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Notes To Contributors

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Changing Images of Pakistani Women in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* and *Broken Verses*

Abstract

*The culture of Pakistan which is deeply entrenched in patriarchy has given rise to constructs of ideal femininity as devotion, endurance, loyalty and self-sacrifice. Literature is considered to be one of the most important means of perpetuating such images which seek to marginalize women and ensure male domination. The study of Pakistani fiction provides a fertile ground for a feminist critic seeking to unearth the political dimensions of characterization and to undermine patriarchal marginalization of women. An investigation of the ideological dynamics of portrayal of women in literature was the primary concern of the "Images of women" school of criticism. This trend particularly dominated feminist criticism in the 1970s and still remains a dominant focus of Women Studies in literature. In this research "Images of women" critical approach was used to analyze and evaluate how Kamila Shamsie, an emerging Pakistani female writer has depicted female characters in the novels *Salt and Saffron* (2000) and *Broken Verses* (2006). The critical analysis of Shamsie's selected fiction in the light of Images of women criticism revealed the novelist's keen observation and realistic presentation of Pakistan's predominantly patriarchal culture, where women are still in the process of transition to break free from the moulds of ideal femininity. Shamsie champions women's autonomy by portraying socially rebellious, strong-willed and courageous women as her central characters and deconstructs the ancient stereotypes of Pakistani women.*

Key Words: Patriarchal society, feminism, Images of Pakistani women, autonomy, independent selfhood

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1. Introduction

The current research analyzes selected fiction of Shamsie from the perspective of Images of Women School of criticism since Pakistani women are still struggling to break free from the so-called traditional roles assigned to them by the society whereby they are expected to act as submissive daughters, obedient wives and self-sacrificing mothers. Literary practice in Pakistan operates against the background of a male-dominated society and its corresponding patriarchal structures. The patriarchal mindset shaping Pakistani society has been the focus of a great deal of critical inquiry by Feminists scholars and activists. Several studies have been carried out which provide statistical evidence of discrimination and bias against women.

Shahnaz Khan in her book *Zina, Transnational Feminism and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women* (2006) documents that women in Pakistan face discrimination in all fields of life whether it is education, employment, ownership, or legal safeguards. She particularly highlights the low education rate among women in Pakistan and states that “on average, boys complete five years of school, while girls average only two and a half years. The rate of school enrolment for boys is 8 percent higher than that of girls which is 61 percent. In 1998, only 3 percent of the females between the ages of seventeen and twenty three had access to higher education” (p. 83). On research, Majumdar in her study entitled “Gender Disparity in South Asia: A Comparative Study of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka” (2006) explores that the “female literacy rate at the dawn of twenty first century is the lowest in Pakistan that is 27.9 percent, as compared to other South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, few initiatives for gender development are being taken which is reflected in Pakistan being ranked 120th out of 146 countries in gender development and 92nd in gender empowerment according to Statement on Gender in Pakistan, by the United Nations Development Program” (p. 53-54).

Mumtaz & Shaheen in their significant work *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back* (1987) record that despite the difference of education, professional skills and self awareness between the educated and domesticated women in Pakistan, one thing which is common is that “(their) life is governed by the same rules of patriarchy which cuts across class and regional differences to create (a) measure of similarity and uniformity” (p.23) Under the influence of this patriarchal setup all Pakistani women find themselves being measured and judged against certain roles attached with the female gender whereby an ideal woman is considered to be an embodiment of passivity, self-sacrifice and endurance.

In this context it becomes relevant and significant to study the role literature, specifically fiction, has played in perpetuating or dismantling stereotypical images of Pakistani women. Since images in literature are an important tool to support or subvert the patriarchal ideology due to the power accorded to literature, so this research is also corrective with the aim to discourage any misrepresentation of women in literature.

Shamsie, a Pakistani Anglophone author, particularly assumes a special interest as she is shaped by a dual influence of being brought up in the patriarchal social setup of Pakistan and of education in the West where she gained an exposure to a liberal society. She is thus in a position to both understand and expose the stereotypical characterization of women in her society.

2. Feminism and Images of Women Criticism

Feminism is not a single harmonious monolithic school of thought. While sharing certain core concerns with feminine sexuality, it has undergone several permutations in terms of its critical formulations. Starting with a concern and critique of the politics of gender feminist criticism has diversified immensely with no clear limits or fixed boundaries. Diverse intellectual developments within Feminist literary theory have seen critical focus centering on the role of women as readers and later as writers and development in relation to models of Marxism, Post structuralism and psychoanalysis each having its own rationale and method of analysis. For this very reason, feminism is not a single, unified concept rather there is multiplicity of voices and approaches within in the field. Owing to this multiplicity, Robbins (2000) labels them as “Literary Feminisms”. For her feminism does not have one meaning: “It does not have one catch-all, all-or nothing meaning, but many meanings which depend on contexts, subject positions, languages, the material worlds we inhabit, and our own psychic spaces all mixed up together”(p.3).

In late 1960s and early 1970s, the feminist critics were chiefly concerned with the representation of women in literary texts especially by renowned male authors, however later on works of female writers also came under close scrutiny. This earliest school of feminist criticism is known as ‘Images of Women Criticism’. In words of Josephine Donovan (1998), one of its leading exponents, “images of women approach dominated feminist literary studies in the 1970s and is still central to the pedagogy of Women’s Studies in literature” (p. 235). Images of women criticism is mainly concerned with the representation of women in literary texts. It began as a critique of the images, particularly the stereotypical images of femininity that the literary texts presents, and thus devised an altogether new way of approaching the text from a feminist standpoint. Writers, both men and women who create unreal

female characters are in for harsh strictures in this form of feminist criticism (Guerin et al 2005; Donovan 1998; Showalter 1979; Newton 1990; Robbins 2000; Morris 1993; Frith 1993).

The images of women criticism aims at analyzing the literary representations of women to emphasize the role literature has played in ensuring male dominance and women's subordination in the society. Images of women critics label these images as powerful ideological tools and they all share a commitment to pursue the image as way of analyzing the ideological force of literature. So for them literature has played and can play a significant role in ensuring continued dominance of patriarchal ideology (Showalter 1979; Beauvoir 1993; Ellmann 1969; Millett 1970).

The re-readings and re-visions of the literary texts exposed the fact that how images of women were constructed on stereotypical sexist assumptions. On closer reading the feminist critics explored that there were two kinds of images commonly found in the literary texts, either positive or negative. The good woman stands for ideal femininity and the bad woman is the harbinger of the evil. Beauvoir's (1993) observation is that, femininity is found to represent beauty, purity and goodness but also evil, enchantment, corruption and death. Mary Ellmann (1968) on reading 1950s and 60s fiction categorized the various stereotypes of femininity as formlessness, instability, confinement, piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy and the two most incorrigible stereotypes the shrew and the witch. Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970) explains the recurrent misogynistic images of women in literary texts as whores or virgins, frigid or nymphomaniac, chaste or licentious. Whereas Donovan (1998, p. 237) shows the dualism of images of women in texts as follows.

Spiritual	material
Spirit/soul	body
Virginal	ideal sex object
Mary	Eve
Inspiration	seductress
Good	evil

So the study of the images in texts highlighted the fact that the good woman was the one who conformed to the social norms of ideal femininity that is caring mother, obedient daughter, submissive wife and the bad women is the one who transgresses these social boundaries. The feminist critics have always been critical of these images of ideal femininity on account of the gap between the representation and the reality

because they believe that femininity is ideal but real women are not. It is a kind of confining strategy which limits women in relation to an impossible standard and it also undermines the multiple realities of women's lives. These images interpellate women into socially acceptable ideas of gender (Wollstonecraft 1792; Ellmann 1968; Millett 1970; Robbins; 2000).

Another significant finding of the 'Images of women' criticism is that the female characters are mostly presented in relation to the male characters. They are too often presented as the other, as an object. In words of Donovan (2000) they are, "of interest only insofar as they serve or detract from the goals of the male protagonist" (p.212). In her analysis of literary texts she observes that there is hardly any personal response of the female characters to the events; they are simply vehicles for the growth and salvation of the male protagonist. "Those who serve the interest of the protagonist are the patient wife, the mother/martyr, and the lady and fall in the category of good women. Whereas old maid/career women, the witch/lesbian, the shrew/the domineering mother/wife are labeled as bad woman since they detract the hero" (ibid. p, 214). Beauvoir (1993) makes a similar remark regarding the presentation of the female characters in relation to the male that,

Through her passivity she bestows peace and harmony but if she declines this role, she is seen forthwith as a praying mantis, an ogress. In any case she is seen as the privileged other, through whom the object fulfills himself: one of the measures of man, his counterbalance, his salvation, his adventure, his happiness (p.262).

The feminist critics have labeled such female characters that have been denied their essential selfhood as inauthentic characters. So it is one of the primary concerns of the images of women school to evaluate the authenticity of the character. Authenticity is an idea borrowed from the existentialist, particularly Heidegger, for whom a character is authentic only if it has its self-defined critical consciousness, whereas for Sartre authentic means the critical or reflective consciousness capable of forming projects. (qtd. in Donovan 1998, p. 236). So authentic female characters are the ones who are not only self-defined, possessing distinctive traits and qualities but also capable of self-determined action. So this school of feminist criticism analyzes female characters to see if they have been portrayed as complex and unique individuals and can they be labeled as authentic characters or not . (Morris 1993; Donovan 1998, Cornillon 1972).

Many studies have been carried out to analyze the images of women in literature. Cornillon's *Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives* (1972) is a collection of twenty one essays about various nineteenth and twentieth century male and female

writers. Sushila Singh's *Feminism and Recent Fiction in English* also shows similar studies conducted on recent Indian and English fiction. *Changing Images of Women in South Asian Fiction* by Shoshana Landow (2009) outlines the changing trends in the images of women from the suffering women to the recent subversions and expansions of the traditional image in works of Kamala Das, Anita Desai, Chitra Fernando and Anees Jung. Tineke Hellwig's *in the Shadow of Change: Images of Women in Indonesian Literature* (1994) is a re-reading and re-evaluation of the texts by male and female authors in search of the images of women.

