

*"Through education, we can fight terrorism, not through guns, not through weapons."* — Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai, the supergirl from Pakistan who was all over the tabloids in the year 2013, for her bold stand against Taliban's oppression and crusade for girls' education. She was chosen as the 'Woman of the Year 2013' by Glamour Magazine and was in the time's list of "100 Most Influential People in the World" the same year.

Malala's impassioned stance on education and women's rights can be traced to her roots, since her father is an education activist himself. Malala was born on 12th July, 1997 into a Sunni Muslim family in Mingora, Swat district in North-West Pakistan. She has two younger brothers. Her father encouraged her to pursue politics and would discuss social issues with her till late at night.

When she was only 11 years old, she gave her first speech at Peshawar, where she asked "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?" Thereafter, she started writing a blog anonymously under the pseudonym of 'Gul Makai'.

A documentary was also filmed on her life. She grew popular and openly gave her views on television and newspapers. She was nominated for International Children's Peace Prize by South African activist Desmond Tutu. Seeing her worldwide growing support, Taliban felt threatened. A gunman shot at her on 9 October, 2012. She was sent to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in England, where she recuperated. On 12th October, a 'Fatwa' was issued against Taliban for attempting to kill her.

Her assassination bid only strengthened her cause. A UN petition 'I am Malala' was launched with the aim to put all the children in school by the end of 2015. This helped in the ratification of Pakistan's first Right to Education Bill. She also won her country's first Youth Peace Prize and contended alongside Nelson Mandela for the Nobel Peace Prize (2013).

She was again nominated in 2014 and this time she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and became the youngest person ever to win the nobel prize. She was given the honour to open the world's largest library—the Library of Birmingham.

She met Queen Elizabeth and Barack Obama and his family. She was conferred Europe's most prestigious human rights award - the Sakharov Prize. She also received a honorary degree from University of King's College, Canada in 2014.

On her birthday in 2013, observed as 'Malala Day', she spoke using the UN platform for education for every child in the world. Currently, she is involved in mobilising support and help for 'Malala Fund', which is being raised to help girls come out of poverty and illiteracy. She has also actively voiced her concern to bring back the kidnapped girls in Nigeria.

Her name literally means 'grief-stricken', but she chose not to lead a life of subjugation and offered a ray of hope to millions of girls like her. She can rightly be called an 'incarnation of Malalai', a Pashtun female warrior, whom she is named after. We salute her vision and courage.