

Decoding Gender Ideologies Constructed in the Discourses of Khawateen Digest

Abstract

This research is an attempt to provide useful insights regarding certain 'stereotypical' gender ideologies by defining femininities in terms of particular adjectives. These linguistic items are loaded with negative connotations and project the 'marginalized' and 'subordinate' roles of women in the patriarchal society of Pakistan. The present research explores the ambivalence inherent in these ideologies and highlights how these constructions of femininity and socialization of women in the discourses of a popular Pakistani magazine Khawateen Digest may lead the readers (mostly females) to internalize or even imitate these images. The research draws upon Beauvoir (2010) one of the first theorists who argues that gender was not an essential characteristic of people, but rather something that one becomes through socialization and Craig (1992) who posits that masculinity and femininity can be treated as social expectations in a patriarchal social set up. The data have been collected from the population of 300 (consisting of four age groups) through questionnaire. The findings make it clear that the construction of the ideologies of woman as "other" in the discourses of these Digests may confirm the specific roles of women thus invoking and reinforcing the readers to have an urge to identify themselves in these particular terms only; never ever thinking of other independent and empowered roles and identities for themselves to pursue.

Key terms: Gender, Ideology, Patriarchy, Femininity, Women Roles, Feminism, Identities.

INTRODUCTION

The present research aims at analyzing the kinds of ideology and/or femininity offered in Pakistani Women's magazine - KHAWATEEN DIGEST (Urdu).

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The research draws upon Beauvoir (2010) one of the first theorists who argues that gender was not an essential characteristic of people, but rather something that one becomes through socialization and Craig (1992) who posits that masculinity and femininity can be treated as social expectations in a patriarchal social set up. It is the effort to deconstruct the genre of women's magazines as linguistic and semiotic constructs which represent femininity in specific ways through socially constructed ideals. The focus is on the linguistic and semiotic patterns in as well as on audience demographics. The present study will be based on a research design which is a blend of quantitative, qualitative, multidisciplinary and more wide-ranging and extensive in nature.

Main objectives for this study are:

- To identify the ideologies about femininity in the discourse of Pakistani women's magazines (KHAWATEEN DIGEST).
- To evaluate the perception of femininities by the readers as portrayed in Khawateen Digest.
- To understand the role of media in creating and sustaining gender stereotyping and gender biases in society.

Media is normally at the center of any society depicting its culture, as well as shaping its ideologies. What the masses consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil is usually shaped by the media. Media can take different forms like Electronic media, social media, print media etc. Print media is the most accessible form of these. Magazines are the part of Print media. So far as the content of the magazines is concerned, it does not take into account the daily events and news rather their factual or practical reporting and articles related to the personal lives of celebrities and sometimes of common people. Despite their popularity, the prevailing view is that magazines are a low brow form of entertainment.

Magazines do not have to be read from cover to cover but can be explored, their format makes them easy to pick up and put down again. It is this reason that has been used to explain the popularity of magazines among women. The stories of these magazines provide the symbols, myths, and resources through the people constitute a common culture. These magazines have become powerful in shaping the women's perception of the self, the strife to achieve an individual identity and to maintain a self- understanding. These magazines project an image of good and a bad woman. Good women are usually house wives, caring and loving mothers, and mostly the nice looking ladies. Bad women are shown destroying family

happiness, disturbing their husbands and are bringing a bad name to their families by marrying a man of their own choice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Magazines have their own particular ethos and ideologies and they can also reflect and construct cultural values. However, in order for the text to work, they must draw on readers' knowledge of language. Women's magazines are generally seen as part of the network of discourses which maintain capitalist-patriarchal definitions of femininity (Gilbert & Taylor, 1991; McCracken, 1993; Macdonald, 1995). The major portion of revenue of these magazines comes from advertising, underlining the point made by (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991) that 'consumption has come to be seen as a way of completing the ideal feminine identity' (pp.12-13) and thus achieving what (McCracken, 1993) identifies: women's magazines repeatedly succeed in linking desire to consumerism' (p.301). The subject matter in these magazines is delicate and forces a transformation in the reader's mind and it forces a revision to the sense of thinking (Gentner & Meadow, 2003). The common sense conceptions of the readers cannot be altered without adequate motivation (Heller & Jones, 2001).