Pakistani fiction in English spans over a period of sixty years, but the number of writers is quite a few. A few writers like Zulfikar Ghose, Hanif Qureshi, Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sara Sulehri, Uzma Aslam Khan and Bina Shah have been able to achieve international recognition. In the recent past, a young Pakistani novelist, Kamila Shamsie (1973-) has been able to make a mark in fiction writing. So far her five novels, *In the City by the Sea*, *Salt and Saffron*, *Kartography*, *Broken Verses* and *Burnt Shadows* have been published.

A striking feature of Shamsie's fiction is the portrayal of the female characters. Three of her novels, that is, *Salt and Saffron*, *Kartography* and *Broken Verses* revolve around the tribulations, desires and quests of Raheen, Aliya and Aasmani Inqalab respectively. Being a young Pakistani writer, it is of interest to analyze her female characters from a feminist perspective.

Thus a study of images of women in Pakistani fiction becomes significant in order to highlight what kinds of images of Pakistani women are portrayed in these works of literature in order to highlight whether Pakistani literature functions as a propaganda furthering sexist ideology or is it otherwise.

3. From Traditional Woman to the Woman of Today: Analysis of Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*

Salt and Saffron is a tale of an aristocratic Nawab family of the subcontinent, the Dard-e-Dils. The novel is particularly noteworthy for its feminine sensibility. Shamsie, a keen observer of the mind of Pakistani women under all influences, has depicted the female characters within the novel with their emotional, cultural and modern ins and outs. She has minutely observed and keenly demonstrated the situation of women in the society, revealing not only their anxiety and anguish about their own situation, but also their growing perception of themselves as individuals capable of self-willed action. The novel traces the history of the Dard-e-Dils showing the social milieu changing gradually from a strictly conservative one to that of progress and liberalism. In *Salt and Saffron* the struggle of women in family, in society, in relations and in cultural concepts is presented very subtly. The struggle of these women for existence, for honour and for freedom is the most central concern of

the novel. By reflecting on the persistent grimness of conflict in the lives of Pakistani women at various levels, Kamila advocates a reformative outlook of the society towards its women.

The novel delineates the tale of several women across class and generation. It skilfully presents the predicament of women of different backgrounds, from elitist Aliya's confusion regarding her choices in life to midwife Taj's struggle for existence. Apart from the female characters caught in the shackles of conventions, Shamsie has also created such characters who show spirit of revolt and take strides towards attainment of selfhood, independence and dignity.

The most central concern of the Images critics is to analyze the authenticity of the female characters in a work of literature. Shamsie's female characters in this novel fall into two broad categories – daring and self-governing characters, fulfilling the criterion of authentic characters set by Images critics; and passive and submissive characters which fall into the category of stereotyped or inauthentic characters. Predominantly Shamsie's characters are assertive and rebellious in nature with the minor inclusion of a few conventional characters which primarily function as a foil for the central characters. The stereotyped characters have been presented as juxtaposed and parallel to the central female characters to draw attention to and criticize the primeval conditioning of women by a dominating patriarchal culture.

Through the narrative structure of *Salt and Saffron*, Shamsie has portrayed the inner experiences of her female characters by employing a female narrator, Aliya. Aliya – the storyteller is a young, American graduated and modern woman, who is compelled to investigate the history of her royal clan in order to arrive at truth regarding her own position and identity. It deals with the issue of Aliya's ability to make decisions in life when caught in the confusion of almost contradictory cultures; her brought up in a tradition-ridden family and her exposure to a liberal western world. It traces the journey of Aliya's education, her coming to consciousness, her search for authenticity and a subsequent development of her self.

Shamsie has skillfully depicted the confusion in the life of a modern Pakistani woman and the constrictions faced by her as far as her own life is concerned. A Pakistani woman's identity is usually connected to and defined by the societal and cultural norms of the existing patriarchal culture. Her identity is constituted in different contexts, settings and situations such as her relation to men, family, community and society. Aliya is flabbergasted to recognize the way she has been conditioned by the society which constrains her choices in life. Her view of herself as a free, autonomous being who is able to think and behave as an unprejudiced individual is thwarted in the very beginning of the novel. She is confronted with an actual conflict when she

becomes aware of dazzlingly handsome and exceptionally urbane Khaleel's origin, the man whom she meets on the plane on her way back to Pakistan and is charismatically drawn towards him. This however, proves to be the defining moment of Aliya's awakening to the fact that despite her education and independence, she is unable to shrug off the age old conditioning of her family and the society. On this complete control of patriarchal structure through a process of social conditioning, Millett states that; "so perfect is its system of socialization, so complete the general assent to its values, so long and so universally it has prevailed in human society that it scarcely seems to require violent implementation" (43). Aliya is agonized at her own reaction on knowing about Khaleel's origin. Though she wants to break free from the long standing mores of her family, but she finds herself awfully helpless. As she admits:

I wanted to shout out. I've deconstructed it, analyzed it, and I have refused to take on the attitude of my relatives with their centuries of inbred snobbery. Why can't my heart be as evolved as my mind? (32-33)

Aliya's deep entanglement in the family traditions is reflected in her belief in the myth of not-quite-twins despite her education and wide exposure. The discovery which further adds to her agony is the disclosure by Baji, a distant relative in London, that Mariam and Aliya are not-quite-twins, the pair destined to bring disgrace to the family. Aliya feels entrapped because she has passed on from the stage of observation to the path of actual participation, which is not only likely to be difficult, but may also turn out to be humiliating and embarrassing.

Despite her deep entrenchment in family traditions, Aliya keeps on striving to become an autonomous being, free from the restrictions imposed on her by the society and to free herself from her own fears and guilt. It is only through self-analysis that she is able to explore her inner self and her own potential to assert her individuality. She undertakes an arduous journey into her family's past and most importantly into herself and learns to free herself of the guilt, disgrace and humiliation she might have to face on account of her rebellious act. She emerges as a complex character and fulfills the criterion of authenticity by discovering her real self. Donovan (1998) emphasizes the portrayal of such female character to reinforce that, "Women are seats of consciousness; are selves not others" (p. 236). Her willingness to finally rebel against the taboos of the society is reflected in her final dialogues with herself when she imagines of declaring her love openly in front of her family members. "This, then, was Mariam's farewell gift to me: the courage to take Khaleel's hand in mine and say to my parents, say to Dadi,just because a thing has always been so, it does not always have to be so" (p.193). Aliya through exhaustive self-analysis attains this autonomy and her final words are a reflection of

her ability to comprehend the need to fulfill her desires and her complete faith in herself. Thus beginning her journey with doubt and uncertainty, Aliya reaches successfully to the destination of self-affirmation and self-actualization. Though confronted with uncertainty at many junctures, she is able to find her true self, her identity in a culture organized by the role system. Aliya, through strenuous effort to go against the tide, finally accomplishes the goal to assert her will and affirm her being.

Besides portraying the struggle for self-affirmation of the women from the elite class, Kamila also realistically presents the ghastly condition of the women belonging to the lower class of the society and the hideous injustices committed against them. Through the character of Taj and Taj's mother, the novelist exposes the dreadful and inhuman treatment of the poor women at the hands of the rich male members of the society. Taj's mother suffers on account of her rape by a prince of the Dard-e-Dil family. The life lived by Taj, daughter of the poor woman raped by the prince, is another abysmal account of the degrading behavior reserved by the society for such women. The prince later became a Nawab but none of his children survived the trauma of birth and he appointed Taj, his own illegitimate daughter, as the royal midwife. So the story of Taj and her mother demonstrates how women of poor classes are doubly disadvantaged in a patriarchal social order. They are the real victims of the patriarchal society.

Apart from realistic presentation of the prejudice faced by women historically, Shamsie's concern for women's freedom is manifested in her construction of the images of transcendence and authenticity for women in *Salt and Saffron*. Mariam Apa, Aliya's aunt, is the most strong-willed character in the novel. She possesses amazing self-confidence and has no confusion regarding what she wants in life and how to get it. Suffused with strength, she shapes her life according to her wishes and breaks out against all taboos and with full conviction, steps onto the road to emancipation.

Mariam is a remarkable and unique female character, in terms of her elegance and poise, her delicacy and gentleness, her resoluteness and obstinacy and above all her silence – her refusal to speak despite everyone's insistence. In spite of her great passion and sensibility for art and music, she talked not to the literate but to their cook Masood and that also to order meals. Shamsie's vision of an autonomous selfhood for women is manifested in her depiction of such characters within the novel who are able to interpret and arrive at truth concerning Mariam's personality. Aliya and Sameer's thoughtful analysis of Mariam's behaviour enables them to develop a better understanding of what she did and why she did it. While discussing her strangest stubborn streak and silence, they consider the possibility that, "her silence

was subversion” and perhaps “Mariam’s silence was a protest built into language” (214). Their insightful evaluation of Mariam’s character allows them to understand her fiercely independent mind and her unprejudiced and enlightened approach towards life. As Sameer hints that, “Do you think that’s part of the reason society was so outraged? Because by eloping with Masood she made eloping with a servant possible?” (215). By courageous act of rebelling against her royal lineage, she proved that unlike her family, she was able to think beyond her class prejudices.

Mariam, through her unconventional approach towards life symbolizes a particular kind of social change. She plays her part in altering the mindset of the society regarding its female members, offering a new kind of a woman, who is self-governing and self-sufficient. Mariam’s marriage is a proof of her truly liberated self and her conviction that her personal happiness must take precedence over her so called responsibilities towards her family.

Another female character who represents the older generation of the Dard-e-Dil family is Aliya’s grandmother, whom she calls Dadi. Believed to be a traditional woman of a patriarchal setup by Aliya, she is able to understand her Dadi’s real self only towards the end of the novel. Disappointed at Dadi’s reaction regarding Mariam’s elopement, Aliya refuses to have any communication with her Dadi for four years. It is on her return to Pakistan that Aliya finds the chance to understand her grandmother, her apparent inflexibility and her inner tragedy. It is only towards the end of the novel that Dadi becomes aware of the reality regarding her failure in love and is restored to her good humour and humanity. So, Abida Dadi finally emerges as a round and complex character who is able to raise herself up to view her own life and those of others around her in a new light.

