

**Biannual**

ISSN 1813-9892

**JOURNAL OF  
GENDER &  
SOCIAL ISSUES**

Spring 2015 Volume 14 Number 1



*Fatima Jinnah Women University*  
The Mall, Rawalpindi-Pakistan

### **Editor-in-Chief**

**Prof. Dr. Samina Amin Qadir**  
Fatima Jinnah Women University,  
Rawalpindi

### **Editorial Committee**

**Prof. Dr. Naheed Zia Khan**  
Fatima Jinnah Women University,  
Rawalpindi

**Dr. Rukhsana Hasan**  
Fatima Jinnah Women University,  
Rawalpindi

**Ms. Rakhshanda Pervaz Janjua**  
Fatima Jinnah Women University,  
Rawalpindi

### **Editorial Advisory Board**

**Prof. Dr. Michael M. Horowitz**  
Binghamton University, Binghamton NY. USA

**Prof. Dr. Maya K. David**  
University of Malaya,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Prof. Dr. Tamara Sonn**  
College of William and Mary, Virginia  
Williamsburg, Virginia. USA

**Prof. Shaheen Sardar Ali**  
University of Warwick, UK

**Prof. Mona Siddique**  
Glasgow University, Glasgow, Scotland

**Dr. Collette Morrow**  
Associate Professor of English,  
Purdue University, Calumet USA

**Dr. Douglas Brooks**  
Texas A&M University, Austin, USA

**Dr. Evanthia Lyons**  
University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey  
United Kingdom

**Dr. Kamran Asdar Ali**  
University of Texas, Austin, USA

**Dr. Heather Hindman**  
University of Texas, Austin, USA

### **Dr. Linda Pritchards**

Prof. of History & Member  
Dept. of Women's & Gender Studies  
Eastern Michigan University,  
Michigan, USA

**Dr. Elizabeth Jones Hemenway**  
Director Women Study & Gender Studies  
Loyola University, Chicago, USA

**Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad**  
Riphah International University,  
Islamabad

**Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui**  
Lahore School of Economics, Lahore

**Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kausar**  
Punjab University, Lahore

**Dr. Zafar Ishaq Ansari**  
International Islamic University,  
Islamabad

**Dr. AI-Ghazali**  
International Islamic University,  
Islamabad

**Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz Asif**  
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

**Dr. Zia ul Haq**  
Allama Iqbal Open University,  
Islamabad

**Dr. Riffat Haque**  
Allama Iqbal Open University,  
Islamabad

**Dr. Surriya Shari**  
GIFT University, Gujranwala

**Dr. Khalid Zaheer**  
LUMS, Lahore Cantt

### **Subscription Rates**

Students Rs. 200.00 per copy

Others Rs. 250.00 per copy

Annual Subscription (National)

Individual Rs.300.00

Institutional Rs.400.00

Annual Subscription (International)

Individual US 0.00

Institutional U ~ 0.00

Printed in March 2016

ISSN 1813-9892

**Biannual**

**JOURNAL OF**

**GENDER &**

**SOCIAL ISSUES**

Spring 2015 Volume 14 Number 1



**Contents**

<b>S.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Multilingualism And Cross-gender Language Proclivity: A Sociolinguistic Perspective Of Pakistan  Tenzila Khan, Muhammad Imran, Mehmood Ahmad Azhar, Zia Ilyas	01
2	Bargaining Female Desires: A Critical Study Of Female Sexuality And Patriarchal Convergences In Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman  Fariha Chaudhary, Dr. Qamar Khushi	11
3	Representation Of Women: A Corpus Based Critical Discourse Analysis Of News Columns Of The Daily Dawn  Muhammad Kamran Musa, Dr. Filza Waseem	27
4	Psychosocial Impact Of Male Migration On The Women Left Behind  Maria M. Malik, Raiha Aftab	43
5	'Iaj', The Concept For Honour, Shame And Modesty Of A Woman In Indian Popular Culture  Azher Hameed Qamar	69
6	Issues In Ethnographic Research: Female Researcher's Dilemma In A Rural Setting  Dr. Rukhsana Hassan	85



## **MULTILINGUALISM AND CROSS-GENDER LANGUAGE PROCLIVITY: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF PAKISTAN**

