper'* which was not named in the original source. The researcher has titled it as *'Iranian Women protests' posters*.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/>.

The image is designed with the help of multimodality and the visual grammar of Kress and Leeuwen (2006) can help in decoding it. The visual is well-lit and prominent. The participants and the placards are centrally positioned and they cover the bulk of the visual thus trying to give weight and prominence to the image to attract the viewers. The placards are specially designed trying to catch the attention of the readers and create an impact on the minds of the readers. The phrases on the placards—'Iran: women, life and freedom', 'Iran', 'jinjiyan azadi' 's.o.s Iran' etc. are the discourse intentionally written in bold and with prominent color on a vivid background. The combination of different colors is intentionally used and the placards are centrally positioned so that the readers may read them easily and they imprint on the minds of the readers. The gestures of the participants attempt to show that they are clapping and seem hopeful in their aim of getting women's rights.

Steinmetz (2018) women are treated unfairly just because of their gender. This mentality is compounded by the social values and political decisions. The intersection of these perceptions undermines women and considers women fragile and dependent. The same goes for Mahsa Amini demonstrations. Women are mistreated and considered lower than men. They are limited due to their gender. Harsh laws are enforced on them without taking them and their issues into account. This mindset is challenged by the women. Every visual, placard, word, gesture and discourse depict that the women of Iran are no more ready to tolerate this attitude. They openly reject the narratives that suppress them and snatch their due rights. The visual shows that they are in agony and grief due to the unfair treatment of society. They feel like they are not from this planet or they do not belong to humanity. This intersection of different beliefs, mindsets and narratives keep women in such a miserable situation and the women are out to challenge them through their widespread demonstrations all across the country (Auslander, 2011).

Figure 36



Note: the visual has been taken from the official page of 'Council of Foreign Relations'. The visual has been titled by the researcher in relevance to the words written in the original source. It has been titled as '*Protesters in the streets against the oppression on women*'.

<https://www.cfr.org/>.

The protest is taking place in an open public space as the background shows. The whole visual is designed through multimodality trying to grab the attention of the readers. The participants and the placards are fore-grounded and made central just to look eye-catching thereby trying to get sympathy from the viewers. The gaze of the participants is directly on the readers of the image communicating with the readers and, thus, attempting grasping sympathy. The readers feel involved with the participants and the facial expression of the participants can be understood and felt by the readers. This impact is created through the special use of different modes. The image of the killed lady, Mahsa Amini, is made salient by making it central and above the people. This is done intentionally to get more public engagement and sympathy. In this way, the attention of the readers is achieved and the illicit killing of the lady is shown to the world. Her look and gaze show her innocence while her veil shows that she was wearing the necessary hijab. This implies that she was not killed on her hijab, but it is the wrong and patriarchal mentality and practices that took her life (Grave, 1996).

Looking at the visual from a feminist perspective, it is crystal clear that it is the mindset that treats women like this and it has been installed through social upbringing and education. All these narratives are social and they are taught and learnt. The lady was killed by the same laws and practices that treat women worse than animals. The visuals show that treating women like this is taught and practiced and it has been legitimized by the people and the state. Women are considered objects to play with or deal with in anyway a man wishes. Widespread and open demonstrations followed the killing of the innocent lady. All of them reject the patriarchal narratives, practices and policies that think of women as objects (Rubio, 2018).

Figure 37

Note: The visual has been taken from the visuals of '*The National Review*'. The visual was not named in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as '*March in front of official venue for women's rights*'.

<https://www.nationalreview.com/>.

The visual is simply stating the message of women's suppression in Iran yet it is specially designed through multimodality to convey the intended message more effectively. The placard of the murdered lady is made salient by bringing it to the front, making it salient and making it prominent through its design, size and the use of different colors. The flag of Iran is also shown attempting to show that the women also belong to the state and the same society. It also tries to imply that it is the policies of the same state where they reside and which discriminate them merely on the grounds of their differences in gender. The image of the lady and its shade on the same placard attempts to create a sense of sympathy to the readers. Her gaze and look show her innocence and raise the question that why has been she killed. The whole is intentionally designed in such a way that it attempts to gain one's sympathy thereby giving the sad feelings about the incident which took her life by a morality police. The background shows that the protest is taking place in front of an official building and public place thus gaining more public engagements. The whole image is well-lit and prominent. The text on the placard also

attempts to show the resistance of women against the norms that reside therein (Ilyas (2021).