Another female character which is quite a contrast to Abida Dadi is that of her younger sister, called as Meher Dadi by Aliya. Meher’s unconventionality comes to display in the true sense at the early demise of her husband. She prefers to lead the rest of her life in following her dreams, instead of becoming dejected or disconsolate, grieving over the arrival of an unexpected widowhood. Meher dadi is capable of changing her state of affairs if she finds them unpleasant for her and has the motivation to lead her life independently, making a joyful, richer and more intense life a possibility for a woman of her age. She is a unique female character because of her enthusiasm to discover the several possibilities of life and to make the most of them.

The most comic and hilarious female characters within the novel are the Starched Aunts. Shamsie has portrayed them with a marked touch of irony to criticize the society’s separatist attitude towards its women. They are the women who are mostly preoccupied with the petty issues of life, like going to the parties, looking young and

attractive and are extremely fond of tittle-tattle all the time. As a result of this, they turn out to be women having no intellectual pursuits, and above all the tragedy underlying their comic behavior is the absence on their part, of any kind of realization of their situation. They have been conditioned so effectively by the society that they are completely blind to their own situation. Kamila has given an ironic representation of these characters in contrast to those of Aliya and Mariam.

So *Salt and Saffron* depicts Shamsie's keen observation of the Pakistani society and the role of women in it, delineated through the portrayal of a wide range of characters. By portraying spirit of rebellion in the self-willed Mariam to the disconcerting conflict faced by Aliya, from the women like Dadi who get willingly immersed in their traditional roles to the utter brutality faced by women like Taj, Shamsie advocates a more liberated attitude of the society towards its women. Her central female characters are in the process of redefining and rediscovering their roles, positions and relationships within their given social order. Her central female characters are able to discover their potentials and they do subvert the patriarchal ideology by opting for an independent existence: that is self chosen and enables them to lead their life on their terms and not on what the society requires of them.

4. Pakistani Woman's Quest for Self and Identity: Analysis of Shamsie's *Broken Verses*

Kamila Shamsie's *Broken Verses* is a complex novel which revolves around the issue of women's quest for self in a patriarchal society. Through the themes and characterization, she has raised pertinent questions regarding the status of Pakistani women in the society. The central issue in this work of fiction, deals with the question of women's freedom, their aspirations and abilities to become self-determining, autonomous beings. The novelist expands the horizon of characterization by presenting such female characters who do not conform to the stereotypes. They raise their voice of dissent and express their rage and frustration with their conditions and attempt to establish themselves as free individuals who can defy restrictions imposed upon them by the patriarchal society. Shamsie has portrayed female characters that are non-conformist and radical in their attitude offering a new, alternative definition of a woman. However how far they are successful in attaining the desired autonomy in the society and what is the approach of the society towards such liberated women are the central issues to be addressed.

This novel by Kamila Shamsie is intricately woven around the lives of three modern and educated women belonging to the upper stratum of the society, i.e. Aasmani Inqalab, the protagonist and the narrator of the story, Samina Akram, Aasmani's mother and an activist for women's rights and Shehnaz Saeed, a famous actor and

Mir Adnan Akbar Khan's mother. The minor female characters are Aasmani's step mother Beema and half-sister Rabia.

Shamsie has introduced such authentic female characters in the novel who overtly transcend the damaging roles assigned to them by the patriarchal culture. According to the Images of women criticism, an authentic character "[Has] a reflective, critical consciousness, [and is] capable of self-determined action" (Donovan 2000, p.159). Samina fulfills this criterion and emerges as the most independent central female character who heroically rises up against the traditions of her society. She confidently shatters the stereotypes of a mother and wife and asserts her autonomous, decisive self and lives her life according to her wishes by crossing the so called boundaries drawn by the society.

Samina Akram, a Cambridge graduate, at twenty three, decides to work for the welfare of women in her country when she witnesses the miseries inflicted upon the women of lower classes. It is during this period of radiant youth and great passion to contribute positively to the society that Samina falls in love with the thirty six year old Poet. However much to her own surprise, she becomes a muse for his poetic creation and comes in the public glare on account of her relationship with him.

She feels thrilled at receiving such attention from a renowned poet, but it doesn't take her long to recognize the damage being done to her individuality. And in order to have "an identity that wasn't caught up in his shadow" (88), Samina decides abruptly to enter into a wedlock just to prove to the poet that she is the one who is in complete charge of her life. However, the marriage lasts for only four months as she immediately realizes that she and her husband are denizens of two different worlds. Samina's will to come to her full personhood is reflected in her decision to leave her husband and live with the poet on her own terms. Samina Akram is a truly emancipated, independent and unconventional woman – who is strong enough to assert her will and walk on her chosen path. She breaks away from the norms of the society which are plainly unacceptable for her and exemplifies a liberated, awakened and learned woman of today.

In their analysis of Pakistani society, Mumtaz & Shaheen (1987) note that traditionally it is believed that a man's life is his work and a woman's life revolves around her husband and her family. The very notion that a woman's life can have connections with her career and she has duties towards herself apart from her duties towards her family is a revolutionary idea and not a very acceptable one (20). Women who prefer their individual selves over their familial roles are subjected to severe castigation by the society.

Samina – the rebellious woman, is rigorously criticized by the society for her eccentric attitude, for following the poet during his imprisonment and exile and for

her neglectful behaviour as a mother. Her outlook towards life is extremely condemned by the society which does not recognize a woman's identity in such a relationship. Her relationship with the poet is looked upon with doubt and suspicion and she is unfeelingly derided and taunted by the society. As Aasmani informs the reader that, "Most of the Karachi society disapproved of her, of course. Running around the country for some man she wasn't even married to, leaving her daughter behind" (89). Aasmani conditioned by the cultural constructs of motherhood believes that "mothers aren't suppose to choose over their children" and calls her, "unnatural woman" (254). Criticizing the so-called cultural standards of femininity Moi (1985) states:

Patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make us believe that the chosen standards for femininity are natural. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both unfeminine and unnatural (p.108).

Aasmani Inqalab, despite her admiration for her mother, doesn't completely approve of her mother's truly liberated approach towards life. Her confused and divided self is quite noticeable, where on one hand she admires her mother's inspiring life, but on the other hand she bitterly criticizes the negligence of her obligations as a mother.

Samina is considered a misfit by the society since she dares to question the validity of the age old, retributive attitudes and oppressive norms of the patriarchal society. However, despite her extraordinary strength as a woman, she has to face the cruel strokes of her destiny and the society's oppression and indignities. Apart from all the criticism she has to endure, she is forced to lead a life of seclusion and wretchedness at the end. Society shows its utter unwillingness to accept such an untraditional woman and Samina pays a heavy price for unveiling her free thinking in her dialogue with the scholar – the poet gets killed and she after two years of acute depression commits suicide. Aasmani gets completely disillusioned by her mother's failure, whom she believes has only disappeared on account of what resulted in proving to her the absolute futility of her efforts.

After the poet's death, she herself becomes a victim of oppressive system of the society and leads the rest of her life in utter dejection and desolation. Even in her horrifying state of grief and despair, society shows no mark of sympathy and proves extremely hostile to a woman of unusual strength. Thus Samina's tragic predicament points to the psychology of oppression yet to be conquered in a strictly conservative Pakistani society, where women are still in a process of transition. Her story is a

realistic presentation of many such women who run in the insuperable opposition and face horrendous consequences for their untraditional behaviour.

Besides Samina Akram, *Broken Verses* delineates the disillusionment and disappointment of another woman with her society, i.e. Aasmani Inqalab. The novel tells the tale of an era when the feminist movement was at its peak, so it has both personal as well as political dimensions. Through flashbacks into her past, Aasmani reveals the reasons of her discontent with her society and herself. The impact of Samina's disappearance is truly agonizing for Aasmani, who is not willing to accept her death and becomes extremely disillusioned and develops some kind of obsession. Aasmani has become a hypersensitive creature on account of her mother's disappearance fourteen years ago. Her petulant dissatisfaction with life can be noticed time and again within the novel.

Aasmani's life takes a new direction on account of her interaction with Shehnaz Saeed's son Mir Adnan Akbar Khan, called Ed by his friends – whom she meets at her new working place, a television studio. Here begins the tale of love and deception. Ed is drawn to her, but Aasmani out rightly rejects his advances and annoys him. Deeply dejected and greatly angered by her irresponsive attitude, Ed seriously contemplates on how he can become significant in her life. On recognizing Aasmani's interest in the encrypted note which he originally writes for his mother to compel her to act again, Ed takes full advantage of the situation and cleverly imitates the Poet's style and writes in the code devised by Samina and the poet, the encrypted letters which can be only deciphered by Aasmani. Aasmani feels exhilarated on receiving the letters and they become a source of bringing her close to Ed – as expected by him.

Aasmani is attracted towards him because of his exceptionally concerned attitude towards her. Aasmani finds true solace in Ed's company, experiences contentment in his presence and hopes for and dreams of a blissful future. But her period of blissfulness is very short lived as she soon discovers the way she has been deceived by Ed – the writer of all the encrypted letters. Ed honestly confesses that he felt ignored and wanted to be important in her life.

She is terribly shaken and utterly shocked when she discovers the truth, and this is the moment when she contemplates over herself and experiences real metamorphosis. Aasmani struggles hard to abscond from the utterly bleak course she kept walking on for so long, but she comes out successful and manages to overcome her self-deception regarding her mother's suicide. Aasmani emerges as a real, self-sufficient woman, who begins to search for her true identity, is able to dissipate her confusion and clarify her motives in life. Though the path that has been unbearably difficult for her but she does acquire real maturity at the end. She asserts her will by explicitly

declaring to lead her life independent of a man whom she can't trust. Despite Ed's elaborate justifications and repeated declaration of his love for her, Aasmani exhibits her strong mindedness and finds no reason to forgive him. As she tells him that; "I just want you to know Ed, in case there's any confusion about this, that what you did to me was unforgivable" (333). Thus she refuses to become an adjunct of a man who is unreliable and emerges as a strong woman, unlike a stereotypical sympathetic woman who is all forgiving and ever kind.