### *Abstract*

*Gender, being a substantial dynamic in establishing the philosophy of language use, language ideology and difference in the process of language preference, is an irrefutable and prospective disposition of a given socio-linguistic fiber. Present study aims at investigating and analyzing the discernible socio-linguistic phenomenon of language preferences exhibited by varied gender categories in Pakistan. It is directed towards analyzing how gender along with other social factors plays its role in determining linguistic attitudes in social mosaic of Pakistan. Over two hundred people were chosen through convenient sampling technique from different cities of Pakistan in order to explore their opinion regarding given issue. Results of the study reveal that women tend to associate themselves with emblematic capital, English, for their societal standing and repute.*

**Key Words:** *Multilingualism, gender, language choice, ethnic ideology, social paradigm*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There exists a pre-determined correlation between an individual's language choice and his or her social identity and status. Language is an indicator and it reinforces an individual's position in social paradigm and signals shared social outlook. Language different genders that are at the disposal of more than two languages, as in the case of

---

#### **Tenzila Khan**

Lecturer, English Department

Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Pakistan, Email: tenzila2012@gmail.com

#### **Muhammad Imran**

Visiting Lecturer, English Department

University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, Email: imranbf1000@yahoo.com

#### **Mehmood Ahmad Azhar**

Chairperson/HOD

Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Pakistan, Email: dr\_azhar1@yahoo.com

#### **Zia Ilyas**

Assistant Professor

Govt. Post Graduate College, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: ziawarraich@gmail.com

Pakistan, where different languages are arranged in a hierarchical fashion inchoice remains an important phenomenon to be explored especially in the context of accordance with various functions and roles. English is being exercised as the official language of the state (Rahman, 2002), language of instruction at graduate and post graduate level, media, science and bureaucracy, while Urdu is playing the role of the national language of Pakistan. It is fundamentally the phenomenon of multilingualism that furnishes individuals with multiple choices in terms of language that is in turn connected to the trend of language shift and language maintenance/ language loss. Fishman (1977) observed the use of various language varieties by a multilingual in accordance with corresponding functions.

The current study explores the above discussed phenomenon of language choice with regard to different gender categories; male and female. It is meant to show the significance of gender in shaping the stances towards English and Urdu. The socio economic turbulence in Pakistani society corresponds to the differences regarding social and linguistic ideologies and attitudes of people especially different genders; male and female. Coates (1986) asserts that the approach of difference signifies a sense of egalitarianism and impartiality towards both genders, under consideration, as belonging to varied' sub-cultures' as they are normally realized from very beginning of their life circles. This practicing phenomenon gives birth to different communicative techniques and choices, adopted by males and females in their speech. Deborah Tannen (2006) supports above stated point of view of Coates and makes a comparison between language and cultural differences in the context of varied gender categories. He emphasizes that given gender based dissimilarities are all-encompassing across social and electronic media and tête-à-tête communications, etc. Bilaniuk (2010) is of the view that though linguistic attitudes are affected by gendered patterns, ethnicity and political factors yet the fact remains that it is difficult to put conclusive explanation regarding relations amid linguistic ideology, social patterns and prototypes of gender and ethnic identities.

Calvert (2002) argues that identity development, commencing at formative years of an individual, represents a vital aspect of his/her life till adolescent age. Language embodies the social and cultural beliefs in terms of identity across gender. Self-disclosure is another important aspect of the phenomenon of language choices made by individuals belonging to varied genders. Self-disclosure engrosses receptiveness and predilection (Borchers, 1999) and is all about giving out facts about one's life that she/he usually would not otherwise prefer to share with others. Derlega (1993) asserts that individuals belonging to different gender categories, exhibiting totally opposite opinions regarding the phenomenon of self-disclosure, made entirely different language choices while put in a situation where they had to develop a given level of familiarity and confidence with others. Lambert (in Wardhaugh, 1987) details

the instances regarding bilingual (English and French) male and female speakers in Canada, who opted for one language in one given situation while employed other one for a different situation.

Politeness is another worth noticing aspect in the context of language choices across the gender. Generally, it is assumed that women make use of relatively more polite linguistic expressions as compared with their male counterparts. In this respect, Lakoff (1975) acknowledges three distinct kinds of politeness: formal, deference, and camaraderie. He is of the view that speech of female is replete with formal and deference aspects of being courteous while camaraderie is a characteristic of male language. Above discussed code choosing difference among varied genders may correspond to difference at a comparatively bigger social canvas. O'Barr and Atkins (1980) identified that involvement of hedges and tag questions in female speech renders their verbal communication a frail kind of speech. Michael, Liaw, Muthusamy & Veeravagu (2010) conducted a research in Malaysia in order to analyze varied conversation styles among members from different genders and found striking differences in the usage of fillers and qualifiers.