The psychological aspect may or may not alter the state of mind of these women readers, but the conscious inference is surely involved (Bell et al, 2001). The stories in these magazines can also be deceptive that can alter the psychological state of mind of the reader. The reason is that every reader of these magazines has past experiences, attitudes and perceptions that are recorded in the memory (Abrams & Hogg, 1999). Women around the world are physically equal, but their intellectual upbringing varies from one culture to another (Diprose, 1994). The most fascinating aspect of feminism is that it provides a platform for women to feel good about themselves (Nava, 1992). But many women might not feel it as it may not sound as simple as it may be. The idea of recognition also varies from one culture to another. Most important and intricate issue still attached is the concern that may label women as unattractive. Other issues like class and social status are often included in the feminist perspective; the younger women are diverse as compared to the women two decades earlier. The local Urdu women's digests seem to maintain their position despite faced with the pressures of latest technologies and new media challenges. This medium of entertainment targets Urdu-fluent women who belong to various educational, marital and social levels. Khawateen Digest is an Urdu language Pakistani family and fictional digest/magazine published from the Karachi, Sindh. The magazine was first

published in 1982. It is a monthly Digest based on fiction and women's magazine in Urdu language. It has its headquarters in Karachi. In a previous study on Urdu Women's Digests Fung (2000) believes that women's cultural consumption creates, constructs and circulates women's identities. He claims that firstly women readers identify certain "imaginary communities" through reading the magazine; secondly, women identify themselves with an idealized community-constructed beauty, thirdly, women regard the "communities" as providing shelter for rapport and comfort from the emotional and relational problems of real life.

Discourses in women magazines have been attributed to sexist stereotypes. The general perception is that women have been portrayed as housewives. This is also been a main source of occupation stereotyping of women (Morley & Robins, 1995). The women products have successfully used feminism as a source of selling beauty products along with the pattern of consumption of these products. Given the importance of gender identity the focus on the socialization of gender from the feminist perspective in magazines there is a lacking from a sociological point of view (Duranti, 1997). Gender as a concept draws attention to the fact that the core identities are a social project. As a general rule the women magazines criticize the sexist behavior of the socialist groups (McCracken, 1993). This is evident in the magazines that are circulated in Pakistan. The notion of women's appearance in Pakistan is not restricted to how they look in terms of beauty. In every society there are belief and principles that are accepted in general. These general beliefs not only explain the ordinary language, but regulate linguistic behavior. However the notion varies from one culture to another.

In Pakistani culture, for instance, the 'ideal' women is believed to be a symbol of character, an individual who can cater to the best of the abilities in the household chores and who is a symbol of utmost character and virtue. The easy to read format of magazines does not mean that they are not carefully crafted. Magazines have their own particular ethos and ideologies; they can also reflect and construct cultural values. However in order for the text to work, they must draw on readers' knowledge of language. Discourse is the means through which social relations between individuals are negotiated. Whereas, femininity as a discourse becomes central when it forms the focus of activity by individuals; the women is not portrayed as a dupe of an ideology, but rather actively constructing position for themselves (Hanks, 1996).

Weedon (1996) states:

Through the concept of discourse, which is seen as a structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thoughts and individual subjectivity feminist post structuralism is able in detailed historically specific analysis to explain the working of power on behalf of specific interests and to analyze the opportunities for resistance to it. Discourses are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (p.41)

The convention of language on the one extreme integrates difference of power, while on the other extreme it presents specific relations. They are both essential whilst taking into account how language practice can be gender specific, since it has the capacity to ponder on the disparity that the discourse offers when it is gender specific. The magazines that portray the novel align the relationship and the power distance between individuals in a given culture (Ehrlich & Ruth, 1994). For instance in a developing country like Pakistan, the emphasis is on the romantic aspect. Moreover this romantic aspect of discourse is all embedded in the general domestic genre.