The novel traces Aasmani's journey through a plethora of fears and doubts towards that of self-realization. Though she experiences intolerable burden which shatters her confidence and complicates her thoughts, but with amazing self-control, strong determination and independent mind she is able to comprehend what she wants and how she can attain it. She finally recognizes her heritage and defines her identity which is manifested in her decision to work for the women's cause in her country by making a documentary about women's movement and completes her journey from doubt to that of self-affirmation and self-realization.

The complexities in the lives of women who are torn between the demands of their children and the urge to pursue their own lives are highlighted by the parallel story of another significant female character – Shehnaz Saeed, Samina's friend and a famous actress of the past. It is through her interaction with Aasmani that we are introduced with another woman who is daring enough to lead her life according to her desires. Shehnaz proves to be a daring woman and leads an unmasked life at the personal level, but she is not as courageous as Samina was when it comes to her dealings at the social level. It is only in front of Aasmani that she reveals the truth about her sexual life, that she is a lesbian. Kamila through the character of Shehnaz Saeed, has taken a bold step by portraying the dilemma of an individual suffering from the guilt of a socially tabooed relationship.

Broken Verses is particularly distinctive for its sensitivity and clairvoyance in the depiction of mother-child relationship. It portrays the dilemma of career women who are greatly troubled when they attempt to integrate their professional or intellectual life with that of their family life. Though Shehnaz has been successful in creating her identity outside the institutions of marriage and motherhood, yet she out of her social conditioning does suffer from the guilt of ignoring her responsibilities as a mother. She has a divided consciousness; on the one hand, she asserts her individuality by leading a life of her choice, whereas on the other she is tormented by the pricks of conscience for being an irresponsible mother, holding herself responsible for her son's secluded life.

Kamila also provides a complete contrast to her unconventional characters, by portraying the character of Aasmani's step mother, Beema – the ideal, idealized and the adored woman of Pakistani tradition. She is an all caring wife, a responsible and concerned mother not only towards her own daughter Rabia, but is incredibly loving and sympathetic towards her step daughter Aasmani. The fates of Beema and Samina are as contrasting as their personalities. Beema, who follows the norms and conventions of society and lives up to the expectations attached with a woman in a patriarchal society, is rewarded with a comfortable home and a happily married life. Samina who is unconventional and rebellious, on the other hand, suffers a lot of pain and is ostracized not only by society but also in her personal relations.

In conclusion it can be said that Shamsie has portrayed a wide array of characters ranging from unconventional rebellious figures such as Samina and Shehnaz to those meeting the standards of ideal femininity set by patriarchal norms. Her rich canvas also includes characters who are confused and lost struggling to establish their own identity and to discover their true self. She thus shows the operations of patriarchal ideology and its suffocating mechanisms which subordinate women and entrap them while also depicting the inner strength of women to counter these pressures and to liberate themselves. Aasmani's passage from doubt, perplexity, aimlessness and despair to an awakening of a realization of innate reservoir of strength, resilience and limitless ability and potential together with her reassessment of her relationship with mother is a testament to the operation of the feminine sensibility of the author. Shamsie delineates realistically, the miseries and sufferings of the non-conformist women as opposed to the contented life of those women who unquestionably abide by the norms of the society.

Conclusion

Salt and Saffron and *Broken Verses* are an evidence of Kamila Shamsie's insightful study and comprehensive understanding of the Pakistani society. In both the novels, she has skillfully resented the feelings and emotional traumas of several women from various perspectives. Her central female characters strive for their desired freedom, show extraordinary inner strength to shape their destiny according to their will and retaliate with all their force to assert themselves in a male dominated society. Shamsie's female characters do not believe in passive suffering, though tormented and condemned at various junctures, they leave no stone unturned to shape the circumstances in their favor. It is also worth noting that Shamsie does not advocate a complete isolation of such rebellious women from the society rather she favours such liberty for women which does not confine them to certain stereotypical roles but awakens them to several other possibilities in the given social order. Her female characters struggle against the prescribed patterns of their patriarchal setup, defy the

roles sanctified by the society, throw off the constraints of the sex-role system and arrive at a transcendent, authentic selfhood.

Though Shamsie attempts to give a complete picture of her society by introducing a wide range of characters both conventional and unconventional in her fiction, but she seems more interested in portraying such female characters as the central ones who are untraditional in their approach towards life and are intelligent and strong-willed to subject to scrutiny and criticize the conventions of their society. They revolt against the existing patterns of the patriarchal society in order to live on their own terms irrespective of the detrimental impact of such an attitude on their lives. Aliya's conviction to affirm her will and Samina's determination to establish a new social order for women, exemplify their liberated and enlightened selves. Samina, Aliya and Mariam come out as subjects in their own right and establish their identity by breaking through the moulds of the standard roles sanctified to women by the traditional society. Shamsie emphasizes the ingenuity and courage of such characters, and demonstrates the quality of life lived by these women and the strengths with which they meet oppression in a patriarchal setup.

One significant aspect of Shamsie's fiction is that her novels show a progression and maturity as far as her feminine sensibility is concerned. From the depiction of Aliya's perplexing journey towards self-actualization in *Salt and Saffron* to the dilemma of a truly emancipated woman in an orthodox society in the form of Samina in *Broken Verses*, Shamsie shows a discernible development in delineating women who have complete realization of their situation and are daring enough to take steps towards changing it. Samina Akram's character is the most powerful of all characters in both the novels. She is particularly noteworthy for her ability to clear away that part of her conditioning which has stressed the focus on male pursuits exclusively and considered women as ancillary for the progress of the society. She is a truly autonomous being, who shows her disenchantment with the so called norms of the society and takes initiative towards their eradication and for the complete empowerment and equality of women in the society. Though her voice is stifled but she leaves her mark and compels the society to review its norms which have no relevance in the modern world.

Shamsie's central female characters are realistic, round and vital characters, adequately complex and true to life. Aliya, Mariam, Samina, Shehnaz and Aasmani have not been created on stereotypical sexist assumptions, rather through a process of redefining themselves, they dare to subvert the patriarchal control and prove to be subjects in their own right by opting for an unmasked and free existence. They are not an appendage of men; rather out of their free will, they decide to be with men for the right reasons. They endeavor to take the un-chosen path and emerge as self-willed

women, capable of exposing the shams of the society they inhabit. Shamsie clearly discredits the ancient ideological and stereotypical images of womanhood by portraying unusual, extraordinary and self-sufficient women who refuse to mould themselves according to the standards of the society and come out as persons on their own account.

So Shamsie due to her profound feminine sensibility emerges as a thought provoking novelist in the realm of Pakistani fiction in English. She has added a significant dimension to the depiction of the women of her society. Her fiction in itself is a kind of feminist critique. She seeks to explore and not perpetuate the patriarchal practices of her society.

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Survival Challenges and Coping Strategies of Women living in Slum: Evidence from Dhaka City

Abstract

This article focuses on the challenges experienced by women living in slum in case of survival and the mechanisms adopted by them to cope with these challenges. Data were collected from 150 women who reside in different slum areas of Dhaka city using mix research methodology. Study found that, around 4500 slums in Dhaka city where estimated 3.4 million people are living. Most of them (40%) are migrated from countryside driven by push and pull factors. Study also found that, they are unable to maintain a minimum standard of living due to poverty. Low income, unhygienic environment, lack of pure drinking water, gas and electricity, physical and sexual harassment, extortion are the major hindrances in their slum life. Apart from these, searching better job, social network, community involvement, future hope were reported as coping strategies among slum women. At the end of the research, some suggestions for the welfare of slum women have been proposed.

Key Words: Survival Challenge, Coping strategy, Slum women, Dhaka city

1. Introduction

Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh, is considered one of the mega cities of the world due to it's the highest urban population growth rate. Annually, the city draws an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 mostly poor migrants who provide critical employment for the city's industries and services. Most migrants come from rural areas in search of opportunities, which can provide new livelihood options for them (Hossain, 2012) and 40% of the total migrated population live in slum areas (Siddiqui, Qadir, Alamgir & Huq, 1993). An estimated 3.4 million people live in the overcrowded slums of Dhaka, and many more live in public spaces lacking the most basic shelter (Uddin, Koehlmoos, Ashraf, Khan, Saha, Hossain, Chowdhury, & Ahmed, 2009). Another study shows that, one-quarter of the population of the Dhaka City Corporation, which is located within the formal boundaries of the city proper, lives in slum households (Perry et al, 1998). Among them a handsome amount of population is woman. They are among the most physically visible of all people living and working in the streets

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and public places of the large cities like Dhaka, but they are also among the most invisible and therefore, hardest to reach with essential services (Uddin et al, 2009). Regardless of the characterization of slums, slum dwellers face higher developmental challenges such as higher morbidity and infant mortality rates than either non-slum dwellers or the rural population (UN HABITAT, 2003).

2. Background

Slum Women are mostly ‘economic refugees’ driven by both ‘push’ (poverty, landlessness, violence, natural disasters, etc.) and pull (job opportunities in formal and informal sectors, better wage rate, etc.) factors (Lee, 1966). Women of slum cannot lead normal life due to negligence in all spheres of life. Their household activities are hardly recognized by society. Besides, they constitute the most underprivileged group of the area as they neither have political right nor have decision making power. Apart from it, they have limited access to government healthcare services. They are deprived of adequate and nutritious food, clothing, shelter, and other social services. Physical deprivation is the main feature in these women’s live (Hossain, 2012). Their unhygienic living condition creates a serious public health hazard. They suffer from various diseases including skin diseases, respiratory tract infection, fever, cough, cold, worm infestation and diarrhea (Uddin et al, 2009). Large numbers of women living in the slums reportedly die during pregnancy and the post-partum period. Pregnancy loss, fetal deaths, stillbirths, unsafe abortions, and HIV were also said to be very common in the slums (Izugbara & Ngilangwa, 2010). Keeping in view the above mentioned situation of women in slum areas of Dhaka city, this research attempts to investigate their survival challenges and coping strategies..