### **Objective**

The basic objective of the study is:

- To explore the opinion of people about the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity in Pakistan.

### **Research Hypothesis**

H01. There is no statistical significant difference between the opinion of varied genders about the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity in Pakistan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The study was designed to examine the opinion of people about the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity in Pakistan. The data was collected from Lahore, a big metropolitan city of Pakistan. The study was executed through a survey in order to find out the gender diversity over the said issue because surveys are designed to find out the opinion of people about a particular area or issue as Dornyei (2007: p. 29) pointed out that “quantitative research was seen to offer a structured and highly regulated way of achieving a macro-perspective of the overarching trends in the world”.

Furthermore, the numerical data was produced via statistical analysis. The quantitative approach was chosen to avoid the biasness because people can be subjective in their open remarks as Colton and Covert (2007) said “surveys are typically used to gather factual information or to assess attitudes and beliefs”. Over two hundred people were chosen conveniently to find out the opinions of the people regarding given issue.

Total	<	Male
250		125
		Female
		125

The actual status of multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity could be explored by analyzing the opinions of people. For that purpose, a questionnaire consisting of 13 items was designed on two point's scale (1 for English and 2 for Urdu). The questionnaire was prepared by the researchers by deriving ideas from literature review and a pilot study was also conducted in order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire. For that purpose, the questionnaire was distributed by the researchers among some fellows and students of Masters of Linguistics at Lahore Leads University, Lahore; however, their responses were not included in the part of sample of population.

The researchers also went to public places and other universities located in Lahore in order to get data from the respondents of the study. The researchers also explained the nature and purpose of research to their respondents and also provided them proper guidance where required.

## RESULTS

After collecting data, it was organized and firstly t- test was applied to test out the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity. To find out the difference in opinion of various genders and for the further verification of rejected null hypothesis frequency, percentage, and mean tests were applied. The numerical data for the analysis was obtained by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version (16.0).

**Table no. 3.1** (t-test) to show the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity.

Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std..Error Mean	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2- tailed)
Male	125	21.21	2.454	.219	3.281	248	.001
Female	125	19.60	2.148	.192			

Table no. 3.1 shows the gender wise opinion regarding multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity. The computed t value is  $3.281 > 1.96$  (critical value) at 0.05 level of significance. The computed significant value is 0.001 which is lesser than the P value (0.05). By using t-test for independent variable gender, it was found that there is significant gender wise difference between opinion of varied genders about the multilingualism and cross-gender language proclivity. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table no. 3.2** to show the differences in opinions at cross-gender level about their language proclivity.

Sr#	Statements	Overall Language Proclivity in %		Difference at Cross Gender Level in Numbers				Mean	Std.	Difference Shown by Mean and its Std. Between Male and Female			
		Eng.	Urdu	Male=125		Female=125				Male Mean	Std	Female Mean	Std
				En g.	Urd u	En g.	Urd u						
1	Language preferred for public use	39.2 %	60.8%	25	100	75	50	1.61	.489	1.82	.389	1.40	.492
2	Language used with family	5.2 %	94.8%	5	120	10	115	1.95	.222	1.96	.197	1.94	.246
3	Language to be used in class	67.6 %	32.4%	60	65	100	25	1.32	.482	1.49	.502	1.16	.368
4	Language to read literary writings	44.8 %	55.2%	45	80	60	65	1.55	.469	1.63	.484	1.47	.501
5	Language to make jokes	5.6 %	94.4%	10	115	5	120	1.94	.230	1.92	.272	.197	.177
6	Language for friends	31.6 %	68.4%	25	100	55	70	1.68	.466	1.78	.413	1.58	.495
7	Language for text message/ email	80.8 %	19.2%	100	25	100	25	1.19	.359	1.17	.375	1.22	.413
8	Language for cinema	31.6 %	68.4%	60	65	60	65	1.48	.501	1.51	.502	1.46	.500
9	Language to read newspaper	40%	60%	40	85	60	65	1.60	.491	1.68	.468	1.52	.502
10	Language employed at work	45.6 %	54.4%	45	80	70	55	1.54	.499	1.65	.480	1.44	.498
11	Language preferred for learning	85.6 %	14.4%	115	10	85	40	1.14	.352	1.08	.272	1.21	408
12	Language to listen to music	36.8 %	63.2%	40	85	45	80	1.63	.483	1.66	.474	1.60	.492
13	Language they feel self-assured in	25.2 %	74.8%	20	105	45	80	1.75	.435	1.86	.353	1.64	.482