The power distance between men and women in these novels is the reflection of what the society is in Pakistan and the construction of femininity revolves around the supporting the family and going hand in hand with the norms of the society. However, the certain discourse aspects that are portrayed in these novels use a conventional tone and language that authenticate the contemporary version of romantic ideology from a feminine perspective. It is very likely that a story indirectly tied to feminism would have a dissimilar approach to feminine sexuality and female sovereignty than would a story discursively tied to usual fable. The usual idealistic beliefs rely upon subjugated heterosexuality and female hope. This in fact makes certain set of storyline rule possible and certain elements impracticable (Corbett, 1991). The femininity in these novels is perceived as heterosexual care for matrimony and child-bearing as only one set of alternative available to women. There is a constant pattern that portrays a domination of male in this relationship. The discourse also portrays woman as subjective to torture and an item that has not an individual personality. As (Beauvoir, 1972) believes

that a person is not born a woman but becomes a woman as the discourses spoken or written provide a set pattern to us to look at ourselves and the society. She believes that the differences between men and women are not natural but social. Men are trained to be bold and acquire power.

Women on the other hand are trained to be dependent. When we compare the ideology in romantic novels, it vigorously endorses these options and affiliation, and account of femininity is built around these sets of storyline features (Crawford, 1995). On the other hand, the manner in which these descriptions are comprehended or acknowledged depends upon additional imperative circumstances. These novels depict the directness and unlimited plurality of content in signifying and challenging the conception that these novels determine in giving steady importance. The acknowledgment of certain account gathering in stories is reliant upon the discursive point of reference of the person who is reading it (Coates, 1989). The readers take up interpretation situation in relation to content which permit them to construct usual enriching connotation. However, the variety of reading positions can be taken to decode meaning. It is surely a consequence of their diverse discursive narration. The acknowledgment of feminist philosophy in a descriptive type, may not, for example, be accessible to a person who is reading it (Christie, 2000). The readers may well be capable to be aware of particular descriptions in a text. It possibly will in addition want to oppose and evaluate such principle. Therefore, if they contact to other information and other reading positions, they defy the foremost philosophy of the content they interpret. Putting it differently, it is likely to be an unwilling reader to what has come to exceed as the socially predictable reading of a story. The discourses which confront the accepted belief and standing of the content in issue are less likely to be an unwilling reader. This is because if they observe not anything to confront in the leading reading situation. The surroundings in which we live in are dependent on a number of mediums for transmission of information.

The people, their views, the advertisements, news and biographies are all part of the medium that portrays a culture. The stories that are depicted in these magazines are also encouraged by some happenings related to an individual or a situation. All these news become a part of social practice and sometimes a situation becomes a benchmark for assessing a situation. It must be noted that the stories and the portrayal of femininity in these magazines might at times be fictional; but most of the times they are a true account of our culture and show the social practices in our surroundings. Not every story will behold the reader's imagination. As a result, the storytelling will be used as an arrangement to

regulate literary meanings by telling some stories rather than others. The advertisements that are placed in these magazines also regulate the prevailing norms that a culture has. These ads become the accepted and enlightening form of defining what femininity is in a society. For instance, in a developing country like Pakistan, the emphasis is on the romantic aspect. Moreover this romantic aspect of discourse is all embedded in the general domestic genre.

The power distance between men and woman in these novels is the reflection of what the society is like in Pakistan and the construction of femininity revolves around supporting the family and going hand in hand with the norms of the society. However, certain discourse aspects that are portrayed in these novels use a conventional tone and language that authenticate the contemporary version of romantic ideology from a feminine perspective. It is very likely that a story indirectly tied to feminism would have a dissimilar approach to feminine sexuality and female sovereignty than would a story discursively tied to usual fable.

