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## **Role of Newspapers in Education Policy Making in Punjab**

### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the role of newspapers in policy making. In this article, the press-policy making relationship is explored in Punjab, which is the most populous province of Pakistan, with approximately 56% of the country's total population. Development experts agree that investment in human capital is the key to eliminate poverty and education is the key to that imperative. In this context, Punjab's educational indicators are not satisfactory. Education policy document comes out as a significant starting point for setting a government's agenda for educational development, so how the press, in the present research, newspapers, contributes to policy making in education, as they provide a conduit through which politicians and government officials convey their promises and intentions, and feedback from public is the inquiry. Newspapers can set the agenda for the public good by giving coverage to a particular issue and ignoring the other. In view of this function of the press, Content of sampled two Urdu newspapers and two English newspapers was analyzed for this study every day for six months (From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011). Content analysis included all the articles, editorials, stories and letters to the editor/public statements related to education issues in Punjab. The hypothesis of the study is "Newspapers' coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view" and sub-hypotheses are i) Newspapers are giving more emphasis to an official version than public feedback on education*

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*policy issues ii) Newspapers give priority to an official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues and iii) Newspapers give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues. The findings reveal that "newspapers' coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is not tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view", "newspapers are giving more emphasis to official version than public feedback on education policy issues", "newspapers do not give priority to official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues" and "newspapers give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues".*

**Keywords:** Punjab, government, education, policy making, public, newspapers

## INTRODUCTION

Punjab is the most populous province of Pakistan, with approximately 56% of the country's total population. Punjab is the most developed and prosperous province as compared to other provinces of Pakistan. Lahore is the capital of Punjab and is the hub of political, economic, cultural and administrative activities. Punjab contributes the most to the national economy of Pakistan; its share of Pakistan's GDP was 59% as of 2010 (Government of Punjab Statics, 2010). As it is the largest province in terms of population, hence, it contributes large pool of semi-skilled and skilled manpower to Pakistan. The health and education sectors of the Punjab are more developed as compared to other provinces. After the passage of Eighteenth Amendment of the Pakistani constitution, provinces have become more independent in legislation and public policy making especially in the health and education sectors. These two important sectors have been devolved amongst other social sector subjects. Hence the public policy making in Punjab has become more intensive.

Development experts agree that investment in human capital is the key to eliminate poverty and alleviate inequality. This investment is essential for the development of knowledge and skills. A true assessment of education status is required to solve the issue of development of education sector. In the last six decades since its independence, Pakistan's accomplishments in education have been much below prospective and lag behind the international standards. The poor performance in education sector is a cause of concern for both the policy makers and general public.

The situation is not different at provincial level like in Punjab the literacy ratio is 59 percent. According to the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), number of illiterates in Punjab in year 2007-08 was approximately 34 million, which is estimated to have increased to 38 million in the year 2010-11 (Government of Punjab, 2010). Such educational indicators mean that Punjab development progress in social sector remains slow. The education policy of the Punjab government is applicable to all the education institutions both in the public and private sector in Punjab. Any policy document comes out as a significant starting point for setting a government's agenda for educational development. Public Policy has become a complex process especially in this information age with the increasing number of stakeholders being aware of their right to participate in the policy making. For any policy decision the basic requirement is the availability of facts and information regarding the issue to be solved. The policy makers have an advantage of having access to classified and unclassified documents but they still require the feedback of other stakeholders especially the general public. The general public which is the biggest stakeholder in any public policy decision lacks information and knowledge about the public policy issues. The newspapers play a crucial role in providing that information and knowledge to the masses in a way which is easily absorbed by them. This is done by providing all point of views regarding a particular public policy issue. Similarly newspapers provide feedback of the general public to the . If policy-makers respond to the public and the public responds to the media, in the case of this study the newspapers, then understanding the nature and degree of media's influence on public opinion is vital. The research problem for this study is that "in a democracy, press acts as a bridge between the government and the public, and helps devise public policy for instance education policy that takes into account the demands of the people. An education policy that doesn't reflect people's demands is in conflict with the demands of democracy. In Punjab, this role of the press as a bridge between the government and the public seems to be insufficient and disadvantageous to both the provincial government and the public". The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between newspapers and education policy making in Punjab

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Both in the developed and developing world there are several dominant and influential lobbies who influence the media through their economic power to use media in swaying government policies in their favor. This can be explained through the Political Economy of Mass media which can be defined as the use of media by a

powerful group, individuals, multinationals, establishment etc. to further their political and economic objectives aims and targets (McQuail, 2005). Likewise, individuals working in the media can mold public opinion which results in influencing public policy by giving prominence to one particular issue and ignoring the other, this can be explained by the Agenda Setting Theory which states that the news media have a large influence on audiences by their choice of what stories to consider newsworthy and how much prominence and space to give them (McQuail, 2005). Media's coverage of aspects of an issue and emphasis on these various aspects makes a substantial difference in how people perceive that issue. Therefore the media's potential to influence public opinion becomes very clear. Though the influence of the media agenda can be considerable, it single-handedly does not define the public agenda. Information and signals about object and characteristic salience delivered by the news media are far from the only factors of the public agenda. This considerable influence of the news media has no way inverted or invalidated the basic postulation of democracy that the people at large have adequate insight to decide the course of their nation, state, and local communities. Explicitly people are pretty capable to decide the basic significance of the issues and aspects advanced by the news media to them and to the larger public arena. When citizens recognize their news stories as pertinent only then media can set agenda (McCombs, 2002). Printed newspapers are acknowledged to broaden the variety of public topics, events and issues their audience is cognizant of. The manner in which print newspapers are designed and used is supposed to appeal readers into reading stories they may not have been interested in previously. Printed newspapers work for a vital function for the public agenda: they broaden the perspective of those whose range of interests is somewhat small. Newspaper effects research has frequently established the ability of print newspapers to incorporate marginal groups into a community (Schönbach, de Waal and Lauf, 2005). Newspapers are perceived to be up-to-date. Newspaper credibility is perceived to be grounded in balance and honesty. In order to offer credibility, newspapers must be perceived to be balanced in their stories, thorough in providing information, impartial and reasonable, precise, and unbiased. The newspapers should also be candid in their news presentation, be credible and reliable (Garrison, Salwen et al, 2002).

Decent policy necessitates including those outside government in policy making. This encompasses consulting those who are the target of the policy, external experts, and those who are to implement the policy (Curtain, 2000). The state in under developed countries controls, regulate and standardize the short- term performance of the various sectors as well as its course of progress and growth. Such an

overpowering role of the state stems its reasoning from the very nature of underdevelopment itself. It is usually perceived that vested interests and pressure groups strive for a bigger portion in the resources and simply those policies have to be implemented in a society which are agreed by all or a substantial majority. The foundation of decision-making is not economic aspects only and the impact of non-economic aspects have been found more significant in terms of conceding the interest of transparency as well as the system in virtually all developing countries as contrary to the developed countries and Pakistan is not excluded (Khan, 2003). Decent public policy is based on learning from experience. Policy making needs to be a constant learning process, not as a series of one-off, quarantined enterprises. This requires making use of evidence and research about the problems being addressed (Curtain, 2000).

The decision-making process is a discrepancy and variance of two extreme cases. Single individual or a group of individuals controlling decision-making may be called dictatorial. When decisions are made through the democratic process then decisions may be called liberal decisions (Khan, 2003). Perhaps this is to some degree closer to the developed world. In general, five main participants can be identified in decision-making on key policies in any market economy; which are (1) Bureaucrats, (2) political parties, (3) pressure or special interest groups (4) government ministers and (5) the head of Government (Khan, 2003). Media as a conduit of communication widely influences or affects people and it has a major role in the statecraft apparatus particularly in the age of information revolution. It acts as a source of information for a society about any local, regional or global issue, people depend on and even trust on what media is presenting to them. Then, this aspect worth of media enhances its importance as a leading and active instrument in respect of building confidence or endorsing distrust between people on issues related to government policy (Hussain, 2008). In any democratic setup such as American government, communication occurs to fulfill the information needs of a democracy, to aid people make learned choices, and to deliver an apparatus for accountability of public agencies (Horsley et al, 2010).

Government agencies officials communicate more effectively in order to achieve their and their organization's policy objectives, the news is a valuable way to communicate—internally to the agency as a whole and externally to the Constituents—what the agency is doing (Graber, 2003). The sway of public opinion is considerable and salience enhances the impact of public opinion and it remains robust even when the activities of political organizations and elites are taken into

account (Burstein, 2003). Policy-motivated politicians select newspapers as political platforms. Electorates choose which newspaper to purchase and read editorial endorsements in that paper and vote. The party who triumphs the election implements its platform. Readers are sensible and read newspapers for an instrumental resolve. Readers have a restricted time to be informed, therefore; newspapers abridge a multifaceted space of signals (a real line) into a dualistic message. Politicians select media on the basis of their ideological positions in order to reach out to targeted audiences for their support (Chan and Suen, 2008).

The media usually faces allegation that it is ideologically biased and that this feature gives a twist to voting competition and eventually it generates undesirable policy consequences. Bias can be in a number of shapes and shades. A media outlet can be choosy in what subjects it reports, what features of the issues it takes account or omits, in what form facts are presented, and how it is remarked. This all encompasses issue bias, facts bias, framing and ideological stand bias. “Can news make policy?” this means that by publishing a news story can a news editor influence government policy? These actions of the media outlets can be best explained by Agenda setting. Both media coverage and policy might be driven by political agendas (Prat and Stromberg, 2010). In-depth investigative reporting yields public outrage (or policymaker outrage) which results in new regulations and laws or stricter implementation of prevailing ones. Policy-makers acquire their principal information on a problem or its urgency from the press, even if the press is not itself uncovering the information but merely passing on it from an advocacy group, a research organization, or the general public. All agencies or congressional staffer knows how regularly the boss starts the day asking to know more about an issue in that morning’s paper or on the previous night’s news (Otten, 1992). The press puts the information into the policy-making process and the media’s decisions on what to cover and what to ignore have obvious policy results (Otten, 1992). People inside or outside the news organizations in their efforts at making news may actually be better thought as efforts to make policy or send more direct and unmediated messages regardless of what reporters do with what they say and do (Cook, 2006).

Fields (2005) explores in what way the subject of school discipline (behavior management, disruptive and antisocial behavior) is reported by Australia’s major newspapers between 2000 and 2004. He focused on the categories of topics covered; proof of bias and the ‘message’ delivered in the reports regarding this significant

and extremely touchy subject. He claims that definitely there is evidence that press coverage, usually of forceful nature, has paved the way for numerous political and educational decisions about discipline and student behavior. He gives more proof by the analysis of newspaper coverage of discipline and related issues which indicates agenda-setting theory in practice. He argues that Newspaper coverage focused mostly on a number of important topics such as violence, safety, suspensions, expulsions and teacher stress. Things from, what could be labeled as the complete agenda for discipline and student behavior, were seldom covered and hardly issues were covered in detail. For instance, the introduction of separate amenities for behavior problem students and how this compares with and refutes stated policies of complete education and social justice may well and questionably ought to be addressed, nonetheless, so far they have were not given coverage (Fields, 2005).

There is no clear conduit of communication from parents to government. The ballot box is a meager guide to opinions on single issues. Opinion polls are infamously difficult to understand, depending profoundly on the nature of questions and sample. Although there are organizations representing parents which have little contribution towards the decision-making process. This void has left the media with a crucial and potentially important role. Together, the media can form and express public opinion. Also media can influence the policy-makers' perception of what will, or will not, be widely held (Baker, 1994).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Hypothesized**

Newspapers' coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view

### **Sub-hypotheses:**

Hi Newspapers are giving more emphasis to official version than public feedback on education policy issues

Hii Newspapers give priority to official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues

Hiii Newspapers give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues

### **Research Method**

Research method used is content analysis, which is an approach in the social sciences for studying the content of communication. Earl Babbie (1975) defines it as the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws. Ole Holsti (1969) proposes a wide definition of content analysis as any practice for making inferences by objectively and scientifically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

Content of two Urdu newspapers and two English newspapers was analyzed for this study every day for six months (From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011). Daily “Jang” and daily “Nawa-i-Waqt” were selected under the Urdu newspaper category while “The News” and “Dawn” were selected under the English newspaper category. The reason for the selection of these newspapers is that all four belong to large media groups, are popular and widely circulated throughout Pakistan. Content analysis included all the articles, editorials, stories and letters to the editor/public statements related to education issues in Punjab.