The feminist analysis of the visual depict that the protesters come up with all those discourses and steps that help them get real liberty. Through these protests and their visuals, they reject all types of norms, policies, decisions and institutions that discriminate and persecute women based on gender. The protesters understand and they show it through each placard that it is the combinations of all these norms and narratives that back and amplify each other to discriminate against women based on their gender. The above placard also shows that the text, the image and the colors used depict open resistance to the discrimination and illicit killing of women on baseless issues.

Figure 37



Note: The visual has been taken from ‘NBC News’. The visual was not named in the original source and has been titled by the researcher as ‘*Women’s right activists holding protests*’.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/>.

The above figure is designed through multimodality and the visual grammar of Kress and Leewuen (2006) helps in its decoding. The represented participants of the visual are centrally positioned. They occupy the whole of the visual thereby trying to give

weight and importance to the visual. The participants are looking upward and shouting attempting to show that they are under different pressures and grieves in the society wherein they reside. They wish to put an end to these brutalities and through their visuals in the protests, they seem to seek the attention of the viewers (world) to understand their issue and sort out a solution to it. The visuals are designed in such a way that they attempt to grab the attention of the viewers and gain sympathy. The image of the murdered lady is centrally positioned and prominent thereby making it more prominent and well-lit. The image attains the sympathy of the viewers. The whole visual interacts with the viewers thereby trying to convey the message that women are subjected to different social pressures (Kress and Leewuen (2006).

Intersectional feminism believes in the intersection of different social and political categories of thoughts that combine to form a sort of narrative that discriminates against women based on their gender. The visuals show that the lady was killed just because of her gender. Women are considered inferior to men and they are not taken on board in any decision. The image of the killed lady shows that the actual issue is not of wearing hijab, but it is the mindset that has been installed and nourished to consider women below the human race. Men dominate women and find different reasons to take them out of social and political domains. These policies and narratives, as the visual show reign in Iran which discriminate and kill women on baseless and void issues. It is the mindset which has been created, flourished and established through the intersection of various identities which gives women this status considering them weak, dependent, confused and unable in their decisions ad in general social and political affairs. This mindset has been identified and challenged in the visuals that we come across in this study (Kaplan & Temma, 1990).

Figure 38



Note: the visual has been taken from the visuals of ‘CTV News’. The visual was not titled in the original source, and has been titled by the researcher as ‘*Protests out in the Streets*’.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/>.

The above figure depicts that the participants are protesting on a large scale in a public space. The participants are holding different placards designed through multimodality. Various colors are purposely used to make the placards look appealing to the eyes of the viewers. The represented participants and the placards are centrally positioned and made prominent thus attempting to look eye-catching and attention grabbing. One of the placards has a woman sketch on it with scattered hairs and serious look trying to depict the open resistance of women against the aggression done to them by men. The phrase; ‘women of Iran’ written in bold and with different colors tries to attract the attention of the viewers and communicate effectively with the readers that women are under so many atrocities. The combination of white, red and green colors also makes the sketch look appealing to the eyes. The scattered hair of the sketch tries to convey that women want to live with freedom and whatever way they wish to live. It also attempts to reject the laws of enforced hijab. The placard is deliberately made central and salient. The other placard also attempts to reject the patriarchal decisions and practices thereby calling for help from the readers and viewers of the protest. The text written on it

and the way it is made prominent attempts to grab the attention and sympathy of the readers (Asriyama & Sari, 2022).

The feminist analysis of the visual shows that the women of the protest reject the observance of enforced hijab that has been implemented by the laws of the state and legitimized by the wrong and patriarchal norms and concepts of the society. They consider themselves equal humans like men and they seek freedom in their life decisions and actions. They want to break the intersection of political decisions, institutions' laws and patriarchal social norms that locate women below men and limit the freedom of women. The women call for help from other communities too and struggle to come out of these suppressions. This needs collective efforts by the women to challenge all those narratives, ideologies, practices and beliefs that restrain women from their freedom and kill them on minute points (Haider et al., 2021).

Figure 39



Note: The visual has been taken from *VOA News*. The visual has been titled in reference to the description given in the original source. It has been titled as '*Public holding visuals during 2022 Mahsa Amini women.*'

<https://www.voanews.com/>.