3. Global Trend on Slum

The urban population in the world is growing at the rate of 7% and projected to reach 50 million by 2030 from 39.4 million in 2005 (UN-Pop, 2007). That indicates more than half of the world’s population lives within metropolitan areas where over 1.5 billion people, or one fourth of the world population, live in areas commonly referred to as “slums”. In Commonwealth countries, according to a recent UN-Habitat report, 327 million people live in slums (Kumar, 2012). More than 70% of the least developed countries (LDCs) and of Sub-Saharan Africa’s urban population lived in slums in 2001 and this is set to increase unless there is substantial intervention. The comparatively more rapid growth in the urban areas of developing countries suggests that the problems associated with slum dwelling will worsen in those areas that are already most vulnerable (UNHABITAT, 2003).

4. Urbanization Vs Slums

Urbanization refers to the concentration of people to urban areas equating to the urban migration. The link between migration and slums has been of concern to development planners since it has become apparent that the majority of Asia's population (56%) will be living in urban areas by the year 2020 (Islam, 1996). The fastest growing sections of the urban areas are the slums. Because migrants seeking shelter in slums do not generally have any other homes to turn to. They are so poor that, at best, they can hire basic accommodation in crowded slums. Limited absorption capacities of the cities, coupled with the low-income status of the majority of migrants, have contributed to the creation of slums. As a result, urbanization in many places has resulted in the creation of vast urban slums, where thousands and sometimes millions of urban residents live in sub-standard housing conditions, without access to even the most basic services (COHRE, 2008). So, it can be said that, slums are the ultimate effect of urbanization.

5. Slum of Dhaka City: An Overview

Bangladesh, with a population of 147.4 million (CIA World Fact Book, 2012) is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an estimated 3.4 million people live in some 5000 slums of its capital city Dhaka (Islam, 2005). Another report shows that the total number of slums in the Dhaka city corporation area is approximately 4,500 and these slums accommodates about 65% of the total population of Dhaka city. According to Democracy Watch (2002) the people who have migrated from different parts of the country are forced to live in the slums due to lack of proper shelter facilities. These slum lands are owned by landowner or *basti* (slum) *owner*, who allow the migrants to build a bamboo shelter to use as a home on high payments. These owners of the slum areas do not pay government any taxes and are not accountable for the conditions or safety of the slum dwellers. Government land is also illegally occupied by those who have power, having links with police and political parties, to be used as slum dwellings (Tiina et al. 2002). These slum areas are densely populated, i.e., >300 persons/acre, with extremely poor housing conditions (generally shacks, *Kutcha houses*, *semi-pucca houses*, flimsy structures, or very old dilapidated buildings). According to Islam (1996b), very poor people who are mostly engaged in the informal sector inhabit these areas and in 1991, about 1,125 slums housing accommodated around 2.3. The density of population doubled between 1974 and 1990 (ibid). Lloyd (1979 as cited in Majumder et al, 1996) found out that around 94% of slum dwellers in Dhaka were from rural areas. However, not all migrants are fortunate enough to find accommodation in slums and Ullah (2004) have indicated that finding a place is difficult without family connections in slums

6. Slum Women: The Poorest of the Poor

Across the world, the feminization of poverty is a stark reality and poor women have enormous difficulty securing an adequate home in which to live. Global statistics show that slum women are disproportionately affected by poverty, and inequality between men and women persists in both the economic and employment fields (COHRE, 2008). It is mentionable that in Bangladesh, hunger and poverty are more women's issues than men's. Women living in slum experience hunger and poverty more intensely than men. These slum poor women in Bangladesh have the most insecure social standing. A husband can throw his wife out any time he wishes (Yunus, 1999). However, the absolute number of poor and undernourished women in urban slum areas is increasing, as is the share of urban areas in overall poverty and malnutrition (UN HABITAT, 2003). Work for slum women is difficult to get, especially in case of single mothers, who are socially out-casted, on top of being excluded from the formal economy because of various socio-cultural factors or lack of secure assets (Andre, 2009). Slum areas have the most visible concentrations of poor women and the worst shelter and environmental conditions (UN HABITAT, 2003).

7. Literature on Slum Women

UN Habitat (2003) explored that Slums have grown as a seemingly inevitable part of modern urban life. Low-income people find the cheap accommodation helpful in their need to keep housekeeping costs low enough to afford. To do this, they have to tolerate much less than ideal conditions. Democracy watch (2002) indicated that the migration of people from rural to urban areas is the main reason of the growing slum population in Dhaka city. 'Urban attractions' and 'rural distractions' has gradually persuaded people to migrate throughout the last decade, whereas COHRE (2008) found that, women move to urban areas for a number of different reasons, ranging from seeking income opportunities, to fleeing conflict, environmental degradation, or family problems (especially those resulting from discrimination), to coping with health related problems like HIV/AIDS and other factors that too often leave women isolated and financially destitute..

COHRE (2008) also revealed, the problems are especially acute for women in the slum. In slums there is a noticeable lack of basic infrastructure, services, and basic shelter. Governments around the world are using increasingly callous methods to 'beautify' cities, erase the urban poor from sight, and clear urban lands for the sake of 'development'. Women living in slums are often susceptible to forced evictions by governments and other actors, and too often face gender-based violence before, during, and after eviction.

Regarding women's occupation Bose, M. (2005) is of the opinion that the women engaged in productive activities were concentrated into three major job categories in the informal sector: domestic service (27%), selling/manufacturing ventures (24%) and piece-work (38%). Settings used for productive work in the private realm ranged from the courtyard, grocery store, roadside and residences in the settlement/neighborhood, to factories in the settlement. Settings used for productive work in the public arena consisted of markets (in and outside the city), charitable institutions, and residential areas for door-to-door selling of products.

United Nations Human Settlements Program, (UN Habitat, 2003) identified, most slum women are in low-paying occupations such as informal jobs in the garment industry, recycling of solid waste, a variety of home-based enterprises and many are domestic servants, security guards, piece rate workers and self-employed hair dressers and furniture makers. The informal sector is the dominant livelihood source in slums. However, information on the occupations and income generating activities of slum women from all over the world emphasizes the diversity of slum populations, who range from university lecturers, students and formal sector employees, to those engaged in marginal activities bordering on illegality, including petty crime. The main problems confronting the informal sector at present are lack of formal recognition, as well as low levels of productivity and incomes.

Frontières, M. S. (2011) observed that, many of the women living in slum are single mothers who have to earn an income themselves. Furthermore, given the sort of menial labour usually available to slum residents, she is unlikely to earn enough to provide a sufficiently nutrient- and vitamin rich diet. The resulting malnourishment stunts a child's growth and development, weakens immune systems, and increases the risk of contracting other diseases.

Netsayi N. M. and Alex C. (2009) mentioned that, some women in the informal sector sometimes work for cash payments, their work is revolves around domestic chores such as cooking, ironing, washing and cleaning for households or for individuals within the slum as well as neighboring non-slum communities. On the other hand, men living in the slums have the opportunity to take up formal employment or high paying informal jobs that sometimes take them away from home.

Koehlmoos, T. P. et al, (2009) viewed that, these women population face physical assaults by local mastans (hoodlum), police or even by the adult members of their family. Even the men face physical assaults while collecting food, fighting over space, or stealing. Their lives are marred by violence, sexual harassment, and drug abuse.

8. Objective of the Study

The core objective of the study is to investigate the survival challenges faced by women living in slum and the strategies they adopt to cope with these challenges.

- (i) To identify the factors affect rural urban migration of slum women
- (ii) To explore their livelihood pattern (food, education, treatment, entertainment)
- (iii) To reveal their day to day problem in the slum areas and in their working places.

9. Research Methodology

Mixed research methodology was undertaken to conduct the study based on primary and secondary data. In order to collect primary data variety of techniques were used such as survey, observation and in-depth interviews. Basically in-depth interview was conducted to explore the challenges experienced by slum women and the strategies to cope. The interviews were consisted of two phases. In first step, respondents were asked about their survival challenges that they experience in the slum life whereas the second segment included the open ended question regarding the coping mechanisms that they adopt to mitigate the situation. Besides, a survey technique was also used to know the demographics characteristics of the respondents which include their living condition, occupation, income, educational status etc. and a structured questionnaire was developed in this concern. The study was carried out on 150 (one hundred and fifty) working women aged 20 (twenty) years and above who were living in ten (10) slums of Dhaka city. These slums were selected purposively whereas the participants were selected randomly. Researcher himself collected the data during September-December 2012.

10. Limitations of the Study

This research is not above limitation like others. Initially, the respondents were suspicious about the intention of the researcher. In some cases, the researcher had to struggle hard to convince the respondents for getting appropriate information. Some were afraid of being evicted and seemed less interested to give the answer and tried to conceal the information as there was no monetary benefit. And finally, this study was carried out only on women who were living in the 10 out of 45000 slums located in Dhaka city.

11. Result and Discussion

The study was carried out on total 150 slum women. The name of slum areas are Mohakhali, Agargaon, Demra, Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Mati kata, Hazari Bag, Kamrangir Char, Kafrul, Vashantake. From each slum area 15 women were selected randomly who were aged 20 years and above.

Table 1: Livelihood challenges experienced by slum women

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Low income	43	29%
Husband's torture	12	8%
Physical and sexual harassment	11	7%
Fear of being evicted	9	6%
Unhygienic environment	11	7%
Insecurity	7	5%
Seasonal problem i.e. rainy and winter season	8	5%
Extortion	7	5%
Lack of pure drinking water	16	11%
Lack of access to electricity and gas	11	7%
Lack of health service	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Study shows that 29% women reported that low income is their major survival challenges. Due the low income they were unable to come out of poverty. For this reason they are considered as poorest of the poor, as it is difficult for them to maintain a minimum standard of life, with no education. So they neither can save money nor can meet fundamental needs as Bilkis Begum¹, 35 years of old woman who resides in East Maticata slum said,

“I have been working as a maid servant for five years but still I have been suffering from poverty due to my low income. Poverty is our part and parcel of day to day life. What ever I earn, I have to spend to conduct my family as my husband passed away seven years back. Nowadays, I don't think about myself. My main issue is my two daughters to whom I can not provide enough food and good clothing. Apart from it I am extremely worried about their future. If I don't save money no one will marry my daughters².”