Ideology and discourse are closely linked. Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that ideology helps to give a proper shape and meaning to the relations that exist in our society. Discourse carries on that ideology that exists in a particular society. Discourse gives a rational meaning to the existing ideology and exhibits a set of characteristics that become the norms of a society. People can be made to believe in a certain myth or belief as noted by Butler (1990). The author believes that every society has certain beliefs about something and those beliefs are represented in every sphere of life in that society. Therefore discourse has the power to alter or affirm the beliefs of individuals in a society. Femininity does not have a single meaning as it is dependent on a wide range of contextual features (Benor, 2002). It includes the perceived power relations for its interpretation and effect. Discourse observes the power as enacted within relationships and therefore as something that can be contested at every moment and in every situation. In exploring femininity as a discourse means that there is a shift in viewing it as a normal order that can be reproduced through socialization (Bucholtz et al. 1999). Femininity as discourse is so all-encompassing that it shows woman as an indication of problem. The remaining section offers a review of previous studies relevant to the present research undertaken in Pakistan in the area of gender representation in media –specifically the way women are represented in contrast to men. These studies highlight similar areas that have been researched and provide an insight and background for the context of this study.

A study conducted by Zubair & Sheikh in 2004 found that the domination and frequency of female images is alarmingly high in the discourse of magazine advertisements in Pakistan and the projection of such images is not only utopian but also demeaning. In another study Zubair & Sheikh (2004) proposed from a feminist perspective that advertising is a patriarchal world wherein women were portrayed as saleable sexual objects for male pleasure and they were also exploited voyeuristically. Mirza claimed in a study conducted in (2009) that Pakistani magazines objectified women by devoting significant space to female images attached to different products as a passive saleable commodity specifically by titles and central fold pages, as compared to their positive and active social roles (teacher, doctor, social & health worker, politician, administrator and businesswoman). Haider (2009) also pointed out that women's magazines offered highly restrictive, constrained and marginalized sets of role regarding Pakistani women's identities through linguistic and semiotic messages. Khan, Ali, Adnan & Nawaz (2014) maintained in another study undertaken in Bahawalpur, Pakistan that English and Urdu fashion magazines affected women in both ways i.e. positively as well as negatively.

On one hand, these fashion magazines were facilitating them not only for preparing formal and informal dresses but also for grooming their personalities. On the other hand, these magazines were not only violating the social norms but were also putting extra financial pressure on them. Mehmood, Qureshi & Saeed (2015) suggest that Pakistani Urdu Magazines (Khawateen Digest and Shuaa) offer passive, constrained and marginalized sets of roles and identities for women. Moreover, semiotic gender representations in the advertisements – specifically the way women are sexually represented are very humiliating and disgusting in these magazines. Qadir (2015) opines that in the T.V talk shows male politicians demonstrate their stereotypical and hegemonic gendered identities through manipulation of language. Sheikh & Ahmed (2015) also state from a feminist perspective that linguistic and semiotic representations of women in Khawateen Digest of Pakistan have been encoded from patriarchal angle in an exploitative, demeaning, belittling, subjugating, subordinating, controlling and marginalizing manner.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a blend of qualitative and quantitative research which is wide-ranging in nature and has even wider implications. The research draws upon Beauvoir (2010) one of the first theorists who argues that gender was not an

essential characteristic of people, but rather something that one becomes through socialization and Craig (1992) who posits that masculinity and femininity can be treated as social expectations in a patriarchal social set up. The multidisciplinary approach is adopted in this study thus making questionnaire as a major tool of data collection. The total population (300) for this DIGEST is divided into four age groups. The age of first group ranges from 18 to 28 years and that of the second group from 29 to 39. The age of the third group ranges from 40 to 50 years and the last group is between 51 to 60 years and the respondents include the actual readers of the Digest under investigation. The study is conducted on the readership and decoding processes of Khawateen Digest in Southern Punjab Pakistan. For instance, the respondents hailed from the major cities of Southern Punjab including Multan, Khanewal, Vehari, D.G. Khan, Bahawalpur and Lodhran which are medium sized cities, but still the women are confined to the specific type of knowledge that they are exposed to. More importantly, the research presents a detailed analysis of the ideologies constructed for women to internalize and how women decode them, as women read this Digest not only as a source of pleasure but also in quest of their identities.