The image is well-designed with the help of different semiotic strategies. The whole visual is well-light, clear and prominent. It demonstrates that the protest is taking place in a public setting. The protest supports and shows its solidarity with the Mahsa Amini women's struggle for the true emancipation of women in Iran. With the help of multimodality, the participants of the visual and the placards are centrally positioned and are made salient. They cover the bulk of the visual thus making an impact on the readers. The placards are specially designed with bold and black writing on them with a white background. This looks appealing to the eyes of the viewers and readers of the visual. The participants are on the same page with the viewers and their gazes communicate directly with the readers. All these settings are created on purpose in order to grab the attention of the readers and communicate the message in a better way to the target audience (Kress, 2006).

The text on the placards also shows some deep meaning. The phrases, 'regime change for Iran', 'women freedom...', 'Iranian lives matter', 'women, life, freedom' etc. try to show the true agenda of the protests. They all reject the brutalities that are done to women just merely on the basis of their gender. The world does not recognize this mindset and calls for the real freedom of Iranian women on humanitarian grounds.

Intersectional feminism sees the visual as a strike for the liberation of Iranian women from the flawed policies of the state and rotten norms of society. The protesters call for regime change too which shows the issue is not only one dimensional; rather it is a multi-dimensional issue taking into account social standards and norms, various identities that are attached with women, political ideology and other interpretations. The worst treatment of women is legitimized by all these sects and interpretations of the society and they need to be changed and reformed. This needs solid and collective efforts to challenge the intersection of these flawed and outdated narratives. Challenging them on global level can make a difference and the women of Iran seem successful in spreading their narratives in their widespread protests and marches that they arrange after the killing of Mahsa Amini. The street activism through various protests, in this case, plays important role in spreading awareness and challenging the patriarchal norms (Crenshaw, 2011).

Figure 40



Note: The visual has been taken from the official site of *GW Today*. The visual was not named in the original source. The visual has been titled by the researcher as '*Women's rights March*'.

<https://www.gwu.edu/>.

The visual is a good instance of the multimodality. Different colors, images and textual discourses are combined so that the visual may seem eye-catching and get the attention of the readers. If we see, the participants and the placards they are holding cover bulk of the visual thereby trying to give weight to the visual by focusing the main issue. The placards are specially designed attempting to grab the attention of the viewers. The whole visual is well-lit and clear. The background and the whole setting of the visual show that the protest is taking place in a public space to get more public engagement (Vinda, 2021).

The textual discourses show that the protesters are trying to reject the patriarchal social norms. The text is written in bold with white background. The red color on the placard attempts to show the atrocities that women face and the killings that are done

with women on the basis of their gender. Every placard talks about the atrocities that are done with the women in Iran. Each placard calls for an end to the worst treatment of women by the society and the political policies of the state. The look of the participants shows the grief and mourning of women on the behavior of men towards women.

Intersectional feminism focuses mainly on the integration of different ideologies that work together to discriminate against women based on gender (Steinmetz, 2018). The same goes for the women of Iran that they are under different forms of violence just on the basis of their gender. All visuals and the visual above show that women are the active agents for their rights. They no longer reside under the patriarchal norms that take their lives on null issues. The phrases in the above visual—‘women, life, freedom’, ‘no to Islamic republic’, ‘Mahsa Amini’ etc. show the open resistance of women against any social norm, political decision or law that undermines women merely based on their gender and considers them fragile. The protesters reject the identities attached with them which are based on stereotypes and misinterpretations (Haider & Loureiro, 2021).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter deals with the findings (trends, patterns and themes), discussion, recommendations and conclusion of the study. The chapter finds all those themes and patterns which can be seen after the analysis of each visual with the help of the integrated framework. This chapter sees that what themes are used and how women use different modes to create and communicate their messages. It finds that what are the common themes, ideologies, patterns and trends that can be seen and extracted from the analysis of the data and what impacts they have. The use of various modes to construct certain meanings and discourses is discussed in this chapter. Hence, the research questions: first, what patterns of multimodal meaning emerge through the interplay of linguistic and visual elements; and second, how have women been portrayed in various placards/visuals used in this study through feminist lens, are answered in this chapter. The themes, patterns and trends in the data help in answering the research questions and finding the research objectives.