The content of all the four selected newspapers was analyzed thoroughly which included stories (government stories, statements and investigative/news reports), articles, editorials and letters to the editor/public statements on education policy issues. Areas covered under education policy issues were: 1) schools, 2) teachers, 3) curriculum.

### **Population**

National Newspapers (both Urdu and English) of Pakistan are the population of the content analysis of this study

### **Sampling**

The News, Dawn, Jang and Nawa-i-Waqt were selected as samples due to their wide circulation and the content of these newspapers was analyzed every day for six months.

### **Coding Unit of Analysis**

The stories (government stories/statements and investigative/news reports), articles, editorials and letters to the editors/public statements related to the education policy issues in Punjab were the coding units of analysis for this study and were counted in

terms of numbers. For example, the total number of stories (government stories/statements and investigative/news reports), articles, editorials and letters to the editors/public statements related to the education policy issues in Punjab in the daily “Dawn” were marked and counted every day for six months. Similarly the same exercise was repeated for the rest of the newspapers of the sample. At the end, the total number of stories (government stories/statements and investigative/news reports), articles, editorials and letters to the editors/public statements related to the education policy issues in Punjab of all the four selected newspapers of the sample were counted.

### **Contextual Unit of Analysis**

The paragraphs of the stories (government stories/statements and investigative/news reports), articles, editorials and letters to the editors/public statements related to the education policy issues in Punjab were the contextual unit of analysis in this study.

### **Inter-Coder Reliability Test**

Inter-Coder Reliability test was conducted to provide reliability to the outcome of the content analysis. Thirty percent of the sample was used to conduct this test. Holsti formula was applied;

2M

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N1+N2

Where

M =The number of mutual agreements between the coders

N1= The number of Entries by coder no 1

N2 =The number of Entries by coder no 2

2(54)

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60 + 60

= 0.90

The result of the test was 90 percent.

Nawa-i- Waqt

Education Policy (Edu)

**Government Schools (S)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	21
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	25
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	12
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	1
Writers Opinion (Wp)	14

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**Teachers (T)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	7
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	19
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	6
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	1
Writers Opinion (Wp)	1

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**Curriculum (C)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	0
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	2
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	1
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	1

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**Jang****Education Policy (Edu)****Government Schools (S)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	18
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	10
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	1
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	2
Writers Opinion (Wp)	4

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**Teachers (T)**

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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	3
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	11
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	1
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	3

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**Curriculum (C)**

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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	2
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	6
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	0
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	0

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**Dawn****Education Policy (Edu)****Government Schools (S)**

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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	14
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	24
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	6
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	1
Writers Opinion (Wp)	6

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**Teachers (T)**

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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	6
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	35
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	1
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	2

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**Curriculum (C)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	0
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	2
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	0
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	0

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**The News****Education Policy (Edu)****Government Schools (S)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	25
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	7
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	0
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	2
Writers Opinion (Wp)	9

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**Teachers (T)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	16
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	24
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	1
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	4

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**Curriculum (C)**


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Government Statements/Stories (Gs)	2
Investigative/News Reporting (IR)	4
Public Feedback/Statements (Fdb)	0
Newspaper suggestions (Sug)	0
Writers Opinion (Wp)	0

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**Operationalized Definitions:**

Newspapers: It refers to the both Urdu and English national newspapers of Pakistan.

Education policy: It refers to the set of laws and rules that govern the working of education systems in Punjab. Education system may include education institutions (schools, colleges, universities, and technical training institutes), people related to those institutes like teachers, and curriculum taught at these institutes. The education policy of the province is applicable to all the education institutions both in the public and private sector in Punjab.

Schools: It refers to the institutes offering basic education, kindergarten to twelfth grade (primary and secondary education). It includes all the schools funded and administered by the Punjab government and the schools operated by the private sector in Punjab.

Teachers: It refers to those professionals who provide education to students studying in the education system of the Punjab. It includes all the teachers of the public schools (funded and administered by the Punjab government) and the private schools (operated by the private sector in Punjab).

Curriculum: It refers to the collection of courses and content (syllabus) taught in the schools in Punjab. It includes the curriculum being taught both in the public schools (funded and administered by the Punjab government) and the private schools (operated by the private sector in Punjab).

Government Statements/Stories: It refers to the statements of the Punjab government officials reported by the newspapers and the press releases by the Punjab government agencies being published in the newspapers.

Investigative/News Reports: It refers to the news items/ issues being investigated and reported by the reporters of the newspapers

Public Feedback/Statements: It refers to the letters to the editors and the feedback of the public reported by the newspaper.

Newspaper suggestions: It refers to the editorials in the newspapers

Writers Opinion: It refers to the articles in newspapers written by the independent writers

The independent point of view: It encompasses the public feedback/statements, investigative/news reports, newspapers' suggestions and writers' opinion.

### Statistical Method

One tailed method was applied to the data available. If the result is more than the value 1.645 then  $H_0$  is rejected.

$H_1$  Newspapers' coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view.

$H_0$  Newspapers' coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is not tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view

Total Content (n) = 363

Government Stories/Statements (official Version) ( $x_1$ ) = 114

Independent point of view ( $x_2$ ) = 249

$$P_1 = \frac{x_1}{n} = \frac{114}{363} = 0.31$$

$$P_2 = \frac{x_2}{n} = \frac{249}{363} = 0.686$$

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{P_1(1 - P_1)}{n} + \frac{P_2(1 - P_2)}{n}}}$$

$$Z = \frac{-0.376}{\sqrt{\frac{(0.31)(0.69)}{363} + \frac{(0.686)(0.314)}{363}}}$$

$$Z = -11.05$$

The value is -11.05 which is less than 1.645, therefore the  $H_1$  will be rejected. Hence, newspapers coverage of education policy issues in Punjab is not tilted in favor of the government as compared to the independent point of view. This shows

that the newspapers give more coverage to the independent point of view as compared to the government version on education policy making in Punjab. This is an indication that the press in Pakistan is a conduit between the policy makers and the public in the formulation of the education policy in Punjab. It is providing a platform to the civil society, academia, intellectuals and the general public to voice their concerns over issues related to education in Punjab.

**Sub-hypotheses**

Hi Newspapers are giving more emphasis to official version than public feedback on education policy issues

Ho Newspapers are not giving more emphasis to official version than public feedback on education policy issues

Total Content (n) = 363

Government Stories/Statements (official Version) ( $x_1$ ) = 114

Public Feedback/Statements) ( $x_2$ ) = 29

$$P_1 = \frac{x_1}{n} = \frac{114}{363} = 0.31$$

$$P_2 = \frac{x_2}{n} = \frac{29}{363} = 0.08$$

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{P_1(1 - P_1)}{n} + \frac{P_2(1 - P_2)}{n}}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0.23}{\sqrt{\frac{(0.31)(0.69)}{363} + \frac{(0.08)(0.92)}{363}}}$$

$$Z = 8.21$$

The value is 8.21 which is more than 1.645, therefore Ho will be rejected. Hence, newspapers are giving more emphasis to the official version than public feedback on education policy issues. Here the press has to make efforts to give more space to the

general public to express their point of view over education issues in the province.

Hii Newspapers give priority to official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues

Ho Newspapers do not give priority to official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues

Total Content (n) = 363

Government Stories/Statements (official Version) ( $x_1$ ) = 114

Newspapers Investigative/News Reports ( $x_2$ ) = 169

$$P_1 = \frac{x_1}{n} = \frac{114}{363} = 0.31$$

$$P_2 = \frac{x_2}{n} = \frac{169}{363} = 0.465$$

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{P_1(1 - P_1)}{n} + \frac{P_2(1 - P_2)}{n}}}$$

$$Z = \frac{-0.155}{\sqrt{\frac{(0.31)(0.69)}{363} + \frac{(0.465)(0.535)}{363}}}$$

$$Z = -4.30$$

The value is -4.30 which is less than 1.645, therefore Hii will be rejected. . Hence, newspapers do not give priority to official version than its own investigative/news reports on education policy issues. The result shows that newspapers give more emphasis to investigative/news reports as compared to the government version. This is a healthy trend as the investigative/news report includes detailed analysis of the issue discussed.

Hiii Newspapers give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues

Ho Newspapers do not give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues

Total Content (n) = 363

Writers Opinion) ( $x_1$ ) = 44

Newspapers Suggestions ( $x_2$ ) = 7

$$P_1 = \frac{x_1}{n} = \frac{44}{363} = 0.12$$

$$P_2 = \frac{x_2}{n} = \frac{7}{363} = 0.019$$

$$Z = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{P_1(1 - P_1)}{n} + \frac{P_2(1 - P_2)}{n}}}$$

$$Z = \frac{0.101}{\sqrt{\frac{(0.12)(0.88)}{363} + \frac{(0.019)(0.981)}{363}}}$$

$$Z = 5.9$$

The value is 5.9 which is more than 1.645, therefore Ho will be rejected. . Hence, newspapers give priority to writers' opinion than its own suggestions on education policy issues. This indicates that press is a forum on which the experts and intellectuals can set a discourse on education issues in Punjab. Hence, newspapers coverage of education issues may lead to effective education policy making in Punjab

**Results and Analysis:**

After testing, the result of the main hypothesis shows us that the national newspapers both Urdu and English give more coverage to the independent point of view as compared to government version on education policy making in Punjab. This is an indication that the press in Pakistan is a conduit between the policy makers and the public in the formulation of the education policy in Punjab. It is

providing a platform to the civil society, academia, intellectuals and the general public to voice their concerns over issues related to education in Punjab. The results of the sub hypotheses show us that the newspapers give more coverage to official version as compared to the public feedback. Here the press has to make efforts to give more space to the general public to express their point of view over education issues in the province. It also shows that newspapers give more emphasis to investigative /news reports as compared to the official version. This is a healthy trend as the investigative/news report includes detailed analysis of the issue discussed. It further shows that writers' opinion on education policy issues is given priority over newspapers' own suggestions. This indicates that the press is a forum on which the experts and intellectuals can set a discourse on education issues in Punjab. Hence, newspapers' coverage of education issues may lead to effective education policy making in Punjab

### **Conclusion:**

So, it can be said that media ,in reference to our study the print media (newspapers) which is an important part of mass media, is one of the primary sources of information for the policy makers and the general public. It gives an idea to the policy makers about what the general public is thinking and gives general public the hint what policy makers' intent to do. Such kind of two ways feedback helps to understand point of views of the stakeholders and shape up education policy which is in the best interest of the people of Punjab.

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## **Parental Attitude towards Girls' Higher Education: A mixed Methods Approach**

### **Abstract**

*The research was conducted to investigate the attitude of parents towards girls' higher education in the District Chakwal by employing mixed-methods approach of research. The main objective of the study was to explore the significance of girls' education according to their parents. Population of the study was comprised of parents (both males and females) belonging to district Chakwal. The sample for quantitative part of the study comprised of parents (N=165), whereas for the collection of qualitative data, parents (n=15) were taken as study sample, who were also part of the quantitative study. Locally developed questionnaires (quantitative and qualitative) were used as research tools. The two sets of data were collected and analyzed concurrently. The cumulative results of both parts of the study indicate that parents have a very supportive attitude towards higher education of their daughters, with few discrepancies due to individual differences. Majority of the parents considered higher education as a significant indicator of better career for their daughters.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gender discrepancy has remained a vague issue from decades in Pakistan. This disparity exists in the educational contents also. If it is discussed in terms of higher education, the disparity and discrimination is much higher than other levels of education likewise primary and secondary education. In this regard Parents' attitude captures a very critical place in the educational matters of girls.

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Education is the basic human right of every individual irrespective of sex, race or region. Investment in human capital development while ignoring the women, half of world's population, is not a feasible approach. Education is one of the most important fields where women have been deprived traditionally (Hashmi, Zafar, & Ali, 2010).