Research Questions

This study will focus on the following research questions.

1. What of the following characteristics of female images are found in Khawateen Digest by the readers?
 - i. Traditional
 - ii. Dependent
 - iii. Controlled
 - iv. Dominated
 - v. Shy
 - vi. Any other
2. Are these images liked by the readers?
3. If yes, why?
4. Do the readers try to follow these images in their real lives?
5. Do the readers identify themselves with anyone of these images?
6. What words/ adjectives are associated with women in these Digests?

The important data related to the educational, marital and social status of the respondents is given in the tables below:

Table1: Education Level

Age Groups	Middle	Matric	F.A	B.A/ BS	M.A	M. Phil	Ph. D	Total
18-28	0	4	6	78	98	6	0	192
29-39	0	10	0	6	26	8	0	50
40-50	6	2	2	8	14	2	0	34
51-60	0	0	0	0	22	0	2	24
Total	6	16	8	92	160	16	2	300

Table2: Marital Status

Age Groups	Married	Unmarried	Divorced	Widow	Total
18-28	12	178	2	0	192
29-39	34	14	2	0	50
40-50	28	4	0	2	34
51-60	20	2	0	2	24
Total	94	198	4	4	300

Table3: Social Status

Age Groups	Student	House Wives	Working women	Total
18-28	152	18	22	192
29-39	10	16	24	50
40-50	0	20	14	34
51-60	0	0	24	24
Total	162	54	84	300

DATA ANALYSIS

In the remaining part of this paper, the researcher analyzes the responses to the above set research questions by the respondents (readers) included in the study in the light of the foregoing discussion on patriarchal gender ideologies constructed in Pakistani 'Khawateen Digest'. The analysis will be made under following six headings relating to the six research questions; based on the responses of the participants.

1: Female images found in Khawateen Digest

The first question determined the degree of agreement of the readers of KHAWATEEN DIGEST with the types of femininities constructed in it. Most of

the readers, specifically belonging to the first age group agreed that the important features of the images presented in the DIGEST were traditional, dependent, controlled and shy. The readers of all the three remaining age groups also agreed with the readers of first age group. The readers' selection of the third option (controlled) reflected the very nature of the patriarchal norms and traditions of the Pakistani society that were duly obeyed by the women to get the societal approval. The patriarchal norms and traditions refer to the power of the fathers (males): a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men - by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subordinated under the male.

As already discussed, the women in Pakistan are more liked if they reflect and display a traditional look in their lives. Shyness was also synonymous with being a traditional Pakistani woman. This point strengthened the belief that women wanted modest images so that they could get approval from elderly female family members, as it might be disconcerting for many elderly women family members that a young woman approved and tried to follow the patterns depicted in these images. Only a dwindling minority (eight readers) out of the total population for this DIGEST had added on to the given list of the characteristics by using the words like 'pathetic', 'emotional', 'religious', 'not confident', 'silly', 'innocent', 'devoted to the family' and 'uneducated'. This mixed reaction was also reliant on the age, education and the marital status of the respondents.

2: Likeness of Images

The responses to this question established the stance of the women in relation to the images that were presented in KHAWATEEN DIGEST (see the table 4 below).

Table 4:

Age Groups	Yes	No	Any other	Total
18-28	122	56	14	192
29-39	24	24	2	50
40-50	16	18	0	34
51-60	8	10	6	24
Total	170	108	22	300

The majority (170) of the respondents belonging to the first (18-28) age group showed their likeness for these images. While 108 respondents did not like them and only 22 went for the third option. In the first age group only less than half (56) of the respondents did not like and the majority (122) liked the female images portrayed in the DIGEST. The second age group contained the equal number (24) of respondents for both likes and dislikes. Importantly enough in the third and fourth age groups consisting of mature independent women also having the educational background of M.A or higher level, the majority in both (18 and 10) did not like these images. It was also significant as it helped to indicate the impact of age and education on the readership.