The analysis of the visual data showed a complex landscape of themes and patterns which emerged from the careful analysis of the data through the framework. The discourses of the visual data are deciphered and decoded with the help of the theoretical framework. The findings of this study resonate with the literature cited in the previous sections and they are built upon the existing research studies that talked about the representation of women issues through multimodality. The discovery that women are often portrayed in stereotypical roles and their voices and perspectives are marginalized or excluded in the visual discourses of this study aligns with previous research studies on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and the silencing of women's voices. The use of visual grammar to analyze the composition of the visuals of this study is consistent with researches on multimodal discourse analysis. They all highlight the importance of considering the interplay between language, image, and other modalities in shaping discourses. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on intersectional feminism and centering the voices and perspectives of marginalized women resonates with the cited studies on the importance of amplifying the voices of women from diverse backgrounds to

challenge dominant narratives and promote social change. By situating this study's findings within the broader context of existing research studies, it becomes clear that this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex and interconnected ways in which women are represented. The trends, themes and patterns that I find in my visual data after analyzing it through the integrated framework are discussed below.

5.1 Themes

- A) Resistance and Defiance
- B) Power Dynamics and Challenging Authority and Social norms
- C) Identity and Representation
- D) Solidarity and Collective Efforts
- E) Intersectional Experiences and Marginalization
- F) Embodiment and Enactment
- G) Emotions and Affective Expression
- H) Counter Narratives and Challenging Dominant Discourses

5.1.1. Resistance and Defiance

All the visuals and the discourses show the theme of resistance and defiance. The visuals show that resistance started after the illegal killing of Mahsa Amini and a wave of demonstrations sparked in Iran to resist the mistreatment of women by the social norms and political decisions. Resistance and defiance are shown in every visual and a powerful show can be seen where women dominate the demonstrations and demand women's freedom and rights. The demonstrations are thus the oppositions presented against the patriarchal norms.

5.1.2. Power Dynamics and Challenging Authority and Social Norms

Power dynamics and challenging authority are the vital aspects of the demonstrations. The patriarchal norms perpetuate gender-based discrimination and snatch their rights. Men hold the power to retain these patriarchal norms and retain their dominance.

If we see, we also know that state policies are criticized by the protesters and the visuals of the protests. The government passes and implements such laws which undermine women and oppose dissent. Such decisions have limited the role of women in

all spheres of life. These norms and political decisions are highlighted and criticized in the visuals of the protests.

5.1.3. Identity and Representation

In the analysis of the visuals, we see that women reclaim their identity and challenge the patriarchal norms and political laws passed by the state. The women want and fight for their identity as the citizens of the state. The movement calls for the acceptance of diverse identities within the Iranian society.

Women demand recognition, challenging the historical mindset of the people. The protesters are using slogans, gestures, stories and visuals to reclaim their voice and demand to be heard. The protests struggle for the inclusive participation and representation of women in politics, social affairs; media etc. that women should be made free to participate in the social and political affairs. The protests challenge the stereotypes regarding the women representing a nuanced representation of the women of Iran. They call for women's empowerment through the representation of the discourses that they produce through multimodality.

5.1.4. Solidarity and Collective Efforts

It is the main theme of the protests. Despite the differences in ethnicity, religion, age and socioeconomic background, we see that the protests use different modes to present their demands. This shows oneness in their efforts. Through intersectional feminism, the protests support the struggle of different marginalized sects of society. This shows an inclusive effort to counter the mistreatment of women by the society. The protesters get global solidarity and support too as the issue is a social one and it needs to be addressed with iron hands.

5.1.5. Intersectional Experiences and Marginalization

They are the crucial theme of the protests. The intersectional aspect shows that women are under the chains of patriarchy supported by political culture and social norms. It shows how different ways are used to marginalize women based on gender. Different ethnicities, religious norms and religious interpretations also play vital roles in shaping and spreading these ideas and narratives. Social class and economic disparities also play a role in shaping these norms and installing this mentality. These aspects act together to

exacerbate the issue of women's suppression and discrimination. Women are marginalized by erasing them from social and political arenas.

5.1.6. Embodiment and Enactment

They are the important themes in Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations. The images and bodies of women are signs of resistance that oppose the patriarchal norms and government control on their bodies, autonomy, dresses and other tasks. The hijab is also used as a symbol of the state's aggressive policies regarding enforced hijab and this very factor took the life of Mahsa Amini. In most visuals, women have intentionally removed hijabs thus showing their resistance against the laws of the state regarding observing hijab.