Education is considered as a significant instrument of change having strong correlation with the overall economic and social advancement of the country (Siddiqui, 2007). In Pakistan, impartial access to higher education has always been remained a challenge. Yet remarkable achievements have been documented with increased access to higher education that is rising from 2.2% of 18-23 year age group in 2002 to over 4.7% in 2008 but still it remained lower comparatively from India (7%) and Malaysia (12%) (GoP, 2009-a). Pakistan's educational statistics 2007-2008 revealed that total participation rate at higher education is 741, 092 having male enrollment rate at 54 % and female enrollment rate 46% (Iqbal,2011).

Higher level of women education usually leads to higher level of income source for women (Stromquist, 2001). In this way if every women is educated she will encounter to employment field and her many problems could be solved (Sharma, 2005).

### **Parental Role for their Daughter's Education**

Parental attitude towards the education of their children is determined when a child is enrolled in the school or is not enrolled (Weir, 2007). Parent's role is very significant in the education of their children as they make decisions that affect the future of their children (Haque, 2002). Ali and Buzdar (2011) argued that parents are aware about the significance of their daughters' education but resources restrict them to engage their daughters in education. However he stated that generally parents want to educate their daughters in rural areas.

Parents often not see education as a human right but they take it as their voluntary authority to make decision to give education to their daughters or not and because of this parental biased attitude in spite of several efforts of the government and other organizations, women participation in education is still far away from that of males in Pakistan (Qureshi, 2003-04). Ali, Hassan, Hussain, Mukhtar, and Zakaria, (2003) revealed the result of their study that majority of parents have a positive attitude

toward their daughters' education in rural areas of Pakistan. However there are some administrative obstacles which confine parents to oblige their daughters to not get education.

Moreover family background, education of mothers and fathers also play an important role to make decision related to their child's education and it is more significant in education of girls (Weir, 2007). However, Ali and Buzdar (2011) stated in their study that in rural areas of Pakistan parents prefer to educate their sons rather than daughters. Thus the condition of women education in rural areas is quite unsatisfactory. Although education for the girls in rural areas has been important issue now and then, however practically very little has been done to date.

Although gender discrimination could be seen in women education, as structure and practices both ensure that boys and girls experience different and consequently girls acquire the unequal educational opportunities (Sharma, 2005). Lloyd, Mete, and Sathar (2005) stated that parental perceptions play a vital role as they make decisions of their child's education. In rural areas there is a weak parental demand for girls education and they are more tended to accept status quo. There is a considerable evidence in this relation as parent's education together with other family distinctiveness such as family income, parent's occupation, and dwelling locality, predict their attitude towards their children's education (Eccles, 2005).

Keeping in view the above mentioned situation analysis, it can be concluded that that women education is a key for national prosperity all over the world and especially, higher education of the girls contributes significantly in the development process of the country. It is obvious that gender biasness exists in education but even though women educational attainments are slowly and gradually upgrading. Attitude and perceptions of rural parents regarding their daughters' education varies in different part of the world as culture, traditional attitude, religion, family background and financial constraints matter for the decisions they make. Therefore, the present study is designed to conduct a thorough investigation regarding attitude of parents from a rural area of Pakistan towards girls' higher education. Overall, this study would be helpful to identify issues related to this phenomenon particularly related to higher education system of a developing country like Pakistan where the majority of the population is still residing in rural areas and poverty and illiteracy are seen as a big obstacle on the way of girls' higher education.

### **Research Hypothesis**

In the light of the above mentioned literature, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

*Parents' attitude towards girls' higher education is supportive.*

### **Method**

The study was descriptive in nature, and mixed method approach is used for the data collection. The “concurrent nested strategy” of data collection was employed in the study (Creswell, 2003, p.218). In order to collect primary data, two types of questionnaires were used. For the collection of quantitative data, a 5-point Likert scale was used, where as the qualitative data was collected through a semi-structured interview protocol. The research tools deals with following categories related to girls' higher education, i.e. importance of women education, gender specifications, financial resources, cultural and family traditional patterns, religious values and women education and development. The interview protocol was used to get more elaborative responses particularly related to the issue.

The researcher took this research as a case study, so the population of the whole study comprised of parents (both males and females) of district Chakwal. By employing purposive sampling technique, the study sample for quantitative part, was comprised of 165 parents of the girls of district Chakwal. Among this sample, 15 parents were selected randomly as respondents of the qualitative part of the study. In order to determine the content validity of the research tool, three different experts' opinions were taken on its validity. The feedback received from experts had enabled the researcher to improve test items for pilot run. In order to ensure the internal consistency of the quantitative part of the research tool, a pilot study was conducted and results of the analysis showed 0.86 Alpha reliability.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the collection of complete data, the quantitative analysis techniques were employed to quantitative part in order “to determine the general trends in the data” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, p.130). For the qualitative part, thematic analysis was being done by using “*Grounded Theory Approach*” (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

**Table 1: Importance of Women education**

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. To get all levels of education is basic right of every child irrespective of gender.	58%	40%	0%	2%	0%
2. Education is important for girls.	54%	46%	0%	0%	0%
3. Girls should get higher education.	36%	62%	0%	2%	0%
4. Girls' should have free choice to decide for their education	10%	62%	2%	16%	10%
5. Girls can be sent out of station for higher education	20%	54%	6%	12%	8%
<b>Average%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>

The results of table 1 regarding importance of women education shows that 36% strongly agreed and 52% agreed that education is important for girls and to obtain all levels of education is their basic right and they allow their daughters to go and get education even at distant places. But meanwhile 6% disagreed and 4% are strongly disagreed with the importance of girls' education. Overall majority of respondents are aware with the importance of girls' education. So the results of table 1 indicated that parents who realize the importance of girls' education are in large proportion.

**Table 2: Gender Specifications**

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The education for the girls has equal importance as boys	40%	46%	2%	12%	0%
2. Girls are provided same opportunities as boys to get higher education	26%	48%	2%	20%	4%
3. You have same expectations for your son and daughter's education	36%	48%	4%	6%	6%
4. Your daughter has freedom to get education in co-educational institutions	12%	40%	14%	16%	18%
5. Girl should contribute more to the household work and boys in education	26%	16%	8%	44%	6%

Reverse scoring of the above statement	5	4	3	2	1
Average %	24%	46%	6%	14%	10%

Results of the table 5 regarding gender specifications shows that 24% strongly agreed and 46% agreed with the statements that gender based differences do not matter in the educational matters of their daughters. Girls and boys are provided equal opportunities to get education. Girls like the boys have a right to independently decide about their education. There are only 6% responses are uncertain. Results also indicated that there are 14% responses disagreed and 10% are strongly disagreed with the statements. These people believe in some kind of discrepancy in girls and boys education. Yet the majority of respondents does not believe in any discrimination in the education of their daughters and give equal importance to their daughters' education.

**Table 3: Financial Resources**

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Your financial status allows you to spend on your daughter's higher education	24%	54%	8%	14%	0%
2. Spending in girls' higher education has many positive effects on family's Economic status	22%	52%	14%	12%	0%
3. Investment of financial resources on girl's higher education upgrades their social status	34%	58%	4%	4%	0%
4. Money is equally spent on your children education irrespective of gender	24%	32%	18%	22%	4%
5. Insufficient family income is obstacle in girl's education	48%	44%	6%	2%	0%
<b>Average%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Results of the table 3 regarding financial resources revealed that 30% strongly agreed and 48% agreed with the statements. This shows that they invest in the education of their daughters so it can bring positive changes in their life and it can upgrade their social and Economic status. While there are 10% responses uncertain and respondents are not able to respond to any decisional statement. Meanwhile

11% responses are in disagreeing and only 1% is in strongly disagree with the statements. Table 3 further shows that insufficient family income is also a major obstacle in the higher education of their daughters. However, majority of respondents are those who willingly invest in their daughters' education for their prosperous life.

**Table 4: Cultural and Family Traditional Patterns**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Your culture and traditions give freedom to girls to get higher education	16%	36%	18%	30%	0%
2. Educated girls follow their family traditions	40%	46%	4%	10%	0%
3. Your family traditions are in favor of girls' education	34%	38%	12%	12%	4%
4. Your family gives importance to girl's education	42%	38%	0%	20%	0%
<b>Average %</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1%</b>

Results of table 4 related to cultural and family traditional pattern showed that 33% strongly agreed and 40% agreed with the statements. Thus they believe that their culture, family and family traditions are in support of girls' education. There are 8% responses uncertain and 18% disagreed while only 1% strongly disagreed with the statements of the table. Whereas dominance is of those respondents whose family, culture and traditions support girl's higher education.

**Table 5: Religious Values**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. Islam allows girls to get higher education	54%	42%	0%	2%	2%
2. Higher education keeps girls aware with Islamic values	44%	44%	6%	6%	0%
3. Only religious education is enough for girls to survive in the society	6%	12%	10%	60%	12%
<b>Reverse scoring of the above statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Average %</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>

Table 5 results' regarding religious values revealed that there are 36% responses strongly agreed and 47% agreed with the statements of the table. This means that parents consider this reality that Islam highly support women's all levels of education and there for they take their daughter's education as religious obligation. There are only 5% responses which are uncertain to the statements while 6% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed.

**Table 6: Women Education and Development**

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Girl's higher education upgrades their value in match making	40%	50%	4%	2%	4%
2. Highly educated girls can contribute constructively outside home, if needed	26%	26%	0%	8%	0%
<b>Average %</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>

Table 6 illustrated women education and development showed that 33% responses strongly agreed and 58% agreed with the statements and only 2% are uncertain. Moreover, 5% responses disagreed and only 2% strongly disagreed with the statements of this table. As these respondents do not agree that higher education can increase their daughters' value in any way and it cannot be utilized further when needed. However, the respondents who agree with the statements are great in number.

### **Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Part of the Study**

Open ended questions were asked by researcher in order to get a clearer picture of the situation. There were three open-ended questions asked from the parents. Several themes emerged during the thematic analysis. These themes were then grouped together into three main categories as follows.

### **Higher Education as Change agent in Women Life**

Respondents conferred about the changes that higher education can bring in their daughters' life to some extent alike with little variation. The one point that was common in all respondents' responses was that they are absolutely agreed that higher education brings changes in their daughters' life.

### **Economic Stability**

The respondents of the study expect that higher education will Economically empower their daughters. They can work in the field if they are needed and play a role of bread winner for the family as well. As one of the respondent Mr. T.H said

*Higher education is very significant for their daughters as it will upgrade their Economic status by escalating their earning potential.*

One more respondent Mrs N.K stated

*I have enrolled my daughter in higher education so it will bring Economic independence in her life. So the Economic difficulties I have faced in my life she would not face.*

### **Social adjustments**

However, the respondents were of the view that as the world has been changed and is still in the changing process, circumstances which are prevailing in today's life may not exist in day after. Therefore, higher education must bring changes in their daughters' life that enables them to struggle with the challenging situation of the life in society. Mr. A.A said in this regard

*Higher education should bring changes in my daughter which enables her to adjust in the social life.*

Similar point of view was expressed by Mrs. M.A as

*Higher education must bring such kind of changes which are socially acceptable.*

### **Responsibilities of family**

The respondents stated that higher education enables their daughters to be a good daughter-in-law, an excellent wife, a careful daughter and a loving mother in their later life. They have an attitude about higher education for their daughters that will bring and develop qualities of a true girl who is loyal to her parents, husband and parents-in-law. This is a common thinking which can be observed in everyday life by girls. Mr. A.R responded that

**The primarily task of a woman is to look after her family**

*therefore higher education must inculcate sense of responsibilities of their duties in them.*

One more respondent Mrs T.Z explained

*Family nourishment is the department of women in social life so after getting education they must have qualities of a good housekeeper.*

### **Suitable education for girls**

Parents expressed that a balanced kind of education must be given to the girls that can bring moral, social and Economic developments in their life.