The foremost reason of likeness that was construed here was that the images were traditional, controlled and shy and these were the most desirable qualities for women in the patriarchal culture of Pakistan and women were most affected by the patriarchal rules imposed on them by both men as well as women. Moreover, it was not only that they themselves had been brought up in that way but also they had learnt to look at the things from a specific angle. Although media have become more diverse, internet is also available now to the majority of the people but the rural woman, in general is not very independent in relation to what impact these narratives have on their lives. Irrespective of the fact that these women also showed a feeling of dislike for these images, they still could not reveal this to their mothers or friends and family members. Even though, this might not be entirely true, the general dispersion of preferences might not be transmitted to a bigger audience.

Hence, if a reader liked the image of Katrina Kaif or Kareena Kapoor, she might not be able to reveal her real feeling with regard to these images. Not only the elderly male members might disallow such a feeling, the elderly women might also disapprove it. This was for a simple reason that in Pakistan and especially in the underdeveloped region like Southern Punjab; feminism might not be approved as an intellectual discipline. There was still a fear of being labeled as a social outcast, if woman would reveal their true or real feelings for such images. Moreover, the patriarchal society of Pakistan might not want their sisters and daughters to set heroines as examples in leading their lives. Many taboos and typecasts still existed in Pakistan, hence it might not be easy for the women to express themselves fully. However, the change in the attitude and responses of the mature and independent women towards these images was quite noticeable. It was certainly the impact of factors like age, education, and social status of the readers.

3: Reasons of likeness of Images

The responses to the third question established the impact that the images had on the lives of women. Many respondents believed that the images and the characters that were depicted in stories were closer to life. This served as the biggest unique selling proposition of KHAWATEEN DIGEST. Moreover, in order to grab the attention of the readers for longer period, the images and characters were well positioned in the minds of the readers. Therefore the readers felt that the characters populated in the DIGEST were reflections of themselves and the society in which they lived. As the difficulties that the women faced in Pakistan were smartly constructed in these discourses, the women were able to gauge the tendencies and the traditions that prevailed in the society.

Interestingly enough, the majority of the respondents used the term 'mirror' in answering this question. The element of tradition and the domain that existed for women in Pakistan were beautifully characterized through these images. Some important elements including tolerance, compassion, compromise and sacrifice were the traditional topics of these stories. Women in Pakistan were traditionally more intimate to the aforementioned elements. This brought about the line that separated what really constituted good qualities in a women living in Pakistani society. Consequently projection of women in the characters and images had become a source of guidance and told them what to embrace and what to abstain from in living a peaceful and prosperous life in the Pakistani society. This question gave very significant information relating to the psychological aspects that bound KHAWATEEN DIGEST and its readers. The relationship only got stronger as the reader got more and more absorbed in the discourses.

4: Readers' inspiration for these Images in real life

In response to the fourth question, the readers provided mixed and very interesting reactions (see the table 5 below.)

Table 5

Age Groups	Yes	No	Any other	Total
18-28	80	98	14	192
29-39	20	26	4	50
40-50	10	18	6	34
51-60	6	14	4	24
Total	116	156	28	300

Quite interestingly the Table.5 above indicated that the total number of respondents (116) who tried to follow these images in their real life was lesser than the total number of the readers (156) who did not try to follow them. Only a minority (28) went for the third option. But the proportion of the respondents who did not follow these images was significantly higher (nearly double) than the respondents who were following them in the last two age groups. The last age group included majority of mature women who had earned their degrees of Ph. D and M. Phil (also belonged to executive class). The age, education, social and marital statuses were the significant factors influencing this difference. Therefore, it could be said that this mixed reaction was reliant on the aforementioned factors related to the research questions. This interesting change in reaction showed the presence of such mindsets among women in Pakistan that wanted to get free, who were more knowledgeable and were also ready to take the issue in their hands. This change of stance had taken place due to globalization and its effects could easily be observed.