Women's bad experiences are also shown in the visuals through their bodies and the images of the killed lady are also shown portraying the marginalization and oppression that women go through. These suppressions have limited them in their daily lives and do not let them live their lives as they wish. They also restrict them from working in social and political domains of the state just because of their gender. Moreover, women's physical presence in all the protests depicts that they are united in opposing security forces, state laws and social norms. Their presence also occupies public spaces, showing their unity and demand for change.

Each visual, image, placard, slogan, logo and participant is the symbol of resistance. Women show resistance and struggle for the enactment of such laws that give women their due rights and real freedom. Women try to bring changes in the laws that treat them harshly and also challenge the social norms and traditions that give them very narrow space in living their lives.

5.1.7. Emotions and Affective Expression

Emotions and affective expression play important roles in the demonstrations of Mahsa Amini women's protests. We see outrage and anger against the laws and social norms that violate women's rights. Protesters are the active agents and advocates of women's rights in the visuals. Women in the visuals also mourn the loss of Mahsa Amini and other victims of the policies of the state that discriminate against women based on their gender. These policies and social norms collected women on a common front where they showed their emotions as one group.

The visuals of the protests also depict grief, anxiety and fear. This is due to violent policies of the state which undermine women based on their gender. The crackdowns, arrests, tortures, and killings made the women seem in grief and stress. Social pressure also adds to their grief. Despite all pressures, we see hope and positivity too which keep women motivated in their struggle and give them strength to fight for their rights through collective efforts and resilience. The emotions and their expression play the role of a driving force to keep the women motivated in the struggle for women's emancipation and true liberty.

5.1.8. Counter Narratives and Challenging Dominant Discourses

Presenting counter-narratives and challenging dominant discourses are the essential aspects of the women's protests in Iran. The laws of the state and the patriarchal and archaic traditions and norms of the society, which enforce the observance of hijab as a compulsory act, are openly challenged through the discourses of the protests. The manifestations of the state are openly challenged and the murder of the lady is called unfair and wrong in the visuals of the protests. Her death is termed as a brutal killing and such policies are criticized openly that discriminate against women just based on their gender. Past stories are also rarely shared which shows that the suppressions of the state and the society are old and they took many innocent lives.

The discourses of protests challenge and criticize traditional concepts and ideas regarding the roles of genders. The protesters reject the stereotypes residing therein and demand women's freedom and rights. By creating counter-discourses to challenge the patriarchal norms, the Mahsa Amini women's protests try to challenge the state control on the manifestation of information and to present strong and rational counter-discourses to challenge the unlawful laws of the state and the patriarchal norms of the society.

5.2. Patterns

In addition to the aforementioned themes, there seem some general patterns that help in understanding the messages of the visuals in a better way. They help to know that what recurring and repeated structures, elements or relationships are used within the whole data. The patterns act as the building blocks that help to construct certain themes and meanings. They are common in the whole data and represent a series of same

elements throughout the whole data thus making a consistent and constant impact on the minds of readers. Some of the important patterns that I found are as under.

- A) Visual Tropes
- B) Iconography
- C) Visual Composition
- D) Inter-Sectionality

5.2.1. Visual Tropes

Visual tropes describe common visual conventions or clichés used in any visual. They are used to create certain messages and convey certain meanings in the form of images. In the context of Mahsa Amini women's protests, visual tropes are used to create different discourses, build connections and criticize various narratives. Some of them that I find in my data are presented in the following paragraphs.

1. Reclaiming Symbols: Women use different types of symbols and signs like victory signs, raised fists etc. that represent women's empowerment and determination in fighting the patriarchy of the society. These symbols are generally used and are associated with feminist movements to show resistance and combine efforts against the atrocities. Such symbols, signs and logos are seen in the visual data of my research.

2. Intersectional Representation: The visuals in the data analysis chapter show that there are women in the protests from diverse backgrounds. They show intersectional identities and experiences and highlight that women are one in claiming and fighting for their rights. This also criticizes the narrative that feminism belongs to only white women or higher social classes. This shows that women are on the same page irrespective of their colors, social class or age. This pattern is seen in the visual data of my research.

3. Subverting Gender roles: The visuals challenge and criticize the mindset of the people and the laws of the state. The patriarchal norms are challenged through the discourses that are created through the visuals. The visuals discourage the social expectations of society and come up with new visuals and discourses that openly resist the patriarchal norms.