Another 25 years old garment worker Rehana Begum, who is living in Agargoan slum for last three years, reported that,

¹ The original name of the respondents have not been disclosed due to ethical consideration

² The interviews were taken in Bangla and later on were translated in English

“My husband is a garment worker. We have a two years old son. After the month we earn 8000 TK. But house rent, food, transportation and baby’s milk, and other miscellaneous necessary expenses, our income breakeven our expenditures. In fact we face severe shortage of funds when my child becomes sick. Then we have to borrow money for his treatment. This is extra spending for us and this time we suffer a lot.”

Like the entire social system, women are the most neglected person in the slum. Most of them are the victim of violence insight and oversight of the family. The study reveals that, 8% slum women experience husband’s torture. Specially, slum women are tortured by their jobless and vagabond husband when they refuse to give them money. In this regard, 32 years old Halima Khatun, who was living in the Mohammadpur slum for five years, alleged,

“My husband works on daily wages. Over a period of time he became drug addict in the company of his friends. He earns nothing. I have to provide the cost of drugs otherwise he thrashes me”.

“I bear all costs of my vagabond husband. But still I have no value in his eyes. Very often he tortures me over a trivial matter. I bear all the expenses of my Family, but still he is the one who has the authority within the family.

These are the views of Said Khusbu Begum, a 27 years of old Mohakhali slum women. Physical and sexual exploitation is one of the common survival challenges among the women living in slum. As urban poor women engage with various occupations in order to survive, they have to face physical and sexual abuse at the work place. Study found out that, 41% study population worked as maid servants, whilst 21%, 17%, 6%, 7%, 5% and 3% were on daily wages, garment workers, hawker, porter and owner of tea stall, respectively. It was reported that, these women have to face the stress of long working hour, physical torture and to some extent sexual harassment. Generally, maid servant and garment worker as well as daily wage workers were the victim of these challenges. As Laboni Akhter, Agargaon slum dweller, age 25 years mentioned,

“As a garment worker I work long hour, though I am paid very low. Besides, I have to face the danger of sexual exploitation from my colleagues and boss. I can guess their attitude and gestures but

pretend not to have understood. Even I have been suffering from the fear of being sexually harassed in my slum as well.”

Another 35 years of old woman Runa Begum who resided in Mohammadpur slum and worked as maid servant, informed that,

“She (housewife) uses me a lot. I have to work from dawn till dusk she wanted me to perform all the household chores, like cooking, washing, cleaning with very little pay. But if I commit a minor mistake she rebukes me severely. Even, I have to endure physical punishment very often. She does not treat me like a human being.”.

Eviction is a grave concern among slum women. As slums are build haphazardly in the capital without the permission of City Corporation, dweller of slum very often experience eviction. Then they start a fresh struggle to survive. Nargis Akhter, a maid servant who was living in Kafrul slum said,

“We can not stop living in the slum. Because, Allah has made us poor. We live in a state of constant fear of being evicted. So far, we have been the victim of eviction twice. No one understands the pain of getting evicted with children. At that moment no one is there to help us.

Study also documented that women consider unhealthy environment as one of the major issue which they have to face while living in the slum areas. Study has indicated that due to lack of toilet facilities 13-19 people have to share one toilet. Along with it as most of the slums are besides the garbage dumping areas which itself is a health hazard, especially for women

Slum women also have to face the issue of clean drinking water. It is a fact that lack of clean drinking water triggers unhygienic environment because of water born diseases such as diarrhea, cholera. Mostly women and children are the ones who are affected by these diseases. The present research has pointed out that, only 13% people use tube well water for drinking, washing and cooking while 25% and 62% of the participants use surface and supply water, respectively. Asma Khatun, age 31 years, resides in capitals Demra slum said,

“The environmental condition of my slum is extremely poor. No sanitary facilities, no clean drinking water, no garbage bins to dump the garbage. This environment is the breeding ground of various diseases, this is the reason that my son becomes sick very often.

Because of unhealthy environment and people's proneness to various diseases they attain their old age much earlier."

The slum areas also lack other basic facilities like, gas and electricity. A large majority of women living in the slum areas have no access to these basic facilities. In this case a 45 years of old Rina Begum, stayed in the Mohakhali Hazari Bag slum, informed,

"We are deprived from the facilities like electricity. Due to absence of electricity this slum area turn into deep darkness while the surrounding buildings of this slum remain enlightened. This time we suffer from insecurity. The prices of everything are skyrocketed and oil which we generally use in the lamps has become extremely expensive. Besides, it is risky because from the lamp accident may occur any time. Furthermore, we are being deprived of entertainment. We can neither watch television, nor listen song."

Women living in the slum area have also indicated insecurity as one of the livelihood challenges which they have to face. It was observed during the research that slums are considered as crime zone. Prostitutes, drug traders have open access here. Besides, political parties also use the residents of these slum to attend their political gathering and processions. As tea stall owner Rubi Sultan, dweller of Agargaon slum, told,

"Very often political leaders create pressure to join their party program. They offer money for that. They use us as political tools. Though many others earn money in this way but I feel insecurity. Even they use slum women to conduct drug business."

Silent extortion goes in the slum that is evident from the 5% participants comment whose see it as their one of the livelihood challenges. According to hawker Sabina who lived in Kamrangir char slum and hawks deshi shari and bed sheet from door to door, said,

"If I want to do my job I have to pay extortion fees otherwise I will not be allowed to perform my job. They are very influential and no one can deal with them."

Slum women suffer a lot all the year round especially during extreme hot, cold and rainy weathe. Due to lack of electricity they can not use fan during extremely hot conditions. As the houses are not properly constructed, and most of the dwellers live

in *katcha* or *semi pacca houses* so during winters when the temperature is low, they have to bear intense cold. Rasheda Begum, a maid servant lived in Mirpur slum, reported,

“I suffer difficulty in all seasons and suffering reaches its climax during rainy season. I can not go to my work place. My madam rebukes me and deducts my salary if I don’t attend my duty. Sometimes the rain water enters inside my house. There is always a fear of storm also which may destroy our house whose foundations are very weak and can cause massive casualties.”

Another challenge the slum women have to face is access to quality health service. According to the report of Democracy Watch (2002), 27% respondents have poor access to health facility. Quality treatment service among the slum women is beyond their means due to low income that is why they prefer to rely on traditional healing practices or on quacks

“During my sickness I go to kabiraj because doctors’ visit is very expensive to me. Although the charges of Government hospitals are reasonable but they ignore us as we are poor”.

These are the views of Khushi Banu who inhabits in capital’s Vashantak slum and garment worker in occupation. Especially, it is a matter of grave concern among the slum women regarding quality of health service which they receive during pregnancy and during post-partum period. As Rahela Khatun, a construction laborer resided in Dottopara slum reported that,

“We become more frustrated during pregnancy. We are not entitled to maternity leave, therefore we have to leave the job. Apart from it many of us can not see the doctor regularly due to high checkup charges. Due to high delivery charges at private clinics, and non availability of public facility, most of deliveries are conducted at home. Because of the unhygienic conditions there is a high risk of pregnancy related complications as a result many women lose their lives during child birth.”

11.2. Coping Strategy

Table 2: Coping strategies adopted by of slum women

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Searching new job	36	23
Social network	22	15
Community involvement	16	11
Frequent rural visit	31	21
Seek NGO's assistance	12	8
Emphasis on entertainment	14	9
Hope of future	19	13
Total	150	100

The poor women migrated from country sides find refuge in the slums of Dhaka city for cheap accommodation. They are unable to fulfill their basic needs because of their poverty. To cope with this challenge 23% women reported they were searching new job where salary is very high. As Dotto Para slum dweller Shahina Akter who worked as maid servant, said

“I am searching new one job where I will be paid high salary in order to get rid from poverty. To survive smoothly, there is no alternative of high income. Money is essential in order to provide better educational facilities for my son, for better health care facilities and to buy good and nutritious food.. Hope that I will get it soon because I have working experience enough”.

Evidence shows, 15 percent participants maintain social network as a technique to cope with the stresses of slum life. According to their information, strengthening relationship with neighbors and friends help them to lessen constant worries what they experience in daily life. Evidence also confirms that 11 percent people get involved with community and other voluntary activities etc. to handle the challenges which they have to face. Runa Sultana, who resided in Vashantake slum and worked as porter in a nearby school, commented,

“Each day after finishing my duty I go to my neighbor house which is next to me. I use to gossip with them for long hours and refresh my mind as my husband does not care and does not listen to my problem.”

On the other hand, Kafrul slum woman Eti Khatun aged 28 years, who was living there for seven years, told,”

Maintaining ties with rural relatives, back home, is my strategy to deal with strains of slum life. At the end of every month I visit my rural relatives’ house. I stay there for few days that add energy to fight with the challenges of urban livelihood”.

There are some development organizations who are working for the development for slum people such as Plan Bangladesh, Opajeo Bangladesh etc. But most of the slum women are not informed about this. However, it was observed that around 8 percent slum women seek the assistance of development organizations to cope with the difficulties they have to face while living in the slum areas. Sabina Begum who was resident of Agargoan slum and construction labor by occupation said,

“I was informed about Plan office who works for slum children from one of my relatives. I approached the organization and asked for their help in case of my children’s education. While living in this area with meager income, we are unable to afford their educational expenses. The organization was very helpful and it is bearing all the expenses of his education. It also provides health facilities to some extent. Now I am feeling less pressure on me.”
Said occupation.

Entertainment or recreation is a one of the fundamental demands for human being. Though this opportunity is rare among slum women, 9% women of slum women depend on entertainment to make slum life enjoyable. Ranu Akter, a garment worker who lives in Mati Kata slum, informed

“Every holyday I use to go to cinema hall to watch Bangla movie with my husband. That day we try to enjoy a bit. Likewise my other friends and neighbors also does the same”.

Out of total slum women 13 percent claimed that without future hope no one can survive and they had a firm belief that one day their lives will be improved and will have better living conditions, as Sanjida Begum, Kafrul slum dweller and owner of tea stall, confidently said,

“Now my husband and I am working hard with a view to get our children educated. When our son will complete his study and will

be involved with a better job, the happiness will embrace us. We are eagerly waiting for that day”.

