

KOZHIKODE, November 9, 2012

Malala speaks out in Malayalam

A collection of Malala's diary, interviews, and the script of a documentary.

“Our school was supposed to open today. On waking up, I realised the school was still closed and that was very upsetting. In the past, we used to enjoy ourselves on school closure. But this is not the case this time because I am afraid that the school may not reopen at all on the orders of the Taliban.” So goes one of the diary entries of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani school student and education rights activist who was shot at by the Taliban last month.

A collection of her diary entries, interviews, and the script of a documentary, all translated into Malayalam, has been released in the form of a book by the Insight Publica. This is possibly the first such endeavour in any language.

In 2009, the BBC News Website started publishing Malala's diary entries when she was just 11 years old. It paints a picture of the conflict-ridden Swat region in Pakistan, much different from traditional conflict reporting. The writings oscillate between a childlike innocence and an adult-like frustration at the happenings around her.

She talks of her craving for school, questions the Taliban's diktats against girls' education, and points the finger at the army for its inaction. She notes the shift in language in the household, with 'frequent mentions of rockets, shelling, death, and army as the conflict deepened.'

Historical record

Her short daily diary entries are a historical record which captures the emotions of a populace. She wrote under the pseudonym 'Gul Makai,' fearing attacks from the Taliban.

Malala is now called the Anne Frank of Pakistan. The young girl from Swat has redefined the meaning of Pakistan. “I was getting ready for school and about to wear my uniform when I remembered that our principal had told us not to wear uniforms and come to school wearing normal clothes instead. So I decided to wear my favourite pink dress. During the morning assembly, we were told not to wear colourful clothes as the Taliban would object to it,” says one entry.

A transcript of a fairly long interview of her with journalist Zahid Bunerji surprises one with her answers revealing her maturity and knowledge of issues. Asked about her change in ambition of becoming a doctor to that of becoming a politician, she says: “Although I wanted to be a doctor, I realise now that politics is the only way to fight for our rights. We have enough doctors in the country, but there is a dearth of quality politicians.”

As she recovers from her injuries in a hospital in the United Kingdom, her ideas are spreading far and wide and inspiring.

Many schools are buying Malala Yousafzai's diary translated into Malayalam and distributing it among students.

Link : <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/malala-speaks-out-in-malayalam/article4079244.ece>