5.2.2. Iconography

Iconography plays a vital role in Mahsa Amini women's protests. Some images, icons and symbols are seen repeatedly thereby making a pattern. It can be divided into different parts.

1. Mahsa Amini's image is the widely used iconic symbol of the protests. As the protests started from her killing by the state's morality police, her face represents the human cost of the brutality that the state has been doing with the women. Her image is the spark and her death was the stimulus of the protests. We see her face almost in every visual which gives a kind of motivation and strength to the protesters. Her image symbolizes the resistance of women and demands for freedom, liberty and women's rights.

2. We see women's hair as uncovered and sometimes they cut their hair. Some images show them holding their hair in their hands. All of these images act as powerful symbols of resistance against the state's oppressions. They reject the laws of observing compulsory hijab and criticize the social patriarchal norms. This pattern is also seen throughout the visuals.

3. The raised fists are also seen throughout the visuals which create a pattern for the readers of the visuals. They are often accompanied by the phrases—"Women, Life, Freedom", "Free Iran", "How many more lives?", "Rise with the women of Iran", "Free Iran Women", "Say Her Name, Mahsa Amini", "Injustice is Law in Iran", "No to Compulsory Hijab", "Do you know that letting your hair blow in the wind is a crime in Iran", "Stop Killing Us" etc.—which denote an iconic gesture against the patriarchal norms of the state and also show oneness, unity, solidarity and strength. These phrases are very strong and they are the slogans of the protests showing a strong desire for gender equality, women's rights and liberty in its true sense.

4. Martyrdom Imagery: The imagery of martyrs, especially Mahsa Amini in this case, is repeatedly depicted in the visuals. The image has become an iconic representation. It shows that women have made many sacrifices and even they sacrificed their lives. It also shows that the patriarchy has taken many innocent souls on very minute issues. The protesters use them as a symbol of determination and commitment too to challenge the brutal laws and patriarchal practices in their society.

5.2.3. Visual Composition

This shows how visual elements are used and how the visuals are designed to grab the attention of the viewers and guide the readers in their true understanding. These patterns are used in a specific way to create an impact on the minds of the viewers and create a sense of harmony and rhythm. This pattern is seen in Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations. The visual elements that show a pattern throughout the data are discussed below.

1. Arrangement of the Visuals: Most of the visuals are arranged with linear flow thereby giving the intended message to the readers in a direct, clear and easy way.
2. Colors: The use of different colors like red, black, white and green create an impact on the minds of the readers and convey the target message more easily and effectively as discussed in detail in the data analysis chapter. Moreover, the red, green and white colors also represent Iran's flag colors thus creating a sense of unity and nationalism that women love their country and they want to live in it under moderate laws and policies.
3. Imagery: Some powerful images are used in the visual data of all protests. These images create an impact on the minds of readers and show that these images are important to be noticed. The images of Mahsa Amini, for instance, create an emotional connection of the readers with the visual. This also gains sympathy from the readers.
4. Typography: How the text is written and what colors are used in written discourse play an important role in conveying the message of the protests and also in grabbing the attention of the readers. In the visuals, we see that clear, colored and bold typography is intentionally used to convey the demands of the movement in a better way.
5. Symbols: Symbols are also used in the visuals of the women's protests in Iran as we see in the data analysis chapter. In the visuals of the protests, symbols like fists, victory signs, hair, hijab etc. are used that add depth to the meaning of the visuals.

Moreover, the repetition of some visual elements like protest slogans, signs etc. also creates an impact on the readers and helps in strengthening the messages of the protests. The use of contrasting colors, imagery and texture also creates interest for the readers and gains their attention of the readers. Alignment of the visual elements also creates different patterns and helps in conveying the meanings of the protests.

5.2.4. Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the combined nature of social categories—gender, race, class, age, sexuality etc.—to show that an individual possesses many identities that interact to create discrimination and marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989).

If we look at the visuals of Mahsa Amini women's protests, we see that women are suppressed, discriminated and marginalized based on their gender. Women, based on their gender, are considered weak and indecisive by the social norms and state policies and they are tortured and killed on very minute issues. They are institutionally violated and their rights are snatched. Women are forced to certain practices like the observance of full hijab etc. This means taking away the freedom of women and compelling them to follow what men want in the patriarchal social order. Other reasons like ethnicity, social class etc. can also amplify the issue of women in these protests but it is the gender which mainly matters in this very issue. Thus, with the help of intersectionality, women in the protests communicate their experiences both on individual level and in groups.