12. Conclusion and Policy Implication

This study documented the situation of women living in the slums of Dhaka city. In order to survive they have to face many challenges, like poor living conditions, unhygienic environment, lack of basic facilities, like sanitary, electricity, and clean drinking water, as well as access to education and quality health service. Though, access to shelter, provide quality service, environmental concern, and creation of job opportunity are the issues of concern for the government, yet no serious effort has been put in place by the administration to improve the living conditions of these urban slums. However, the following initiatives can be taken for promoting the welfare of the slum women such as:

1. A proper survey can be conducted by the government and non government organization to know the number of slum women.
2. Vocational and technical training can be arranged for them so that they can have access to better job opportunities. Ministry of Social Welfare can play a pioneer role in this regard.
3. Government and various development organizations can provide them microcredit with low interest rate to create women entrepreneur in income generating activities.
4. The government should fix the wage rate for the poor people especially for slum women.
5. Initiative should be taken to rehabilitate these destitute women.
6. Constitutional legal protection regarding women torture including physical and sexual harassment has to be strengthened.
7. Provide security at job place and in the slum as well.
8. Ensure entrée to essential services, for example, water, gas, electricity and sanitation.
9. Joint initiative should be taken to ensure the basic education and health services.
10. Remove gender discrimination and ensure equal rights for slum women.

Slum women have also the rights to enjoy the basic social services like the other women of the Bangladesh. The government must pay attention to improve their living standard. Improving the implementation of government policy framework and proper monitoring can change the fate of these destitute slum women.

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Behind the Bars: Situation of Imprisoned Mothers in Karachi Jail

Abstract

Women either in police custody or in jail both are in quite horrible and dreadful situation. It is hard to measure their physical and especially mental state as they do not easily discuss their problems with anyone. Women prisoners who live with their children or have children outside the jail confront more miserable psychological issues than others. More than 60% of women prisoners are mothers of little children. For this research, the universe is the Youth Offenders Industrial School & Special Prison for Women, Karachi. Through simple random sampling 200 women prisoners were selected. According to the research requirement questionnaire was developed by reviewing the objectives the finding shows that children living with their mothers in Jail particularly need special attention and the Jail Manual should be modified.

Introduction

The issue of female criminality was not highlighted by criminologists, researchers and social scientists before, but in 1990's this problem drew attention of researchers and psychiatrists towards its intensity and significance for society. The reason for ignoring this problem was a common misconception that very few women were involved in crimes and also that usually women committed ordinary type of crimes, for example shoplifting, prostitution, and burglary. These crimes are not of that kind to draw attention or give reason and conduct research on the socio-economic factors behind them which force women to commit crimes (Wikstrom, 2006).

Because women constitute fewer than 7% of the world's prisoners, their needs, particularly regarding menstruation, pregnancy, and motherhood are often ignored by prison administrators. .

Jails are always considered as correctional facilities for the criminals. A prison was defined as a place properly arranged and equipped for the reception of prisoners who

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by legal process are committed to it for safe custody while awaiting trial or punishment. However, now prisons are increasingly being called correctional institutions and are defined as places properly arranged and equipped to keep in safe custody those committed there by the courts and where they will be treated with humanity, and helped to lead a useful life as law abiding citizens after their release.

Though the types of jails were changed according to time, they always existed for the reformation of criminals. According to United Nations report “the separation of women from their children due to imprisonment has a traumatic and long term effect on the mothers and their children. Children are likely to suffer from acute emotional and developmental problems, as well as being at risk of inadequate care at home or even in Child care institutions”. Women are facing many problems in jail like sexual assault, overcrowding, violence and rapes; these problems were rarely discussed before (Hiremath, 2005).

Faith (1993) presented the most comprehensive list of these “Pains of imprisonment”.

The “Pains of Imprisonment”

The stigma of incarceration
 The claustrophobia of confinement
 The boredom
 Anxiety about one’s children
 Loneliness for family
 With drawl from alcohol and street drugs
 The lack of privacy
 Abuses of power
 Little or no choice of diet
 The cacophony of radios , television , [and] people
 The uncertainty of when you will be released.

Women prisoners who live with their children or have children outside the jail confront more miserable psychological issues than others. More than 60% of women prisoners are mothers of little children; 3% of women’s children are living in jail with them. Women prisoners living with their children in jail seldom receive positive responses from jail staff and Police officers; most of the time they have victims of the most humiliating and violating abuses in jail. It is a common obscuration but cruel mental violence that children in jails are used to hearing ugly comments about their prisoner mothers character whether they are guilty or not. Pregnant women prisoners are also exploited in jail and face physical and mental violence from jail staff; with no special attention or medical facilities these women confront brutal behavior.

In Marcel’s (France) a woman prisoner delivered a child in jail while her hands and feet were being double chained and in this condition she got dripped. In American jails women are in chains till they complete their work (Shah, 2010). Even in developed countries women prisoners are suffering from terrible conditions.

Pakistani women are widely considered to be second grade citizens in a

predominantly male dominated society, where they are humiliated and exploited for various reasons. This continuous discrimination leads towards violent retaliation. Women have always played a pivotal and crucial role in our society. Women not only make an impact on their children but they play an important role as caretakers of their families and also provide financial support. Rapid urbanization, industrialization, poverty, socio-cultural restrictions and misinterpretation of religion, early marriages and generational gaps are major causes of women's increasing stress and anxiety.

According to the Marxist feminism capitalism created a sense of deprivation and inequality among classes. Women in the weaker position adopt those negative ways to cope with their unhealthy and misbalanced position in the society.

Historically women criminals have usually been subjected to the same prison system as men but with distinctive variations introduced from time to time (Hiremath, 2005). Torture and abuse of prisoners in police custody –particularly in police lock-ups—are common throughout Pakistan, and abuses against women detainees are frequent. Women either in police custody or in jail both are in quite horrible and dreadful situations. It is hard to measure their physical and especially mental state as they do not easily discuss their problems with anyone.

In Pakistan most prisons are overcrowded and few provide rehabilitative services to prisoners. The female population of jails in Pakistan face the very problems as male population and moreover are victims of sexual violence and prostitution, drug mafia within our jail system and physical violence by the jail officials.

Detail of Jails in Pakistan

Province	# of women jails	# of women cells
Sindh	03	01
Punjab	01	29
N.W.F.P.	NIL	20
Balochistan	01	05
Total	05	55

www.4anaa.org/.../PresentationonWomenPrisonersunderHudoodOrdinances

A majority of female prisoners in Jail are illiterate and unaware of their legal rights. These female prisoners, accused of many crimes actually done by their male partners, are forced to live behind bars. According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in 2001 number of women prisoners in the country was over 2000. Official data shows that 1, 519 women were under trial and 653 convicted. A report from Adiala Jail in January stated that women prisoners and their children were imprisoned in miserable conditions. Drug addiction among women was on the rise and treatment at the hands of jail staff was extremely poor. Only two doctors who were in fact unavailable most of the time were posted to treat the 155 women and 40 children, aged one to ten (Sadaf ,2005)

Prison Conditions

According to the 1990 report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, overcrowding, unhygienic accommodation, unsatisfactory diets, degrading punishments, unlawful solitary confinement, tyrannical behavior of warders, molestation of women prisoners, confinements of babies with convicted mothers, and the spread of drug abuse were major complaints.

The prison administration in Pakistan classifies prison facilities according to a three-tiered class system. According to the U.S. State Department, the lower class or class “C” cells, “which generally hold the common criminals, suspected terrorists, and low level political workers are the worst”. Conditions in ‘B’ and ‘A’ are better, with the latter reserved for prominent persons.”

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports physical and sexual abuse of female prisoners by prison officials. However, there are fewer reported cases of sexual abuse of women in prison than in police lock-ups. One of the major reasons for reduced sexual violence in prison is that women prisoners are routinely guarded by female prison guards. This speaks volumes about the need of the Pakistani Government to implement the law requiring the presence of female constables and officers in police lock-ups (Shah, Ahmed & Karrar 2008).

Overcrowding is common in all Pakistani jails which creates unhealthy atmosphere in jails. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report in 2006 the number of male prisoners was 52,587 and female prisoners are 1,022. They were accused not convicted and due to weak law and judiciary system forced to wait long for their hearing. Numbers of male convicted were 17,263 and female were 313.

Number of Prisoners in Sindh Jails January---August 2006

Name of Jail	Approved Capacity	No of Prisoners
Women Jail Karachi	102	118
Women Jail Hyderabad	150	806
Women Jail Sakkhar	30	124
Women Jail Larkana	110	193

(State of Human Rights in Pakistan 2006)

According to another case study in Balochistan jail 26 women out of 36 were married, two were divorced, 47.22% reported that the pregnant women/feeding mother do not get any extra food and care. 36.11% were satisfied with the extra food and care given to pregnant/feeding mother. 16% had no comments. 55.56% reported that the children with women prisoners do not get enough food. 38.89% stated that they get enough food for their children. 5.56% did not respond. These findings clearly present the conditions of women prisoners living with their children; they did not get proper facilities which affect their physical and mental health.

It is pertinent to add that the psychological stigma attached to children imprisoned with their mothers has been recognized by related community professionals. According to Dr. Abbas, a psychiatrist, "Remaining with mothers in a prison could lead to mental disorders in the children. (Shah, Cheema, 2006). Under Section 426, the court has discretion to grant bail where it deems fit, after considering the facts and circumstances of the case. The court has to provide reasons for its bail decision, which should be based on sound "judicial principles".

Section 497(1) allows bail in non-bail able offenses to the infirm. Therefore, when a woman is infirm there is an even stronger case for granting her bail. Infirmary includes pregnancy. Courts generally do grant bail to the affected women and children, because the Courts take into account the nature of the illness and the lack of medical facilities in prisons.

Local human rights monitors have determined that the preferential treatment regarding bail under section 497 has not provided any meaningful relief for women. In addition, though the procurement of bail seems to be much easier under the law for women, in practice women are denied bail more frequently than men.