## RESULTS

- Most of the people 60.8% preferred Urdu for public use whereas only 39.2% favored English.
- Majority of the people 94.8% wanted to use Urdu as a medium of communication with their family members whereas only 5.2% respondents were found to be in favor of English. It is one of the strongest grounds of Urdu where people wanted to use their national language.
- Only 32.4% people desired to communicate in Urdu with their class fellows in educational institutes whereas 67.6% wanted to prefer English for that. It is almost opposing to usage of Urdu while communicating with their family members.
- Only 44.8% people like to read English writers' work whereas 55.2% prefer Urdu literature in their leisure time.
- Only 5.6% people liked to use English while having jokes/fun with their fellows and 94.4% samples preferred Urdu to make fun with their fellows. It is another most dominant area of Urdu among the people.
- Only 31.6% people like to use English with their friends whereas 68.4% prefer Urdu.
- Majority of the people 80.8% preferred English for text messages/email and only 19.2% preferred Urdu for that.
- 31.6% preferred to go for seeing English movie in the cinemas and 68.4% liked Urdu.
- 40% people liked to read English newspaper whereas 60% preferred Urdu newspaper.
- 45.6% people preferred to use English language at their work place whereas 54.4% preferred Urdu language.
- Majority of the people 85.6% preferred English for their education/learning and only 14.4% preferred Urdu for that purpose. It is one of the most dominant areas of English language. This result is also showing that people give preference to Urdu language for their recreational purposes but not for education and academic purposes.
- Only 36.8% people took pleasure in English music whereas 63.2% preferred Urdu music.
- Only 25.2% people were found who felt themselves self-assured in English while communicating with their fellows and in their social activities whereas 74.8% felt themselves self-assured in Urdu.

## DISCUSSION

The results indicated that most of the male preferred Urdu language while majority of females preferred English; they may be status-conscious or less confident in native language or may be more confident in second language. The data also revealed that males chose Urdu to English because they felt less confident in English, to express themselves while females brought English into play in their communication because they are more conscious of formal setting and decorum of class whereas more males cherished Urdu literature because of less proficiency and interest in English literature, as compared with females. The results also illustrate that more males preferred Urdu to English in order to create informality with friends; they also felt more fluent while fewer females preferred Urdu because of being informal to friends and more expressive. And almost same results were found when they were enquired regarding entertainment.

Mostly, males were reported preferring Urdu newspaper because of their better fluency of reading Urdu and conceiving direct meaning as compared with females whereas while conversing males favored Urdu because they deemed themselves less communicative and at-convenience in English language while more females preferred English language because they depicted themselves more ceremonial and status-conscious. Here, the most worth mentioning point is that most males and females cherish learning English language because they desire to be good at it to gain confidence as it is a status symbol and global language but they were found unable to express themselves because they did not feel themselves enough competent in English. However, overall results indicated that Females exhibited more preference for English, considered as status symbol in Pakistan, at various levels and areas; i.e. learning, talking, joking, between family, etc. This shows that females are more status conscious and more particular about choosing language of expressing. In this connection, effect of the society cannot be ignored because society treats females differently and they are restricted to follow certain roles.

Both genders feel more confident in speaking a politically dominant language. For language selection, speakers appreciate using a language which they find rich in social, political and economic values. It demonstrates that individuals are pre-occupied with a pre-determined set of social constructs through which they ally themselves with a particular language in a given social framework.

## CONCLUSION

Both genders are in a sub-conscious war against each other to gain superiority in multilingual Pakistani society. Women are more persistent in shielding their

established social linguistic traditions while men are less flexible in attitudes towards other languages whereas women are more inclined towards the traits of prestige and status consciousness. They are more inclined towards associating such traits of intelligence, cultural awareness, authoritative and politeness with English as it has evolved as a globally dominant lingua-franca for last couple of decades. It reveals that women tend to associate themselves with emblematic capital for their societal standing and repute.