5: Readers' identification with female characters / images in this DIGEST

Table 6:

Age Groups	Yes	No	Any other	Total
18-28	108	66	18	192
29-39	22	18	10	50
40-50	16	18	0	34
51-60	11	13	0	24
Total	158	114	28	300

As shown in Table. 6 above, the majority of the respondents (158) believed that there is a relation between these images and their individual lives. Almost one third of the total (114) did not identify themselves with these images and a minority (28) had gone for the third option. In the first and second age groups, though the majority (108 and 22) agreed to the statement of the question yet more than the half (66 and 18) showed their disagreement. In the third and fourth age groups, however, the majority (18 and 13) did not identify themselves with these images and the minority of the readers (16 and 11) confirmed the statement of the question. It also indicated the impact of age of the readers for such responses. In order to identify with something, immense faith is required; therefore, the overt and covert signs and expressions that were used in the stories had become the

source for these women to break their silence. This might not be an easy job for Pakistani women as quite a few had shown restraints in identifying themselves with the presented images. These women who abstained from identifying with the images were aware of the consequences of breaking the barrier and turning this fictional piece into real meaning in their lives. More often than not, these respondents were mindful of the complications and the issues that surrounded them in case of identifying themselves with these images.

It is important to realize that predominantly there were two types of images presented in KHAWATEEN DIGEST. Firstly, the images came in the form of advertisements, whereas the other form comprised of the different characters that were represented in the stories. Both these images had a strong bearing on the readers. It was for that matter that the representation of Pakistani woman hanged on a thin fabric of norms and traditions. Hence what was portrayed inside the stories in these DIGESTS might not necessarily be the true representation or vice versa. The images were complex and had different connotations to the readers. If a woman was beautiful the cosmetics or other images related to feminine beauty might become appealing to them. She might also try to be self-assertive and confident by becoming fascinated by a particular character. A whole lot of adjectives was used that the females identified themselves with but generally speaking every woman wanted to look beautiful, confident and become center of attraction. Moreover, if a story depicted a tense state of affairs, the reader related this to their personal life. The discourse that is presented in KHAWATEEN DIGEST could be recognized as rational and objective in nature. This objectivity stemmed from the fact that Pakistani women are desperate for a turnaround in 'fortunes' as far as their individual life goes in the society. The social pressures and the excessive obligations that these women go through had made these stories a bitter reality for them.

6: Words / adjectives found by the readers associated with women in the DIGEST

Readers' responses to the last research question ascertained what words really constructed the various femininities through these discourses. The most frequent words that emerged in this research were 'beautiful', 'caring', 'modest', 'responsible', 'clever', 'shy', 'traditional', 'oppressed', 'needy', 'stupid', 'coquettish', 'dependent', 'symbol of sex', 'inferior to man', 'silly', 'vulgar', 'bereaved', 'immature', 'low', 'bad', 'cunning', 'cruel', 'thrifty', etc. The most of the linguistic items / adjectives associated with women in this DIGEST carried negative connotations and marginalized women as the other side of the society. It

also exposed the subjective and inferior nature of the positions, identities and roles which women were assigned in the patriarchal structure of the society in Pakistan. This view is also supported by one of the most influential French writer of all 20th-century Western feminists, Simone de Beauvoir, as cited in Walters (2005) that:

All through history, woman has been denied full humanity, denied the human right to create, to invent, to go beyond mere living to find a meaning for life in projects of ever-widening scope. Man 'remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he invents, he shapes the future'; woman, on the other hand, is always and archetypally 'Other'; she is seen by and for man, always the object and never the subject (p.98).

Many words were interchangeable, but the meanings that the society gave to a complete woman in Pakistan were 'modest', 'obedient', 'shy', 'traditional' and 'caring'. All the negative aspects that were presented in the DIGEST came about from a particular situation in the story. However, it can be suggested that the negative or the lesser traits that were used in the stories were near to reality, despite the fact that stories contained a piece of fiction. All other words found by the respondents in the DIGEST are given in alphabetical order in list (A) below:

(A). List of Adjectives Related to Q. No. 6 (KHAWATEEN DIGEST)