### **Moral Values**

The respondents were of the view that girls must be provided higher education that makes them a good human being. They are in favor of education for girls which is according to the prescribed rules of propriety. It must bring the qualities of good women and respectable member of the society as well in them. One other respondent Mrs U.K stated

*I expect that after getting higher education my daughter must be more civilized in her manners*

At the same time, Mrs. I.C complained

*Modern Education is not fulfilling the criteria of morality. Higher education is to be of kind which upgrades moral status of girls along with economic status.*

### **Religious awareness**

Respondents said that girls should be provided only religious education as religious education keeps them aware with their roles and responsibilities prescribed by God the Almighty. Mr. G.F believed

*Our religion is a complete code of life so girls are not needed to provide any other kind of education.*

Respondents said that girls must only be given Quran and Sunnah's education so they could perform their religious duties more devotedly as their first responsibility is to serve God. Mr. & Ms A.N expressed in this regard

**Only religious education is enough for girls.**

The respondents stated that they do not think that higher education is necessary for girls and therefore just provide them religious education and teach them religious subjects related to Fiqqa and Sunnah. In very contradiction to this the respondents said that girls must get all kind of education that could be scientific, technological, religious and art related education through this they could understand their religion more cohesively. Mr. S.H said

*Balanced kind of education is necessary for girls which can be integrated with religious and scientific knowledge.*

**Conventional Role**

Respondents said that girls should be given education different from boys as they have to perform different roles from that of boys. So education for girls must be according to their own roles and responsibilities. Mrs A.B stated in this regard

*Girls and boys should be provided different education as they have to perform different roles and responsibilities in everyday life.*

Respondents expected that higher education must enable their daughters to perform their traditional roles more honestly it should empower them morally, socially and Economicly so they can play a role of bread winner for the family as well. Mr Q.B stated

*Girls' should be given education which enables them to work for the earning if they so need*

**Economic Empowerment**

The respondents expressed that higher education for the girls must be job oriented and it must be of that type which gives them some kind of Economic gains. Mr. and Mrs. N.K said

*Present's Economic crises demand that job oriented education must be provided to girls so they can earn for their family.*

Similarly, Mrs T.Z expressed

*Higher education should enable them to get a suitable job so they can spend from what they leave*

*The role parents desire to contribute for their daughters' education*

Respondents were aware about their roles and responsibilities as parents for their daughters' education. There was variation in the responses of the participants as everyone had different experiences and preferences.

**Role model**

The respondents opined that they want to be a role model for their daughters' education and will do everything for their education. These people have a very distinct consideration for the education of their daughters. One of the respondents Mr. A.A said

*I am employed in a government department and I am still a student with the age of 54 years. I have four daughters and I want to be a role model for my daughters so they can also engage themselves in education with best of their capabilities.*

**Constructive role**

The respondents who said that even they were illiterate but they will do every possible effort for their daughters' education and will provide them education in the best institutes for higher education. The respondents expressed that higher education is the demand of today's complex world so they desire to contribute constructive role through financial and moral support for their daughters' education. Mr. and Mrs. N.K were of the view

*I want to contribute a very constructive role for the education of my daughter as education is very much important for girls in order to survive in the society.*

Similarly Mrs M.A said

*Education of girls has become essential and in this regard I will take every positive step to highly educate my daughter.*

One of the respondents Mrs A.B expressed her views

*My husband has passed away. I have acquired education after my husband's death so that I could educate my three daughters and now I am a primary teacher in a government school and is trying to educate my daughters at best institutions so that in the future they would not face problems which I had faced in my life.*

The respondents said that they will carry out every positive measure for which they have pace, for their daughters' education and they are ready to take every kind of risk in order to highly educate their daughters.

#### **Supporter in case of religious education**

Yet few of the parents' respondents revealed that they did not consider that higher education is acceptable for their daughters so they did not support for it in any way. However they will encourage their daughters to get only religious education and will not support them to get any other form of education that is contradicting to their religious ideology. They think that higher education keep their daughters away from their religion. One of the respondents Mr. S.H said

*Education which is provided in colleges and universities is keeping girls away from Islamic principles of life.*

Similarly Mr. T.H expressed

*I support education for my daughter but only religious education.*

#### **Financial constraints**

Respondents revealed that they are willing to play constructive role for the education of their daughters but financial constraints restrict them. They told that they have not enough money to spend it on the education of their daughters. Respondents expressed their views that although they want to contribute a very positive role for their daughter's education, less number of higher educational institutions in their area is the obstacle to afford their daughters' higher education. Moreover, transportation problems are there and institute of higher education are out of station in distant cities. This all force them not to enroll their daughters for higher education. One of the respondents Mr. A.R stated in this regard

*We are willing to highly educate our daughters but higher education institutions are out of stations and we cannot afford expenses of these institutions.*

#### **Results and Discussions**

The qualitative findings of the parents' perceptions regarding their attitude towards higher education of their daughters were integrated with the quantitative results of the study.

The quantitative data described overall significant positive attitude of parents towards higher education of their daughters. Whereas, the qualitative findings do support the quantitative results to a large extent, at the same time, a small number of discrepancies have also been emerged from both types of data due to individual differences among the respondents. They expressed unsatisfactory remarks in response to the queries related to their attitude towards higher education of their daughters. They believe only religious education is enough for girls. The overall results of the study revealed that majority of the parents agreed that it is the right of their daughters to get higher education.

The cumulative findings illustrate that parents do not make any difference between girls and boys by declaring that it is basic right of every child irrespective of gender to get all levels of education. They support them to get higher education and educational achievements of girls are acknowledged by their parents. Girls can be sent out of station to urban areas for higher education. The higher education for the girls of the rural areas is not considered glass ceiling any longer. These transformations could be seen as the changing attitude of the people for the girls' education, a change that is positive. Same results were revealed by Ali and Buzdar (2011) in their study as they indicated that parents had a positive attitude for their daughters' education.

The important findings obtained from the study were that parents understood significance of girls' education and there was not any significant discrimination made on the basis of gender in the education of the girls. The results of the study also showed that parents happily bore the expenditures of the girls' education and they were given enough money to fulfill their educational needs. Family traditions and culture was also supportive for the girls' education and parents take their daughters' education as religious obligation as they consider that Islam highly support girls' education at all levels. The findings of the study also indicated that parents are highly concerned about women education and development as they think that higher education upgrades their daughter's social, Economic and moral status. Parents wanted to play an important role for their daughter's education through moral and financial support. They also believed that higher education brings some positive and constructive changes in their daughters' life. Thus results indicate that parents' attitude is very supportive for girls' higher education.

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## **Does Unfair Cellular Services' Usage Adversely Influence the Youth's Morals? A Study From Pakistan**

### **Abstract**

*Youth plays a considerable role in the development of any nation. Their espousal, intent and aspirations transform values of the culture and lead towards change in individual's behavior. This study is based on the impact of excessive usage of cheap cellular services on the ethical behavior of the young generation. The cellular services of Pakistan are growing without a check on how these services affect the values and traditions of Pakistani youth. Although these services are facilitating individuals but unfortunately, these services are also being exploited by our youth. Authors have assessed the unconstructive impact of cellular packages (Late night free hours and SMS bundles) on the moral and ethical behavior of youth. This ongoing study is descriptive in nature. Data were gathered from the work of different researchers through web resources and online journals. Results showed that there are unfavorable impacts associated with inexpensive cellular services and different advertisements that influence youngsters negatively.*

**Keywords:** Cellular, cheap rate packages, Short Messaging Service (SMS), youth's ethical values, Pakistan cellular sector.

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## Introduction

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority was established in 1994, since the launch of the first mobile and paging service. In 1996, Acsys Limited, a US based phone company, agreed to design rural networks and provide modern communications and value added services. This was an outcome of Pakistan Government's decision to privatize Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited in 1991 (Sarfranz, 2009). Since then, there has been an increase in the development of the telecom sector and different cellular companies have emerged that attract the attention of people by introducing value added services. In the early stages, cellular rates were expensive but with the passage of time prices declined and new low-priced options became popular. Cellular technology has manipulated the lives of millions of people in recent years and is becoming an essential part of today's life. Telecommunication is the fastest growing technology across the globe and is becoming increasingly popular among the young generation (Hakoama & Hakoama, 2011). Cellular technology grows rapidly and people adopt it as a source of communication. Cellular technology has experienced a remarkable progress. Swedish mobile used the first official mobile phone in 1946; Motorola offered first truly portable cell phone in 1983 (Ahmed, Qazi & Perji, 2011). According to the quarterly report of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, there were 100 million cell phone users in 2010, with 62.5% penetration rate at the end of January 2011, and 100 billion SMS generated during July-December 2010 (Ellahi, 2012). Similarly, a large number of Pakistanis have easy access to cell phones (Ahmed & Diesner, 2012).

Population and cell phone use in Millions (percentage of population in parenthesis)

	<b>India</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Bangladesh</b>
<b>Population</b>	1,189	187	159
<b>Face book users</b>	45.8 (3.8%)	6.4 (3.4%)	2.5 (1.6%)
<b>Internet users</b>	121 (10.2%)	29.1 (15.5%)	5.5 (3.5%)
<b>Cell phone users</b>	919 (77.3%)	114.6 (61.2%)	86.6 (54.6%)

Table 1: Population and cell phone users in Millions (percentage of population in parenthesis) (Ahmed & Diesner, 2012)

In Pakistan, youth adopted the cellular technology and admired it to the great extent. There are five telecom companies that are currently working in Pakistan i.e. Warid, Zong, Mobilink, Ufone and Telenor. All these companies are facilitating people

through low-priced calls and SMS packages. All of them provide late night call packages and different SMS bundles to subscribers. The Pakistani youth has adopted cellular technology and have responded positively to such packages. As a result, cellular companies have targeted the youth because of their increased consumption of cellular technology. These companies attract the young generation through various attractive packages and encourage them to utilize their services. Through their cellular activities and unnecessary conversations throughout the night, as a consequences, their traditional and cultural values affected adversely (Kamran, 2010). Youngsters call and text all the time while driving, attending lectures and seminars and while they are in the university premises. Day and night packages, free airtime and SMS bundles have affected the moral fiber and educational performance of students (Kamran, Sohail & Sarfraz, 2012).

Mobile technology has been adopted blindly by youth who without realizing the pros and cons of this technology using it and it is becoming an addiction in Pakistan. One of the reasons for the popularity of cell phones is that it allows youngsters to communicate with each other without elders' supervision (Ahmed, Qazi, Perji, 2011). Youngsters talk with their friends on their cell phones without any monitoring by their guardians. They use their cell phones as a personal gadget. Walsh (2009) found that many teenagers perceived the possession of a cell phone as symbol of their growing autonomy from their parents as they were able to get in touch with friends and engage themselves in different activities without their parents' knowledge or consent. Invariably this leads to teenage trends such as the desire to maintain secrecy from adults. Young adults start hiding different things from their guardians and become involved in unethical and immoral proceedings.

Many parts of cell phone technology are unnecessary and does not add to the usefulness' of the device, rather it influences the behavior of adolescents (Kumjonmenukul, 2011). Extreme usage of cellular technology has brought numerous unconstructive implications as well (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011). The immoral behavior and unethical attitude towards information system has caused considerable losses to businesses and the moral values inherent in society (Leonard, & Cronan, 2005). Misuse of mobile technology is an important issue that needs attention to be paid. Various cellular packages entice teenagers to busy them without understanding the damaging effects associated with it. The risk of exploiting late night call packages and unlimited SMS bundles is a constant factor and an additional service known as Friend Finder service initiated by cellular companies has affected the

morals of youngsters (Shah, Waris, Aziz, Jaffari, Fatima, Ejaz, Sherazi & Rehman, 2012). The youth has become enthusiastic about using cell phones and is paying attention to these services, disregarding their prime responsibilities and overlooking their ethical values and traditions.

Ethics can be defined as the "conscience" of a person. Ethics is usually a superficial set of communal standards that encompass the values of the society ([www.users.qwest.net](http://www.users.qwest.net)). Ethics and morals play a vital role in the development of any nation. Cell phones have become a symbol of independence for our youth as mobile phones help them to develop their own language and social groups away from the prying eyes of their parents (Kalhor, 2008).

The impact of cellular packages on the ethical behavior of youngsters' in the context of Pakistan contends that youngsters are exploiting inexpensive cellular services without realizing their impact. First, valuable time is spent on unnecessary conversations that negatively affect the values and traditions of our culture. These packages not only disturb the social and personal lives of individuals but also affect the behavior of youth, waste their time, affect studies, contribute to sleep disorders and have adverse affects on the morals of the young generation. Youth is an important building block of the nation and there is a need to create awareness among people about the destructive consequences of inexpensive telecom packages on the moral and ethical standards of our youth. Previous studies on the subject of cell phones is pragmatically extensive, but there is comparatively little research regarding adverse impacts of cellular low-priced packages on the ethical and moral behavior of young people. The endeavor of the ongoing study is to investigate the exploitation of cellular inexpensive services particularly by the young people as well as the harmful effects of these low priced packages on the morals of the Pakistani youth. Without ethics and morals, it is very difficult to develop an educated society.