Although a court itself has the power to move for bail without that initiative being taken by the accused, in practice it is only when the accused through her attorney moves the court that bail is considered. The overwhelming majority of women prisoners inclusive of pregnant women and mothers are unaware of their basic rights including the right to move for bail. This legal unawareness become a cause of exploitation and abuse of these women prisoners by police and Jail staff. (Shah, Cheema, 2006)

Objective

The main objective of this research study is to know the legal rights of women in Pakistan and to find out the abuses, women prisoners faced in jail.

Methodology

For this research, the universe is the Youth Offenders Industrial School & Special Prison for Women, Karachi. The Jail was founded in 1993 by the Government of Sindh in the Peer Ilahi Bakhsh Colony, New Town in Jamshed Town. The number of barracks for women was six, two were reserved for foreigners and four barracks were reserved for local female prisoners. Every barrack had the space for twenty women but due to the problem of overcrowding one barrack contained 30-35 female prisoners. Every barrack had only one washroom which also created problem of sanitation. Women prisoners had the facility of medical room where from 10:00am to 01:00am a lady doctor was available that also provided them medicines. In case of emergency patient would be brought to the Jinnah Hospital.

The size of the sample was initially 100 in 2005 but after analyzing the facts the researcher decided to extend it from 100 women prisoners to 200 women in 2008 for

a brief overview. As per the requirement of the research the researcher proceeded towards building the questionnaire by reviewing the objectives and hypotheses.

Due to the nature of the problem and type of respondents, the researcher used the simple random sampling for research. This type of sampling is also known as chance sampling or probability sampling. There was no specific criteria set for inclusion and exclusion of the respondents because a limited number of women prisoners were available.

Results & Analysis

According to the survey results 29.50% respondents belong to the age group of 22-25 years, 22.50% belong to the 26-29, which shows that more than 50% women were young and they forcibly commit crimes due to poverty and peer pressure. Media, pornographic literature which is easily available everywhere, and limited thoughts and information about religion easily distract young women towards criminality. Moreover, socio-cultural restrictions, lack of access and control over resource and gender inequality increase the chances of women involvement in crimes. Data has shown that majority of respondents were Muslims which is 99% and only 1% is Non Muslim. Data shows that 33.50% respondents were Urdu speaking, 25% were Punjabi. Due to poverty Punjabi families were migrated to Karachi for employment. Generally they are illiterate and unaware, therefore criminal gangs are easily using them for criminal activities. Data has shown that 52% of the respondents were literate but among the literate women 28% respondents were only primary passed, 21% were Matric and 17% were Middle. The education system of Pakistan is very poor. Education at primary level is unsatisfactory even Middle pass students don't know how to write and read due to many reasons including teaching system. That's why even literate people do not fulfill the definition of literacy.

Among the illiterate 49% of respondents did not get education due to financial circumstances and 21% were pressurized because of household burden. Due to illiteracy women were unaware about their legal rights and become victim of cruel illegal acts.

Table. 1 shows that 67% females were married. Teenage marriages are common in Pakistan. Early marriages, extended families and limited income of spouses force women to commit crimes. Crime and violence is the direct effect of poverty in Pakistan. Prostitution is the most common form of human trafficking, which is largely fueled by poverty. According to a survey, men belong to poor households do violence on their wives for income purposes. They force their women family members to earn something even by selling their bodies. Increasing street crime is also the ultimate effect of poverty in Pakistan. The table also indicates that women of all marital status were involved in crimes. According to Baloch women of all marital status categories were involved in crime moreover his study findings showed that out of 13 divorced and widows, 10 (77%) were involved in three crimes i.e. drug

trafficking, robbery/theft and child trafficking; 5 out of 10 unmarried were involved in drug trafficking. Findings also showed that 72 inmates were illiterate and only 28 were literate (N=100). Out of 28 literate, 17 (61%) had achieved up to primary and secondary level education only: 15 of them were involved in household work and 2 of them worked as maids. The 11 inmates who achieved college and university level. The urban rural divide of the respondents showed that 40% belonged to rural areas and 60% belonged to urban areas. It may be kept in mind that those from urban areas were actually from the slums (*Katchi Abadis*) of the city and living in worst of the conditions. Findings show that inmates who are illiterate, poor, and belonged to lower socio-economic class had arranged marriages where the women were not asked their consent for marriage. Out of 90 married inmates 63.3% had arranged marriages, 18.9% had marriages of exchange, 15.6% had love marriages, and 2.2% fall in other category where the bride is purchased in lieu of hard cash. All the 2 'cash marriages' and out of 17 inmates having 'exchange' marriages, 15 were Sindhi who belonged to the rural areas where patriarchal society more prevalent. The figures show that 76 out of 90 married women (84.4%) do domestic work/farming, 5 were working as maids and only 9 (10%) were working women employed in public and private sectors. As mentioned earlier the occupation of the husbands as 81.1 % were farmers/laborers, doing nothing/gambling and begging/ill/old. Thus the result is: poverty married to poverty begets poverty (Baloch, 2012).

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents 80% have children.

Table 3 shows that majority of respondents (39%) have children between 5-6 and 29% between 1-2. It also indicated the failure of family planning programmes policies of Government of Pakistan. In Pakistani culture and society larger families are considered a symbol of pride. Larger families, lack of resources and poverty make them more vulnerable.

Table 4 shows that children of 38% respondents were living with their fathers and only five respondents said that their children were with them in jail. On further inquiry almost all respondents admitted that they missed their children and have fears that how they make up without them. They also told that behavior of in laws and neighbors is not good with them. They taunt their children because of their mothers and especially their daughters were used to the comment of 'Jesi Maa Wesi Beti' like mother like daughter which was devastating for their personalities. The mothers whose children were with them said that they were worried because of their children's future. They said that Jail atmosphere is not good for their children their children were so young that they could not live without them which increased their stress level.

Conclusion

The situations of women prisoners especially with children need extra attention as children are the future generation that would govern this country in the coming times.

The society and the state should provide them with human conditions of life even if they were living in the jail with their mothers.

The Jail Manual is too old and requires a thorough review and revision for amendment. It needs to be transformed according to the modern times.

TABLE – 1
Distribution of the respondents according to their marital status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	134	67.00%
Un married	37	18.50%
Divorce	12	06.00%
Widow	17	08.50%
Total	200	100%

Data shows that 67% females were married, 18.5% were unmarried, 5.5% were divorce and 9% were widow.

TABLE – 2
Distribution of the respondents whether if they have children.

Having Children	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	131	80.00%
No	32	20.00%
Total	163	100%

Majority of respondents 80.00% have children.

TABLE 3
Distribution of the respondents according to the number of children they have

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1-2	38	29.00%
3-4	33	25.00%
5-6	51	39.00%
More than 6	9	07.00%
Total	131	100%

Majority of respondents 39.00% have 5-6 children whether 29.00% have 1-2 children and 25.00 have 3-4 children.

TABLE 4

Distribution of the respondents according to who has children's custody in their absence

Who has the children	Frequency	Percentage
Father	50	38.00%
Paternal grand parents	26	20.00%
Paternal Uncle	5	04.00%
Maternal Uncle	9	07.00%
Maternal grand parents	23	17.50%
With relatives	10	08.00%
With me in jail	5	04.00%
Living in Madressah	3	02.00%
Total	131	100%

Majority of respondent's 38.00 % children were in the custody of their father, 20.00% were in the custody of their parental parents and 17.5% lived with their maternal grandparents.

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End Notes

BOOK REVIEW

Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity By Judith Butler

Author: Judith Butler

Publisher: Routledge, New York

By

Ms. Shahla Tabassum

Judith Butler's idea in "Gender trouble" is radical regarding gender identity and the relation between gender and sex where she introduced gender as performance. Butler's claim in Gender trouble was based on two arguments that maintained one as epistemological in an academic literature and other as normative in societal morals.

Butler collected the thoughts of the 20th century feminists on their gender-sex division as a means of a difference in cultural expression of gender and biological fact of sex to struggle with the assumed biological determinants of science. Gender was associated with social construction and sex with biological innate. The gender-sex division was important for feminists because of their identity as a woman, and they made a distinction between sex and gender. They accepted the fact that certain bodily difference exist between women and men, but they pointed out most of the norms that determine the behaviors of men and women, in fact, social gender construction have little or nothing to do with our bodily sexes.

Butler criticized this theoretical division because it confined the feminists with the universal category of woman through their identity politics by attempting to change the class of woman in society. Basically, she criticized the unitary idea of gendered "woman" which she argued that there is no real meaning of gender and sex. She explained that there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender. Gender is a repeated stylization of the body, produced within a rigid frame of a set of repeated acts. Gender identity is just performance, and that is constituted by the everyday expressions of speech, utterance, gestures, dress codes and representations.

She described the gender essentialism as "intelligible gender" which is a socially coherent expression of gender performance. In her words "intelligible gender are

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those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practices and the desire". She said that all expressions of gender are not fundamental in nature but just repetition of habitual acts and behaviors which create compelling illusions of gender through language construction. She argued that the compelling illusion of gender is a result of a body of power structures of a heterosexist society which create heterosexual matrix in which sex and gender are categorized. In reality there is no essence of sex or gender but only the norms, categories and words with which we describe them.

Butler claimed that the universal category of woman is subject of feminist political identity, but before that it has normative or ethical association. All feminist discourse described the universal category of woman as a subject of oppression and emancipation. They focused on unitary, exclusionary and hegemonic idea of a woman at the expense of alternative gender expression. They believe that these hegemonic ideas are exclusionary, marginalize, confirmative and oppressive.

She believed that these concepts prescribe a socially recognized coherent form of gender expression, and it excludes incoherent gender expression (homosexuality). She described all essentialist concepts of sex and gender, a form of the heterosexist oppression because heterosexuality is a norm in society and people are judged on the basis on their sexual identity.

Butler said gender is not a reasonable alternative because different gender expressions did not destabilize the socially coherent, culturally construction of sex and gender.

Butler proposed to encourage a continual expression of incoherent gender expression, and she hoped that these expressions will change all socially constructed concepts of sex and gender and eventually make these concepts unintelligible and inexpressible.