These patterns are seen in the analysis of the visual data of Mahsa Amini women's protests. They create uniformity and harmony. The importance of the issue is created in the visuals through these patterns that catch the attention of the viewers and thus help in gaining the sympathy of the readers or viewers of the visuals.

Thus, this research study makes significant contributions to the field of linguistics by pioneering a multimodal discourse analysis approach that integrates feminist theory, semiotics, and social movement studies. By examining the 2022 Iranian women's protests through this innovative lens, this study sheds light on the complex interplay of language, visual elements, and spatial configurations in shaping meaning and contesting power dynamics. This research expands the scope of feminist linguistics, multimodal critical discourse analysis, and semiotics of social protest, while demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding social phenomena. The analysis provides a unique dataset for future research and comparative studies, and the methodological innovations offer a novel framework for examining linguistic and social contexts. Ultimately, this research enriches our understanding of language, communication, and social dynamics, inspiring future studies and contributing to the development of new theoretical and methodological approaches in linguistics.

5.3 Discussion

This section answers the research questions that how different modes are used, what messages are created, and how women are portrayed in the visuals. The research aims at investigating these questions and getting the research objectives. We see (in the previous chapter) that visuals are used to create discourses regarding women's true emancipation from the chains of patriarchy. We also see that women are discriminated just because of their gender. The text and images used in the protests showed that women are under suppressions and they are violated politically and socially. Their rights are snatched and their souls killed. Certain laws are passed to limit women and enchain them just because of their gender.

The interplay of the images with the text also answers the research questions that women are shown weak, dependent and absurd creatures. Women are, therefore, out in the streets to let the world know that they are treated brutally. They suffer just because of their gender and there is no room for them in any sphere of their society. They feel as if they are not humans and they do not have any right to live their lives and work. Men dominated policies undermine them and finish their identity. The sentences, phrases, slogans, images, logos, gestures etc. that they show in their protests create a clear message that they no longer accept the patriarchal norms which discriminate them just on their gender.

As we see from the analysis and findings of the previous chapter that the Mahsa Amini women's protests exemplify a masterful deployment of visual and symbolic resistance, taking into account different elements. Various elements of multimodality are taken and analyzed to let the readers of the images about the patriarchal norms that are practiced therein. Protesters used various placards, signs, symbols and logos that create an impact on the minds of the readers of the visuals. This helps in the constructions of various discourses and in effectively opposing the dominant patriarchal narratives and practices. The inclusion of semiotic resistance like making the body parts red, cutting the hair etc. shows the embodiment nature of the protest that openly rejects the patriarchal norms. All these show that women are serious, united and fully committed to fight for their due rights. They no longer want to live under patriarchal norms and laws.

Furthermore, the re-contextualization, re-alignment and appropriation of the protesters' symbols like hijab, veil etc. does not show their literal senses, but shows the open challenge that women pose to the unfair laws of the state and illegal practices of the society. This semiotic reclamation portrays the navigation ability of the protesters that they are fully aware of the ill-practices of the state. They, therefore, properly understand and overtly challenge the power structures which undermine women just on the basis of their gender.

The integration of digital platforms and social media plays an important role in these protests. The visuals are formed through different unique ways and various digital tools and colors are used to make them more eye-catching and impressive. This helps in effectively communicating the messages and also in propagating the messages of the visuals all across the globe. Social media platforms, news channels and print media are used to spread the message globally and make it a serious issue that needs to be addressed. This created transnational solidarity protest and the people came out against the patriarchal norms of the State of Iran which keep women at a disadvantage position just because of their gender. Thus, these are the protest strategies in this digital age.

Thus, the Mahsa Amini women's protests show that women were able to resist the long-standing norms that undermine women on the basis of their gender. The use of multimodality has proven as an efficient way of constructing such discourses that challenge the patriarchal norms and create a strong narrative of solidarity, women's empowerment, resistance and calls for the equality and due rights of women. The protesters created the discourses of open resistance and social change through multimodality. They inspired new ways of women's activism in Iran and made a history in the women's history of Iran thereby compelling the government to abrogate morality police and grant women their due rights. Though there are still so many challenges and constraints, but these protests marked a history. All the protesters—within Iran or outside—had one narrative and aim. They all were united and fully committed for the liberation of women from the domination of men and from the chains of patriarchy that undermine them just because of their gender.