### **Originality of the Study**

Researchers have discussed the unconstructive impacts of cheap rate packages on the ethical behavior of Pakistani youth. The current study has investigated the impact of diverse cellular packages of Pakistan on the morals of young Pakistanis. Cellular services providers grab the interest of our youth by introducing abundant call and SMS packages and advertised them in an attractive manner particularly targeted to the adolescents. The author recommends a need to create awareness

among people about the detrimental aspects of cellular packages and to check the excessive use of these services and encourage the use of these services when required. The study also aims to find out solutions to the problems raised in this paper.

### **Literature Review**

According to the Information Economy Report 2009, published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Pakistan is amongst the five countries of Asia in terms of increased saturation of cell phones, and internet with 93 million users (Sarfraz, 2009). Cellular technology has flourished in a great way all over the world as it has a number of advantages in modern age. There are different daily communicative practices, individual's lives and relations in various global contexts (Reading, 2009). Cell phones facilitate the masses and help to communicate within no time. Cell phones help to stay in touch with friends and family, ensure individual security, 'digital gift giving,' co-ordinate public and peer group activities, support close relationships', as well as ritual exchanges (Green, Singleton, 2007). Asia has the world's largest wireless phone industry, with over 250 million users and this figure was expected to reach 600 million by the year 2005. China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia have numerous wireless phones. This figure exceeds the number after adding landlines users. Other countries with cellular penetration recorded at 60 percent by September 1999 and countries like Brazil, South Africa, Spain, and UK have remarkable cellular phone densities (Mutula, 2002). In the beginning cell phones were considered a status symbol but after the understanding of its significance in social cohesion and economic activities, now it has become an important part of people's life (Malik, Chaudhary & Abbass, 2009). Many people who own mobile sets having various cellular connections and use it as a communication device. Recent studies suggest that cell phones are becoming popular in a short period of time among youngsters and have evolved into something more than a communication instrument; they have an important place in various facets of social communication and are considered as essential as wallets (Hakoama & Hakoama, 2011). The cell phone is an omnipresent communication tool worldwide. Young adults are popular users of cell phones because of which the market segment dealing with cell phones has been called the sweet spot of the communication sector (Haverila, 2011). Young people give great response to the cellular technology across the globe, because of which, cellular companies target

youth to maximize their wealth. After saturation of developed markets, corporations turned to the developing countries to avoid saturation of their cellular growth and targeted the youth to fulfill the intention of maximizing their profit (Sinha, 2005). These companies introduce different features in mobile phones to grasp the attention of young users. Researchers found that while it took 20 years to gain 1 billion cell phone subscribers the growth was incredible and it took only 40 months to add other 1 billion subscribers. It took only two more years to reach the 3.5 billion mark (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011). People adopt cellular technology and become addicted to this technology without realizing many of the facts. There are many drawbacks as well as comforts of technology. Extreme usage of cellular phone among young people causes financial strain, nervous tension, broken relationships and failing literacy. Additionally, strong relationship has been found between excessive and unnecessary usage of cell phones and issues that arise due to it like several social, health and educational risks as well as criminal, immoral and unethical activities such as fighting, theft, use of alcohol and drugs. (Naz, Khan, Daraz & Hussain, 2011). Cross-cultural studies have revealed that cell phones are used by teenagers globally to articulate thoughts, and feelings to their friends. This reduces face to face interaction, and becomes a habit. Thus, the cell phone becomes an instrument to gain liberation and independence from parents and traditions (Azran, 2012). Young people communicate through cheap rate packages because they can easily afford the activation of cellular services and talk for long periods of time with the opposite genders and friends. Free night packages offered by cell phone companies encourage young people to avail these services without understanding the drawbacks of such packages. Teenagers spend whole nights chatting unnecessarily, form friendships and social groups and keep them private from their guardians. This not only affects the future of users but also influences their moral values (Kalhor, 2008). Young students have wasted precious time chatting all night at the expense of their sleep, studies, and spending time with family. Not only studies have been affected, but also insomnia and health issues become a concern for parents. According to a Korean study that studied over 500 teenagers into four groups based on the usage of cell phone, those in the peak rank scored 50% higher on a depression rating scale than those with the least use. Many adolescents become passionate about their cell phones and undergo withdrawal symptoms if they lose cell phones or if they are not instantly available. Many teens keep their phones under their head cushions at night for texting, which obstructs their sleeping hours ([www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org)). According to Microsoft and the National Broadcasting Company (MSNBC), one third of high

school students admit that they cheat in the class by using cell phones, 52 % people have an opinion that they know students who cheat through cell phones and store information for class quizzes, 57% have an opinion that they know such students who can text during quizzes and communicate with their friends , 45 percent browse and search quiz material on the internet through cell phones and 41 percent take pictures of class quizzes and exchange them with their friends (punjabstudy.com , 2010).

Cellular technology offers massive advantages, but it has been connected with objectionable and unpleasant effects. In his study, Azran (2012) found that Indian youth were using the phone camera to swap pornographic stuff, while traditional Arab-Israeli girls kept their cell phones out of sight from their parents to uphold romantic ties and Rwandan teens were using the phone as a symbol of independence and individuality. Many people misuse cell phone services and send inappropriate messages that are detrimental and destructive for the moral values of a society. When teenagers read inappropriate literature through their cell phones it creates dissonance in their minds and negatively affects their ethical behavior. In current years “sexting” – where youth exchange sexually explicit texts and pictures – has become an increasing concern. Additionally, the emotional space and potential for obscurity that texting provides can fuel harassment, become a nuisance and result in bullying behavior (www.bewebaware.ca). All these type of activities lead youngsters to behave negatively in the society and ignore their traditional and ethical values. Approximately, 75% of 12-17 year old kids own cell phones, which has increased from 45% in 2004 and one-in-three teenagers send approximately 3,000 SMS per month, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (Boyles & Rainie, 2012) . Though many parents think that they are giving a cell phone to their child for protection and to stay connected with them, many children utilize their phones as a tool for cyber bullying (Donegan, 2012).

Prior researchers worked on the issue of extensive mobile phone usage but the ongoing study has significance in the ethical field and investigated the adverse impacts of cheap cellular packages on the ethical and moral value of youngsters . These services manipulate the morals of young people and encourage them to avail their services without realizing their social and ethical responsibilities.

**Methodology**

The ongoing research has assumed descriptive method and information is based on secondary sources. Descriptive work to know the excessive & gratuitous usage of cellular inexpensive services adversely affects the morals of Pakistani youth. Youngsters can accept the new technologies more than adults because of many reasons. They utilize cellular services (inexpensive cellular offerings/packages, SMS bundles) excessively because they have no errands, have additional time and an urge to espouse newest technology. Data is gathered from the work of different researchers from journals and internet. It is hard to gather the data ubiquitously in cities and towns of Pakistan. The paper is written in the light of literature and work of prior researchers and presents feasible changes in this regard. In the study, it is examined that cellular offerings manipulate the Ethical and moral values and behaviors of youngsters.

### **Cellular Sector of Pakistan**

Cellular phone penetration varies by region, with urban areas having greater access to cellular service than rural areas in Pakistan (OSC-PakistanEliteSNS, 2010). Telecom sector is flourishing day by day that provides relief for the customers to correspond and intermingle with each other. These cellular companies propose low-cost services to attract users and achieve a competitive edge. There is a significant growth in recent years. Cellular sector of Pakistan has grown at a high annual rate and fascinated local as well as overseas cellular service providers (Ali, Ali, Rehman, Yilmaz, & Afzal, 2010). Five cellular companies are presently functioning in Pakistan i.e. Mobilink, Telenor, Ufone, Zong and Warid. Out of a total population of about 180 million people, 110 million are mobile users (Chaudhary, 2010). Mobilink was recognized in 1994, as one of the major cellular companies of Pakistan. Different connections include: Mobilink JAZZ, Indigo and Infinity. All connections are offering diverse cellular day and night packages (i.e. Ladies first package, Jazz 1, Jazba etc) ([www.mobilephonerate.com](http://www.mobilephonerate.com)). Ufone was established in 2001, a company of Pakistan Telecommunication Limited working under Etisalat Group, UAE. Packages include Uth super ghanta package, Panch ka pandra, and Ufone life plus package ([www.ufone.com](http://www.ufone.com)). Telenor is a Norwegian company and was founded in 2006. The connections they offer include Talk Shawk and Djuice While packages include: Telenor talk Shawk A1, Talk Shawk her minute, Talk Shawk 24 hours, Djuice – Din Raat aik hi baat – and Khamoshi ka Boycott ([www.telenor.com.pk](http://www.telenor.com.pk)). Warid is a UAE based company and a joint venture between

Abu Dhabi Group & SingTel Group. They offer packages such as Glow by Warid, Warid minute package. ([www.waridtel.com](http://www.waridtel.com)). Zong is run by a Chinese company, previously called CMPak. Zong launched hourly call rates, cheap daily SMS bundles, and inexpensive internet surfing in Pakistan. Zong 12 Aany, Zong Free and Zong 1 Paisa are major package plans of Zong ([www.mobilephonerate.com](http://www.mobilephonerate.com)).

### **Influence of Cellular Packages on the Moral values of Young People**

The younger generation is considered the standard of focus group and center of attention in the marketing of cell phones. Cellular companies indulge themselves in creating new approaches to advertise their product to the younger bracket and promote it through a lower price than ever before (Kumjonmenukul, 2011). All the cellular offerings, SMS bundles, free airtime and late night packages attract the attention of Pakistani users especially youngsters because they respond to such facilitations and technology faster than adults. Elder people have their professional lives and have less time to spend on availing these packages. There are a large number of young users who are adopting the cellular offering and waste their time that will further affect their moral and ethical character in the long run.

The inappropriate messages that are exchanged by different groups pollute the minds of teenagers. April fool's Day, Valentine's Day, and various sorts of different occasions are not Pakistani traditions but through SMS, people send, express and celebrate them. Young people also build up emotional relationships on cell phones via internet or SMS and virtually communicate among each other. As a result of such activities, they indulge themselves in unnecessary things that are harmful for them in future. Teenagers are not honest to their parents and demand money to meet the extra expenses related to cell phones usage. Talking all the time with friends and the opposite sex results in the desire for isolation that is free of interference from their guardians and keeps their personal spaces.

### **Poor Relationships**

Cell phones are an important part of the personal lives of youngsters in current times. Youth can easily activate different sort of late night cell phone packages because of inexpensive services and maintain social and personal relationships. Cell phones have made it easier for people in dysfunctional relationships to have extramarital relationships without getting caught (Eash, 2011). Some adolescents chat and talk on cell phones, they develop virtual relationships that allow them to

flirt and cheat each other. They can talk constantly with their friends and waste their time in unnecessary conversations. They can decide their marriage and future plans as a result of these relationships; and being to live in a world of fantasy. When this fantasy comes to an end, reality can be very painful to accept. Cell phones play a vital part in affairs among youngsters. Cell phones also encourage open relationships prior to marriage, which is contrary to the traditional Pakistani culture. Cell phone is also popular among people who are working 24/7 and remain on the go (Kalhor, 2008).

### **Restlessness**

Cellular phones and various packages that support young people to avail and adopt their services by giving them low rates, cause restlessness in the lives of young people. Different studies found that children who use electronic media before bed have a larger occurrence of sleep disorders that lead to the behavior issues, educational problems, mood swings, nervousness, and depression (cmch.typepad.com, 2010). Extreme use of cell phones can obstruct sleep, cause fatigue and anxiety and psychological troubles, such as depression and lack of attentiveness (www.laurenthaug.com).