Amiable	Foolish	Playful
Attractive	Fun loving	Proud
Bad	Glamorous	Religious
Beautiful	Hard working	Responsible
Bereaved	Honest	Sacrificing
Bold	Ideal as woman	Self-controlled
Caring	Immature	Shy
Clever	Inferior to man	Silly
Chaste	Innocent	Simple
Compromising	Intelligent	Sincere
Controlled	Jealous	Slim
Coquettish	Lovable	Smart
Courteous	Loving	Social
Crazy	Low	Stupid
Cruel	Loyal	Symbol of sex
Dejected	Lucky	Thrifty
Delicate	Modern	Tolerant
Dependent on man	Modest	Traditional
Destitute	Obedient	Ugly
Devoted	Oppressed	Unlucky
Disappointed	Paragon of beauty	Virgin
Emotional	Petty	Vulgar
Fair	Pious	Well-mannered
Fairy like	Poor	Wise

CONCLUSION

The findings indicated, after in depth analysis that Khawateen Digest promoted gender inequality and patriarchal ideology by portraying very constrained and stereotypical roles of women. Such representations reinforce soft, decorative, ignorant and family oriented women. Majority of the respondents liked these images and even if some of the readers did not like them they were unable to disclose their desire due to the fear of not only the ‘patriarch’ (the man in power) of the family but also of the elderly women who had inculcated these images in the minds of the female younger generations. For the same reason some of the respondents were reluctant in identifying themselves with these images having a fear of being labeled as social outcast. This may also be one of the reasons for disapproved of feminism as intellectual discipline in the underdeveloped regions of Punjab. However, the change in the attitudes of the mature women was noticeable. They believed that these images were close to their daily life. Projection of women in these images and the characters of these stories have

become a guiding principle for them thus informing them to what to embrace and what to avoid in their daily lives so as to be socially successful. The total number of the respondents who tried to follow these images in their daily lives was lesser. The respondents from age group 18-28 were identifying themselves with these images.

This is the generation that is a little bit more expressive. Identifying with something needs a lot of effort and belief and it is not such an easy job in Pakistan, particularly in these regions where this study was conducted. These images were coming from two sources: one from the advertisements and other from the characters of these stories. The images expressing feminine beauty were fascinating and those depicting a tense state of affairs were identified by the respondents as relevant to their personal life. The age, educational level and social status of the respondents were the crucial factors in all these responses. The linguistic items projecting these images were loaded with negative connotations. The meanings that the society associated with a complete woman were obedient, shy, slim, caring, loving etc. These notions were transferred from one generation to the next and reading material (like *Khawateen Digest*) was playing an important role in inculcating these ideas in women of Pakistan.

The findings made it clear that these Digests were constructing ideologies of women as 'Others' in order to serve social power relations and support the patriarchal state thus invoking and reinforcing the readers not only to decode but also to internalize those highly constrained sets of roles and identities in the specified ways which ultimately discouraged women from taking collective action for the improvement of the real conditions of their lives. This 'marginalization' of women is an imposed insidious cultural and ideological construct which women need to take as a source of self-knowledge and use it as the basis to challenge and critique the patriarchal institutions in society. This study, therefore has suggested that critical analysts need to reveal and challenge implicit social values and decide images for male and female embedded in these images. Hence women need to decode, deconstruct and redefine these stereotypical ideologies previously defined from a male perspective and generally accepted as factual. They need to fight collectively and think of other independent and empowered roles and identities for them to pursue. It is this politics of gendering that I have tried to uncover in this paper. Beauvoir (1972) also theorizes that women could not be truly liberated until the system of patriarchal society itself was overthrown and the work of feminism was to transform society and women's place in it.

Future Recommendations

Such an analysis, the researcher also hopes, will lead to action, to social change, to revolution, and to rise of women's emancipation. The current study is still at the initial stage and further studies will be essential to make this research more meaningful and effective for raising awareness in the academicians and the general public about this issue. Future researchers can analyze more magazines following the same models of analysis to investigate whether the other Women Magazines in Pakistan are constructing similar or different ideologies about women. Also, same models can be applied on to Pakistani English magazines.

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