5.4 Recommendations

This research, which analyzed the visual demonstrations of Mahsa Amini women's protests, yields some recommendations for future research. It used multimodal analytical tool along with intersectional feminism to analyze the visual data of the protests. Future researchers can get help from this thesis to build their thesis on. They can take various dimensions of the thesis in various contexts. Some potential dimensions include:

- A). Future researchers can use multimodality to examine the role of embodiment and performance in various types of social protests. Future researchers can find and explore that how gestures, bodies, slogans, logos etc. are used in different social protests to construct different discourses and create meanings. This can take the analysis of various dimensions of the protests. The studies can be carried out in different contexts across the globe.

- B). The discourses of marginalized people and their protests can also be analyzed through intersectional feminist frameworks. Future researches can analyze various intersectional identities like sexuality, class, race, religion, ability etc. Future researchers can explore these various aspects that how they interact and how the marginalized group of people uses them to construct different meanings. This can show that how different marginalized group use different identities to understand, navigate and oppose the discourses and narratives through various social protests. The studies can be done from different dimensions and in various contexts across the globe.

- C). The impact of digital technologies can also be researched in future. Future researcher can explore that how different discourses can be created with the help of new technology using different modes. The roles of social media, digital graphics and other modern tools can be analyzed that how they help in creating, propagating, challenging or promoting certain discourses and what can be their impacts. The roles of these platforms can also be analyzed in using different modes and shaping various discourses. This can help to investigate that how digital technologies construct, promote or oppose the dissemination of protests' narratives and the creation and promotion of counter-narratives.

D). Comparative studies can also be done in various social, cultural, religious, political and geographical contexts. To expand the scope of this research, different dynamics of various protests can be compared that too in different cultures and geographies. This can take into account the different dynamics and reactions of various cultures, norms and systems that how they influence or take the aspects of multimodality of social protests.

E). Other theoretical lenses like post-modernism, queer theory or post-colonialism can also be taken into account by the future researchers. This will give an extensive analysis from feminist point of view. This can lead to a nuanced and comprehensive feminist analysis of social protests. The study can be enhanced by the use of various theories like post-colonialism, queer theory, or disability studies to the discourses of analyze social protests. This can help shed light on the new dimensions of the social protests.

F). Other forms of social activism can also be taken into account in future research. Multimodal feminist analysis can be used to in understanding these other forms like environmental or labor movements. This can help to know that how different movements use visual and multimodal strategies to construct their discourses and convey their messages and challenge dominant narratives.

5.5 Conclusion

To conclude, the current research study endeavored to decipher the intricate mechanisms by which diverse strategies are employed to construct disparate discourses and convey specific messages. This investigation delved into the realm of multimodality, exploring the ways in which various communication modes are utilized to create visuals that convey particular meanings. Through the lens of multimodality, this study revealed that diverse kinds of discourses are created, each with its unique characteristics and implications. Furthermore, this research employed intersectional feminism as a critical framework to decode and interpret the discourses, thereby uncovering the ways in which women are portrayed, treated, and discriminated against solely on the basis of their gender.

The findings of this study underscore the significant impact of visuals and textual modes on the minds of readers. The strategic combination of these modes creates a profound impression, shaping the reader's perceptions and understanding of the message being conveyed. In the context of the Mahsa Amini women's demonstrations, the visuals

were meticulously designed to effectively communicate the messages of the protesters to the viewers. These visuals were crafted to be eye-catching, prominent, and clear, ensuring that the intended messages were constructed and properly fore-grounded to render them vivid and salient to the target audience.

This research demonstrates the efficacy of an integrated framework, combining the visual grammar of Kress and Leeuwen with the intersectional feminism of Kimberle Crenshaw. This integrated approach enabled the researcher to convey the intended meanings and messages of the protesters to the readers, while simultaneously revealing the hidden ideologies embedded within the discourses of the visuals. Through the application of multimodality, this study provided a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between visuals, text, and ideology, shedding light on the ways in which discourse is constructed and communicated.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the ways in which discourse is shaped and negotiated through the strategic use of visuals and textual modes. By employing an integrated framework that combines multimodality and intersectional feminism, this study provides a critical perspective on the ways in which women are represented and marginalized in discourse. As such, this research has significant implications for the development of more nuanced and inclusive approaches to communication, highlighting the need for a critical awareness of the ways in which discourse shapes and reflects societal attitudes and ideologies.

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