### **Bullying**

Cyber bullying is defined as the: “willful and frequent harm inflicted through the exploitation of cell phones, computers and other electronic devices” (www.cyberbullying.us). Youngsters most often send insensitive messages to their peers and colleagues and spread rumors and make fun by using internet and mobile technology. Some users also misuse this facility and tease other people only for the sake of fun. Bullying means humiliating weaker people. SMS and e-mails play a vital role in bullying. According to a study by Nair (2006) 14% people received threatening messages and were black mailed through various cellular services. He found that bullying just do it for fun, taking pictures of others and threatening them in different ways were common concerns. Children's charity NCH examined 770 adolescents and found 14% of 11- to 19-year-olds had been endangered or harassed using SMS. Bullies used pictures and images taken with cell phone cameras to threaten or humiliate one in 10 young people (news.bbc.co.uk, 2005). Such people perform these activities to make fun of innocent people, sometimes harass them and black mail them by exposing them via internet or MMS. Numerous types of

persecution and cyber bullying were exposed through a survey taken in 2010. The investigation revealed that mean or hurtful comments posted online was (14.3%, 8.8%), rumors online (13.3%, 6.8%) and threats through a cell phone text message were (8.4%, 5.4%) (Donegan, 2012).

**Exchange of immoral Texts**

Text bullying is sending embarrassed, awkward, false, or hurtful messages to others, sometimes these are sent to known persons and sometimes to strangers. This can also include sexting, or sending sexually suggestive messages to someone or about someone ([www.bullyingstatistics.org](http://www.bullyingstatistics.org)). People send threatening messages and information and also harass other through texting.

There are many harmful results linked with cyber bullying. Many people, who are victims of cyber bullying report that they feel miserable, depressed, annoyed and disturbed. There is a link between cyber bullying and low self-esteem, violent behavior, family troubles, academic issues, school violence and aberrant behavior (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). A study in the United States found that cyber bullying had a consistent link with victimization and lower self-esteem (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007).

**Reduced desire to help others**

Abraham, Pocheptsova and Ferraro (2012) found that usage of cell phones induced feelings of connectedness to others, thus satisfying the basic human need to belong and consequently reduced the need to connect with anyone else. This decreased desire for social connection unenthusiastically affects concern for others, which will exhibit itself as reduced desire to help others. Thus the young generation keeps themselves occupied by texting and prefers to spend time in isolation and avoid face-to-face interaction. They create individualistic living styles and adopt behavior that borders on self-centeredness. People avoid others who are in trouble and don't ask about the problem, in fact they busy themselves on long calls and texting all the time.

**Late night conversations between opposite sex and emotional stress**

Research has found that behavioral troubles were 80 percent prevalent among those who used cell phones by the age of seven .Older individuals also experience emotional stress from cell phone use that is frequently not valued but it is more

dangerous. As previously noted, a study of over 1300 people who commonly used cell phones found that they “experienced an increase in emotional suffering and a decrease in family satisfaction” due to the interruption of numerous work related calls that disrupted life at home or while on holiday ([www.stress.org](http://www.stress.org)) . Many issues arise in maintaining the touching relationships and cause emotional stress among youngsters’ that will have long lasting effects on the behavior of young generation in the long run.

### **Low academic performance of students**

Excessive use of cellular packages influences the academic performance of students. While increased use of texting in class rooms, and talking with friends adversely influence the performance and behavior of students (Kamran, Sohail & Sarfraz, 2012). By availing cellular cheap offerings all the night, students ignore their studies and sleep that will result in low participation in the class room and absenteeism. Various cellular offerings and the excessive usage of cell phones have an adverse impact on young people, as they spend their most precious time on calls and sending text messages rather than studying and performing different routine tasks (Zaheer, 2011). Because of the fact, many learning institutions take action by banning the cellular services in educational settings so it can save time of the students and keep them from unnecessary activities. Texting can be used in cheating during tests and students cannot concentrate on lectures and it disrupts the learning environment (Gautreau, 2008). With the help of cellular technology, students can communicate and cheat during exams easily in the presence of invigilator or teachers and hide cell phones with themselves. This behavior negatively influences the attitude of students towards their studies and influences their morals. Many educational institutions prohibited the use of cell phones’ because it distracted the learning environment, disrupt teaching, Interrupts other students, draws the concentration of the student away from the class and potentially leading to substandard learning outcomes (Walsh, 2009).

### **Cellular Advertisements manipulate teens behavior**

Abideen and Saleem (2011) found that there is a lifelong impression of advertisements on the outlook of audience and it can manipulate people’s behavior ‘exposure’ ‘life style’ ‘morals’ ‘state of mind’ ‘attitude’ ‘actions’ and mores of the country. Pakistan cellular companies are trying to target the youth bracket because

they adopt new technologies and offerings faster than older people. Safdar (2010) found that late night call rates are much cheaper than day time call rates and youngsters can avail night offerings from 11pm to 7am to talk with each other and this result in absenteeism in the morning classes. Cellular companies offer new and cheap services from time to time, to grab the attention of users and encourage them to buy packages without realizing the side effects of low-priced packages, SMS bundles and calling rates. Advertisements for late night cellular packages are very attractive to students as they promote girlfriend and boyfriend culture in Pakistan, which is basically not a part of our culture or tradition (Kamran, Sohail & Sarfraz, 2012)

### **Crime**

There is an evidence of illegitimate behavior with some New-Zealand teenagers reporting that they have stolen money to pay their cell phone bills (Walsh, 2009). To meet the expense of cellular packages and bills etc, youngsters need money. There are hidden charges in different low-priced packages. If parents refuse to give them money for such expenses, some of them steel or engage in illegal activities to meet the expenses. Ishii (2011) found that heavy users of cell phones are more likely to become victims of illegal activities.

### **Romantic ties and Fantasy**

Kalhor (2008) argues that the saying “romance is in the air” prove to be true. In today’s world, it is cell phone which is carrying messages of love. Youngsters are using cell phones to maintain individual, idealistic and romantic relationships. Additionally, these packages support them to build “social and emotional ties”. Make night calls support them to behave in an emotional way and live in the fantasy and build castles in the air. These activities lead them to a stage where they feel depressed and anxious. Stress can be caused by both senders and recipient’s annoyance and frustrations ([www.childalert.co.uk](http://www.childalert.co.uk)). When youngsters can talk every time, it is obvious that a stage comes when they become exhausted and frustrated about things going on and want some change. This situation leads them to the miserable state of mind and they react unusually.

### **Mental health risks**

People living close to a cell phone base station are distressed about prospective injurious effects of their radiation. People relating their health troubles to cell phones frequently report having unspecific symptoms like annoyance,

restlessness, headache , sleep disorders , lack of attentiveness, memory issues and absence of appetite (Thomas, Kuhnlein, Heinrich, Praml, Kries & Radon , 2008). The investigation suggests that there may be some relationship between children's behavior problems and mothers who use cell phones and that can lead to negative behavior in their offspring (McIntyre, 2010).

### **Psychological effects**

Different psychological and mental diseases can be associated with cell phone radiations. Extreme usage of this gadget can lead to severe health problems and affect the hearing of individuals. There is a problem observed in the, excessive cell phones users known as "Ringxiety" by the psychiatrists in India. In "Ringxiety," users foresee their cell phones sound or vibrating when it really doesn't. According to the US Research, 66 percent of the youngsters aged 18-26 years are suffering from "Ringxiety." Research conducted by David Laramie from the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, Los Angeles found that approximately , 67 percent of the natives suffering from this problem for utilizing higher monthly charges, frequent SMS, used more minutes and showed higher levels of impulsive behavior (Avvannavar, Kumar, Shrihari &Are, 2008).

### **Communicate with strangers**

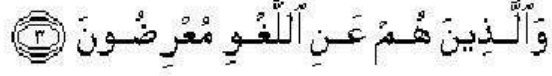
Teenagers can talk with the strangers and unknown person on calls and SMS. They can communicate and share themselves virtually and when it comes to reality it hurts them. Because many of them lie and cheat with innocent people and make them fool. By doing so, they entertain themselves and make fun of it without realizing the adverse impacts on the mindset of the sufferer. The volatile development in the use of cellular devices has resulted in an exponential raise in opportunities for public dealings, creating probability to set up and grow individual relationships with friends and strangers (Abraham, Pocheptsova & Ferraro, 2012).

### **Solutions/Recommendations**

- Youngsters communicate with their friends & opposite sex without parental supervision and maintaining personal spaces. By staying long at night calls, they can share their personal life and information. Parents should be involved in such activities so that young generation can rely on their guardians in this regard.

- Inexpensive call rates and free SMS packages capture the attention of teenagers and encourage them to avail their services. Cellular companies should fulfill their corporate social responsibility and realize the drawbacks of these offerings which negatively affect the moral behavior of teenagers. It is the responsibility of Pakistani cellular companies that they educate young people about the proper use of mobile phone services.
- In the cellular advertisements, marketers portray the opposite gender to talk and text among each other. Through these sorts of advertisements, they are sending negative symbols that attract the teen bracket and encourage them to do the same. It is also the responsibility of cellular companies that their advertisements do not reflect negative relationships between the youth, such as, girlfriend and boyfriend.
- Young people can text all the time, anywhere without realizing the environment and surroundings. In working places, during work hours, in educational institutions, meetings, seminars and conferences. They can waste their time on unnecessary messages and chat through inexpensive offerings. This can not only waste time but also spoil their career and organizational environment. Organizations' and educational sector should ban such activities and discourage the unnecessary use of mobile phones.
- By availing these services, young generation go beyond their limits into unethical and immoral practices. They can exchange immoral bits and pieces, dirty messages, pictures, sexting etc and these things can ruin the young mind that can further spoil their career and life as well. There is a need to understand the negative and harmful effect of cellular services by the young generation so that nation's precious asset could be saved.
- These cellular packages also promote illegal activities e.g. in crime, cheating etc. People use fraud, misrepresent and cheat other people through these packages; use unethical practices, and enjoy them. Islam also prohibits such activities and gave the message of fairness, truthfulness and discourages the unnecessary conversation.

In Surah Al-Mominoon, Allah SWT says in Parah no.18, Ayat no.3



“And who (always) turn away from vain/absurd talk”.

- Cellular inexpensive services can reduce face to face contact and create a culture that is virtual and imaginary. Our youth can prefer to live the unreal life and enjoy the fantasies that can provide by the cellular sector. Although these services are helpful and economic, but people can misuse them. This is the responsibility of elders, teachers, guardians, organizations, educational institutions, government, and the cellular sector itself, to aware the people about the right and fair use of Mobile phone services.
- Through all these activities, young generation go far from their traditions and culture. It is the responsibility of the higher and authoritative bodies to take a step in this regard so that our young talent could be safe.

### **Conclusion**

Youth plays a very important role in the development and well being of the society. Every country has its own culture, traditions and living patterns' but unfortunately, In Pakistan, the traditional patterns are fading and modern technology is being exploited by the young generation. It has been discussed in the ongoing study that Pakistani cellular companies are offering new and inexpensive call packages without fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities. Our youth has adopted the latest packages and waste their precious time on staying long at calls. The cellular companies promote their services through attractive advertisements in which the opposite gender talking with each other. Adolescents follow these trends and avail such offerings. Because of the excessive and superfluously usage of these packages, youngsters forget their responsibilities and their morals are being affected. By staying long at night calls with their friends, they can share many things that are unethical and beyond morality. These calls and frequent SMS encourage and support the immoral activities that are not the part of the civilized nations. There is a need to think about the severe circumstances that are prevailing in our society. Young generation needs to know the right usage of the modern technology and to stop exploiting cellular Economic services.

### **Limitations**

The study has some limitations and shortcomings. It is related to the young people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It is hardly impossible to collect the data from different areas of Pakistan because of time constraint. So the study was limited bounded to the youth in Pakistan. Future research should be conducted empirically and also examine the view point of adults towards modern sources of communication. Future research could use the probability samples in different cities of Pakistan and Asia as well so that it helps in generalization of the results to youth worldwide.

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## **The Sociology of Human Rights with Reference to Customary Practice in Rural Pakistan: The Social Structure of Violence**

### **Abstract**

*This paper deals with the sociology of human rights, particularly with reference to customary practices that exist in areas outside of the cities. We took the example of the 'exchange marriage' in rural Pakistan: the actors involved in the system of exchange and their interpretations of human rights within the structure itself and the existing social conditions of the society. Also, this paper highlights the mechanism of violence that is associated with these customary practices and the fabric of the vicious cycle of this violence. State-of-the-art field investigation on the exchange-marriage system reveals that it does not exist only in Pakistan, but that it has also been exercised on every continent of the world. With the advent of industrialization and individualization, this custom changed rapidly in the West. However, the system still prevails in many developing countries because of set social structures and a deep-rooted moral economy. Human rights activists in the world have not seriously taken into account the moral economy that is attached to such practices, mainly because of the cultural manifestation of the issue.*

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*The customary practices that shaped the structure and 'culture' of violence in Pakistan still remain strongly manifested in the society.*

### **Introduction and Research Approach**

Customary practices are the ways and rules that regulate social life in a society. These include (but are not limited to) family relations, marriage and the dissolution of marriage (in some instances, genital mutilation is also included). In this paper, the term 'customary practices' refer to exchange marriages, child marriages (Amnesty International Report, 2004), forced marriages and *vani/sawara* (compensation marriage). The focus of the debate in this article will be on the exchange-marriage system in Pakistan. In almost every society, customary practices are rated as functional in nature unless they remain in the interest of the society at large. Customs are in transition in many developed countries, but they remain relatively stagnant in developing societies. Since developed societies evaluate their customs by basing them on scientific parameters, they can choose to abandon archaic ones and/or adopt emerging customs. However, developing societies strongly depend upon traditional behaviour, which remains strictly bound to the customs.

This paper highlights the institution of *exchange marriages* (spouse selection on the basis of sister/daughter exchange for marriage) as an example of a customary practice. The custom of the exchange marriage is centuries old and is perhaps the oldest method and most civilized way to get married in primitive societies (Urlin, 1969; Molloy, 1986; Sabeen and Matheiu, 2007). Marriage by 'capture' and marriage by 'fight' were replaced by the exchange-marriage system. This then led to the marriage by 'price' and the 'arranged marriage by wealth' and then arranged marriage on the basis of a dowry. This system of marriage was common and still exists in some pockets among most continents. (see Mauss, 1954; Levi- Strauss, 1969; Bell, 1998; Milicic, 1998; Bollig, 1998). Aboriginal Australian (Bearman, 1997; Muller, 1980; Strathern, 1984), North and Latin American societies and a few parts of Europe (Molho, 1994; Heady, 2001; 2003) follow this system. In Africa, this system was replaced with the bride price and marriage by wealth. Asia (Tapper, 1991; 1989; 1993; Douglas and Schweizer, 1998; Dietrich, 1998), some rural parts of China (Cooper, 1983; 1993), India (Pfeffer, 1983) and Pakistan also follow these traditions. Societies in the Middle East as well as Algeria, Yemen, Palestine and other Middle-Eastern countries also follow this customary practice, as well as that of 'bride price' and 'bride wealth'. Interestingly, no part of the study revealed any

human rights violations: domestic violence, forced marriage or child marriage resulting from the system of exchange anywhere in the world except in South Asia (Dauer, 2002).

In Pakistan, this exchange system seems to be predominant in rural areas (Jacoby and Mansuri, 2008) and among some families in metropolitan cities. South Punjab, interior Sindh, Baluchistan and some parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkawah (KPK) carry out exchange marriages. However, 'bride price' and *vani/sawara* (compensation marriage) are more common in parts of KPK, Baluchistan and Sindh as compared to the province of Punjab. Niaz (2004) and the study done by Bullock, Clive and Khalid (1995) highlighted the health and mental problems in Pakistan that result from the system of exchange marriage. The study revealed medical and psychological disorders among women. However, Jacoby and Mansuri (2008) argued that the exchange marriage protects women's rights and is in the interest of the woman involved. Interestingly, they neglected the issues of personal choice, forced marriages, child marriages and domestic violence, all of which are associated with the system of exchange. On the other hand, some observations on the issue reveal serious human rights violations resulting from the system of exchange (Jilani and Ahmed, 2004 pp.75; Siddiqui, 2000; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 1996 pp.127).

Our emphasis in this paper remains on the debate of the sociology of human rights (how an actor perceives human rights) with reference to customary practices and whether an actor who follows the exchange-marriage custom is a conformist or non-conformist to human rights. Similarly, we highlight some aspects of the customary practices (especially exchange marriages in Pakistan) which promote conflict and then violence and explain how they create a 'culture' of violence.

### **Research Method**

I conducted my fieldwork in the town of Kabirwala (southern Punjab, Pakistan) during 2005 for a six-month period, for two months in 2006 and again, in 2007-2008, to verify the findings, as part of my PhD studies. The Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was adopted for data collection and analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1965; Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1992; Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Neumann, 1997; Creswell, 2003; Larossa, 2005). A theoretical sampling as per the GTM's guidelines (Glaser, 1992) was followed. Since gender segregation, carried out generally in Pakistan and particularly in rural areas, is an important custom in Pakistan, the

research team conformed to this norm. As such, a female colleague (Abida Sharif) was requested to assist in collecting the data from the female respondents. Otherwise, the data would have remained without gender sensitization. The research team obtained consent from the respondents while explaining the research objectives. Many of the respondents were willing to give interviews. However, two female respondents declined the request and were not willing to give interviews. Twenty-four case histories, based on fifty individuals (the couple, their parents and marriage-age children) were conducted in order to obtain individual perspectives. The research team also engaged in eight focus-group discussions comprised of persons of different ages, genders and generations to glean an in-depth knowledge of the issue. We also collected data from representatives of four non-government organizations (NGOs) who were working on human rights issues as well as lawyers dealing with cases of exchange marriage and four religious scholars. We compiled open, selective and axial coding in order to define the concept, themes and sequence of the themes.

### **Findings**

As indicated above, this article focuses mainly on the exchange-marriage custom. Therefore, we intend to share our findings based on this custom. We focus on three brief case histories derived from the data in order to highlight the human rights problems that result from the system of the exchange marriage. The first case history reflects a simple exchange based on the “generalized exchange” as Bearman (1997) found to be practised among the aboriginal Australians. This reciprocity is also similar to Shalin’s (1972) “positive and balanced” reciprocity. The second case history is close to Shalin’s (1972) notion of “negative reciprocity whereas the third case history that is presented does not fall into any theoretical model or instance of empirical evidence in the existing literature. This is a unique finding which may be termed as a human rights violation due to the system of the exchange marriage.

The following is a brief description of these three case histories.

#### **Case History No. 1**

Riaz (a male) and Nawaz (another male) were parallel cousins and both had sisters with *watta satta* (exchange marriage) engagement from childhood, soon after their births. After they finished their secondary school education, their parents decided that their children should get married. Later, Nawaz opened a commercial store in a

local town, while Riaz was without a job. Nawaz offered to open another store for him with his savings and then both were sufficiently earning. Consequently, Riaz gave his share of land to Nawaz's brother so that he could also earn sufficiently. However, their sisters, who were exchanged, quarrelled with each other, which created problems for them. The parents of both couples have tried to settle their issues. Otherwise, both couples do not have any major problems apart from the quarrelling between the two women each of whom was married on the basis of exchange.

**Case No. 2**

Alim and Qadeer were close friends and maternal cousins. Qadeer and his mother were interested in his marrying Alim's sister (Nasim) in exchange for Qadeer's sister (Najma). Alim was not interested in this marriage and refused this offer, however his uncles and aunts forced him and his family to marry on the basis of exchange; Alim had to accept the marriage. After the marriage, problems started between the two families. Qadeer beat Nasim when she did not cook the lunch on time. As a result, Alim was forced to reciprocate with Najma. Consequently, the bond of friendship was broken. This started a series of conflicting and violent events which led to the dissolution of the marriage for each of the couples after only two years of marriage.

**Case No. 3**

Alia (a female) and Naeem (a male) were paternal cousins and their parents were in dispute with each other due to land-ownership issues. Both of them had exchanged engagements from childhood with different cousins whom they did not like. Both Alia and Naeem gained admission to attend a university in Multan and they lived there in a hostel. They fell in love with each other and secretly got married in Multan. When Alia's parents found out about their marriage, they became angry because the couple violated the exchange-marriage norm and they proceeded to kill their own daughter. They also tried to attack Naeem but he managed to escape. Now, both families have been quarrelling for years and revenge-taking constantly occurs between them. Alia's family (brothers) have been searching for Naeem in order to take revenge for their sister's marriage to him; Naeem still remains in hiding ever since the killing of his wife.

***Watta Satta (exchange marriage): Triplicate Ties***

Literally, the word *watta satta* means “to throw a stone/give a gift and return it with the same (or with more) force. It means that if someone gives something to someone else, this is reciprocated with the same zeal (as indicated in Case No. 1 above where Riaz and Nawaz reciprocated with each other). However, if someone hurts someone else, he receives the same response or a worse response from the second party. In Case No. 2, Alim and Qadeer reciprocated negatively with each other. As per the rule of the ‘game’, both had no other option but to carry out a negative reciprocity. Sahlin (1972) also found negative reciprocity in agrarian societies where they follow similar rules related to the exchange system.

Exchange marriages in South Punjab have similar meanings and have both a positive or negative connotation, which may lead to revenge. If a family gives a daughter/sister to the other family (among cousins only), the second family reciprocates immediately or may make a commitment to reciprocate a female as soon as they have a daughter/sister for this. However, this is limited only to cousins and intermarriages with other castes or clans are virtually impossible.

Thus, the *watta satta* has triplicate ties within or among the immediate families. We will explain these three, triplicated social ties of the spouse involved in the exchange marriage and the dichotomy of these social ties within the system of the exchange.

#### **Spouses’ Relationships With the Family of Procreation: Loyalty and Love**

The marriages of ‘exchanged couples’ and ‘arranged couples’ are marked by loyalty. A husband/wife has to show loyalty and love to his/her family of procreation. Deviation from this custom brings negative reciprocity to the person (see Sahlin 1972), whereas the conforming actor is always appreciated and receives support from the relatives. However, non-conforming actors are rejected, banned and sometimes even victims of violence. The relatives and community label the deviant person as a “*na ferman*” (non-conformist). Therefore, a person consciously spends most of his life showing loyalty and love towards the family of procreation or the family of orientation.

#### **Spouses’ Relationships With the Family of Orientation: Loyalty, Fairness and Clashes**

The family of orientation expects their son/daughter-in-law to show loyalty and respect to his/her in-laws. This family has high expectations because they have

invested (in the form of a family member) in a person who will have to reciprocate one way or another to the family of orientation. This person must be loyal and fair to his/her family of orientation. If this turns out not to be the case, then the family of orientation will ask their own son/daughter (who has been exchanged in the marriage) to be disloyal to their family of orientation. Understandably, this custom generates conflict.

### **Intimate Relationships: *Sharam* (shame)**

Intimate relationships between spouses are always kept unseen. They remain strictly private and are never on show as is the case in Western societies. Contrary to the West, where loyalty between spouses counts more than that shown to the family of orientation or even the family of procreation, the spouses are always dependent upon their respective families in Pakistan. To exhibit or 'show off' the love between the spouses is considered to be "*besharam*" (shame) and has negative values attached to it in rural areas of the country. Loyalty to the family of procreation counts more than that for the family of orientation or the relationship with the spouse. Again, non-conformity to these social values leads to serious conflict and violence among families.

### **The Normative Structure: The Generation of the Seeds of Conflict**

Relationships between the spouses and families involved in the exchange marriage (either material or non-material) as well as between the two families do not always function well. Any mistake, though at times minor, causes disputes in one couple, affecting the second couple with immediate effect as a result of this normative structure. The conflict/disagreement between the couples or their respective families shapes the conflict and may lead to a division among close relatives and the clan at large. Therefore, the families of both spouses will try their best to settle the conflict at the domestic level (see also Versa-Sanso 1999 and Razzak and Durocher 2005). However, these conflicts are always open to violence and, consequently, become a matter that amounts to a violation of human rights.

### **Conflicts in the System of Exchange Marriage: Human Rights Violations**

Violations of human rights are common within the exchange-marriage system (similarly as in other customary practices). In Case No. 3 (presented above) Alia and Naeem had to face the problems which are closed to the notion of human rights violation. Conflict between the couple often leads to verbal, symbolic, economic and

physical violence. This violence is not only limited to the female, as males are also victims of this tradition. Additionally, child marriages, forced marriages and domestic violence are common within the system of exchange marriages. From my data, I found that both genders were the victims of violence as indicated by one of the female respondents who informed: "Look! My husband punished me last month and my brother, in revenge for me, punished not only his wife, but he wounded my husband, too. Whenever there is fight between us (husband and wife), it has serious effects on my brother, his wife and my *susrali* (family-in-law)". A lawyer told me: "Both families retain the right to fight each other with available resources. They abuse, hurt each other and try to damage their property when they are in conflict with each other."

A male respondent, when asked whether he keeps in mind that they are violating human rights, replied: "What do you mean by human rights?...If someone abuses, beats or hurts us, is it not our right to protect ourselves?...We protect only our family (brother/ sister) which is our prime responsibility". Kalim, another male respondent reported: "human rights have nothing to do with our family affairs. It is not our practice; we do not know about human rights stuff..." When asked what human rights are, Asif (a male) replied: "No, I do not know and neither do I need to know about them. This is not related to our familial affairs". Another respondent, Sajida, who was educated, explained: "Nobody knows any humanity or human values while fighting....The notion of human rights becomes irrelevant when things are becoming complicated with familial affairs". Similarly, a male respondent reported: "If my sister, who is exchanged is the victim of violence, then why should I not take revenge?" Violence is a deep-rooted manifestation and part of the social structure of the society. Violent, revenge-taking behaviour has become part of the latent behaviour of the community, so much so that the community is unable to identify the violence.

### **Forced /Child Marriages: Domestic Violence**

Upon examining the data, it became clear that domestic violence, abuse and physical violence, are all part and parcel of the exchange-marriage system. Forced/child marriages are specifically important in light of the violence in the system of exchange. For instance, Saleem, a male respondent elaborated: "My sister had not agreed to marry our cousin, my father slept and forced her to keep silent and follow the instructions to get married. She was engaged from her childhood and she is

married now on the basis of *watta satta* and has three children.” He further explained: “I was not interested in marrying my cousin, but my father forced me to marry her. Now, I am living with a forced marriage....Although my wife and I do not have a good relationship with each other, we still have to live together because it was the decision of my father”. A male respondent, Mehboob, reported: “Parents are the right persons to decide about the “*rishta*” (spouse selection) because they are more experienced and they know what is good and not good for their children.”

Domestic violence resulting from this customary practice is perceived as a justified act of the parents or spouses. Furthermore, the frequency of violence is deeply penetrated in the structure of the society. Nonetheless, the offending actor involved in the exchange marriage hardly sees this practice of violence as a violation of human rights.

#### **Exchange Marriage and ‘Tit For Tat’: The Chain Reaction of Violence**

The term “exchange marriage” refers to equal reciprocity: either with positive or negative return. The negative reciprocity generates a chain reaction of conflict which leads to violence in Pakistan. Contrary to Jacoby and Ghazala’s (2008) findings, my data revealed that, due to this kind of marriage, the system contains more negative reciprocity as compared to positive reciprocity. For instance, Akbar had a difficult relationship with his wife (Sadan) and they fought with each other on minor domestic issues. As a result, the brother of Sadan, Saghir, fought with his wife (Namu) to take revenge for his sister. This violence did not stop at this point; the brother of the first couple took sides and the mother of Saghir took sides with her son. Consequently, all close relatives started taking sides with either party and a never-ending chain reaction of violence began. Akbar beat his wife (Sadan) and in revenge, Saghir beat his wife (Namu) who is the sister of Akbar. Close relatives tried their best to resolve the conflict by forcing both parties to stop the violence, as they knew that this conflict could reach them. Owing to the intervention of elders (grandparents), this came to an end after six months. Though such a particular conflict may end, it can still generate another wave of violence in the future.

Exchange marriages are often seen as a chain reaction of violence and a source of never-ending violence (Zaman 2011). This type of violence is different from one region to another. However, the notion of reciprocity (give and take) remains constant. There is hardly a stage of equal giving and taking that does not lead to conflict and then violence in customary practices.

### **Customs: Social Networking**

As mentioned above, exchange marriages do not always cause problems, but have strong reasons to persist. The system of exchange marriage creates an alliance (in Levi-Strauss's 1969 notion), and mutual welfare (Jacoby and Ghazala 2008). It forms a social network where all cousins and relatives are woven in a single web of relationships. They are the "*shreek*" (shareholder/ relative or party) of the positive as well as the negative results of the relationship. These cousins remain closely attached to each other through such marriages. The system of the exchange inherits security (Zaman 2008).

A male respondent reported:

"We marry among our cousins because we maintain our close relationships with each other. This creates security and maintains the purity of our blood relations. Otherwise, if we have to marry out of the clan or caste, then people will give us "*tanay*" (abuse) because we are not *khandani* (pure family). This may lead to a segregation of our close relatives.... We will become weak and others (enemies) can easily hurt us.... We cannot allow others to attack us due to our weakness."

Keeping in view the above-highlighted fact that exchange marriages include a strong notion of alliance formation, mutual welfare, social security and insecurity, the system also strengthens social networking. Such social networking brings some positive rewards to the clans and families involved.

### **Exchange Marriages and Tradition: Social Exchange and a Moral Economy**

Customary practices (especially exchange marriages) in rural Pakistan have a strong notion of 'moral economy'. The actors are knitted into the network and remain obliged to follow strict moral values upon marrying close relatives on the basis of exchange. If anyone violates this norm, the other community members will make them conform. An actor always keeps in mind: "*Log kia kahain gai!* (What will people say?!)." The research team met a medical doctor during my fieldwork. He was married to his cousin on the basis of exchange. We asked him about his education in the medical field and the fact that marriages between cousins are more genetically problematic as compared to non-cousin marriages. Moreover, exchange marriages create difficulties but he is still married to his cousin on the basis of exchange. He replied in this way:

“Look! I know all of these facts, but you know our family values are strict. If I had not married my cousin, my sister (who was exchanged since her childhood) would not have married her cousin either. She would become a ‘victim’ of my education and she would be treated as a stigmatized lady. No one else from my family would have taken her *rishta* and my parents would not have married her to anyone else. I just tried to save my sister’s life...If I had not married my cousin, then people would have been skeptical about giving education to their children by thinking that, after education, the children become *nafarman* (deviant).”

The moral economy prevails strongly in the rural areas of Pakistan and it is deeply rooted within the social structure of the community. People feel comfortable with keeping this moral economy and they follow shared values.

### **Theoretical Interpretation**

Social scientists, (especially advocates of structuralist and functionalist paradigms), working on the field analyses of such customary practices on the basis of subjective interruptions have tried to find some logic to these customs. Levi-Strauss is a prominent structuralist who found that the exchange marriage is a system of social exchange and that the marriages are like grammatical rules that change as per the need of any given society. However, the conflict paradigm criticizes the custom’s functional perspective. They are advocates of humanist values (ideally speaking). This paradigm is popular with the human rights activists in their perspective of the system of exchange.

Taking rationality into account, the ‘interactionism’ paradigm places more emphasis upon the working nature of the customs within the given social conditions of those particular customs. Bourdieu (1984) found that exchange marriages include a mechanism of violence exchange. In his view, this kind of violence, which is the result of customary practices, is accepted and perceived as ‘legitimate’ violence.

Two forces are working in parallel in the system of exchange: the exchange mechanism and the moral economy of the exchange-marriage system (Thompson, 1971; 1993; Lindholm, 1982; 1988 and Archer, 1996). The system is based on exchange: give and take. This ‘give and take’ is not limited to material things, but rather it is an exchange of values. The exchange mechanism includes the women themselves who have been exchanged for marriage, gift exchange, welfare and security. Non-material exchange is the exchange of appreciation, honour (Hussain,

2005), respect, social networking and conformity within the values system. This exchange has negative connotations as well: mutual threat, deterrence and social insecurity.

Consequently, material and non-material exchange form a 'moral economy'. This moral economy is based on mutual reciprocity, obligation, trust and alliance formation, social support and respect/honour of the value system. If one does not conform to this morality, it leads to a serious moral vacuum and consequently to moral decay. However, if there are ways to overcome and restructure the moral economy, then there is space to bring transformation and social change to the system of exchange marriages. Nevertheless, the option of initiating social transformation depends upon resources being available and opportunities presenting themselves within the structure of the exchange system.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Customary practices prevail strongly as demonstrated in the above data. I will now give a comparative view of customary practices both in the developed and developing world.

#### **Customary Practices in the Developed World: Flexibility in Transition**

The developed world is able to restructure its behaviour on the basis of rationality. The actor is socialised in such a way that he/she remains open to transition and social change. The West developed a new morality along with the development of industrialization. Western societies opened new notions of human values and individualization alongside scientific development. Thus, the West came to the conclusion that an exchange marriage is problematic. It gradually abandoned this type of marriage and transformed it into the "autonomous" marriage. Love, affiliation, monetary interest and physical attraction count more in the Western marriage system as compared to arranged or exchanged marriages. This has led to the formulation of a moral economy of human rights, individual rights and the right to exercise one's choice. Thus, the developed world is flexible to social change, which is paradoxically contrasted with developing countries where social change is viewed as an alien value and people remain ambivalent (at best) to this value.

#### **Customary Practices in Developing Countries: The Conservation Approach**

Contrary to the developed world, developing societies remain close to tradition and follow customary practices. For instance, Meek (1936) wanted to keep the then-dying system of the exchange marriage alive and see it exist as a useful value in Africa. Developing countries are conscious of following traditional values and try their best to conserve them. Exchange marriages still prevail in India (Böck 1998, Böck and Rao 2000, Kapila 2004), Pakistan (Niaz 2004, Jacoby and Mansuri 2008), Algeria (Bourdieu 1984, 1998), Yemen, Palestine, Israel and aboriginal communities in Latin America, North America and Australia as a result of the conservation of approach taken to customary practices (Molloy 1986). Customary practices are observed as being carried out in different parts of the developing world and among aboriginal communities. This approach has led to a stagnant social structure (Merton 1941, 1968) and fabric of society. Although there are many human rights violations within the system of exchange marriages, still they prevail in developing countries.

#### **Customs in Pakistan: Symbolism and the ‘Culture’ of Violence**

Pakistan is a special case when speaking of customary practices (keeping in view the case of exchange marriages). It has a symbolic ‘culture’ attached to its customary practices. For instance, the purity of blood is viewed as important. To marry among cousins is important in terms of symbolic values. The perception of “What will people say?” if someone marries outside the family/clan/caste is a vitally important and influential notion. Similarly, in developing countries, a person must maintain the symbolic values: respect, honour and minimal shame within the marriage system, at any cost (Zaman 2009). Owing to these symbolic values, customary practices have strong roots in the society.

In Pakistan, the system has formed a ‘culture’ of violence resulting from the customary practices. The actors are socialized in such a way that they accept the violence and reciprocate it to others. As the state is unable to perceive and/or understand this structure and culture of violence, it (the violence) has penetrated the society and has become an important aspect of the normative structure and culture of Pakistani society.

#### **Customs and Human Rights: The Structure of Violence**

Customary practices (such as exchange marriages) involve serious human rights violations. These customs form a social structure of violence from which no one can

escape. Forced and child marriages are an example of this violence. Bourdieu (1998:192) rightly observed that “legitimate violence” prevails as a result of the system of exchange marriages.

[Such relationships] “are interchangeable ways of performing the same function, with the “choice” between overt violence and gentle, hidden violence depending on the relative strengths of the two parties at a particular time, and on the degree of integration and ethical integrity of the arbitrating group....symbolic violence, the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety – in short, all of the virtues honoured by the code of honour – cannot fail to be seen as the most Economic mode of domination, i.e. the mode which best corresponds to the economy of the system.”

In a nutshell, human rights activists have to think about how the social structure of violence, which is the result of customary practices that have penetrated into the normative structure of the society, can be transformed. Customs can be channelized in such a way as to reduce the occurrence of human rights violations. So far, the activists have been able to change the developed world’s moral values. However, they are unable to transform the customary practices in the developing countries (like Pakistan), mainly because they do not understand the grounded reality and are unable to change the moral economy of these societies. They have to understand what the mechanisms of the customary practices in the developing countries are and how these could be transformed to reduce human rights violations, or to eliminate them completely, which seems to be virtually impossible.

Customary practices, in some cases, are important sources for the creation and formation of a social structure and culture that is prone to accept violence. Individual emancipation seems to be an important step towards the protection of individual as well as collective rights. Human rights can be protected along with an understanding of the grounded reality of the developing world. Since, grounding realities do not shape another direction, the protection of human rights will be a question in the developing countries. Nonetheless, the future research on spousal relations, changing family patterns and debate of the individual emancipation still is needed.

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