## REFERENCES

- Borchers, T. (1999). "*Self-Disclosure.*" *Interpersonal Communication*. Allyn & Bacon. Retrieved 2011-11-23.
- Calvert, S. L. (2002). *Identity Construction on the Internet*. In S. L. Calvert, A. B. Jordan & R. R. Cocking (Eds.), *Children in the Digital Age: Influences of Electronic Media on Development* (pp. 57 - 70). Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Coates, Jennifer (1986). *Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language*. London: Longman.
- Colton, D. & Covert, W. R. (2007). *Designing and Constructing Instruments for Social Research and Evaluation: First edition*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Derlega, V (1993). *Self-Disclosure* (Vol. 5). Norfolk: Old Dominion University.
- Dornyei, Z. (2011) *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Fishman, J. A. (1977). *Readings in The Sociology of Language*. New York: Mouton Publishers.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Women's Place*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Michael, A. S., S. C. Liaw, Muthusamy, C. & Veeravagu, J. (2010). Gendered-linked differences in speech styles: Analysing linguistic and gender in the Malaysian context. *Cross-cultural Communication*. Vol.6 No.1 2010.

- Rahman, T. (2002). *Language, ideology and power: Language-learning among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Tannen, D. (2006). *Language and culture*. In Ralph W. Fasold and Jeff Connor-Linton. *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1987). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

## **BARGAINING FEMALE DESIRES: A CRITICAL STUDY OF FEMALE SEXUALITY AND PATRIARCHAL CONVERGENCES IN QAISRA SHAHRAZ'S THE HOLY WOMAN**

### *Abstract*

*Focusing specifically on female desire, the present article explores the interplay of female sexuality and patriarchal convergences in, Qaisra Shahraz's, The Holy Woman. Various female characters in the novel are found to 'bargain their desires', either to please their men, or to buy a sense of acceptance within the rigid patriarchal structures of their homes. Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of 'patriarchal bargaining' is used as a model to understand how and why such women are, at times, forced to comply with male dominancy which perpetuates their already gender discriminated position in the society. Women are presented as 'objects of desire' by men, exploited according to their whims, passive recipients of male gaze and are denied the expressions of sexual desire in a male dominated world. This paper concludes that it is precisely through this 'bargaining' that female characters such as Zarri Bano, Shahzada and Kaneez are able to achieve a sense of agency but at a greater cost of emotional and sexual exploitation. The theoretical basis for this inquiry is derived from the postcolonial feminism and Islamic feminist scholarship pertaining to female sexuality in the context of Postcolonial Pakistani society.*

**Keywords:** *Female Desire, sexuality, Patriarchal society, Marriages, Anglophone Pakistani literature.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kandiyoti (1988) in 'Bargaining with Patriarchy' points out two systems of male dominance mostly prevalent in two separate geographical areas, one found in the Sub-Saharan Africa, and the other in the Middle East, South Asia. Furthermore, Kandiyoti explains that, "The clearest example of classic patriarchy may be found in the

---

#### **Fariha Chaudhary**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Bahauddin Zakaryia University (Sahiwal Campus), Multan, Pakistan,  
Email: drfarihabzu@hotmail.com

#### **Dr. Qamar Khushi**

Assistant Professor, Department of English,  
Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan  
Email: Khushiqamar@hotmail.com

geographical area that includes North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including Turkey, Pakistan and Iran), and South and East Asia” (ibid, p.278). In order to elaborate the concept of ‘classic patriarchy’, Kandiyoti outlines certain features of societies such as Pakistan where generally a classic patriarchy prevails. These features include:

- The early marriages of girls into households headed by senior men.
- Young women are subservient to not only men but senior women of the house as well.
- Senior men control the lives of their women as well as junior men.
- Mother-in-law, by virtue of seniority attains authority over daughter-in-law.
- Romantic love is suppressed between youngsters to ensure male control. (p. 278-279).

Kandiyoti highlights how women living in areas under classic patriarchy survive within these structures, at times ‘bargaining’ their position with their men. She also notes the, “breakdown and transformation of patriarchal bargains and their relationship to women’s consciousness and struggles” (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.275). As also pointed out by Kandiyoti, Pakistan falls into the category of societies where a classic patriarchal structure prevails. However, due to economic reasons young people are moving away from their combined households headed by their fathers to live in faraway places. This trend has to some extent broken the traditional agrarian patriarchal setups within Pakistani society. Shahraz’s fiction, in this regard, especially *The Holy Woman* serves as the best text where we can see a similar shift or the breakdown of the classic patriarchal structures. For example, young men move out in search of jobs and prefer to take their wives with them. Consequently, the mother-in-law is left with no daughter-in-law to exercise her superiority over.

Many cases can be found in Shahraz’s fiction where certain structures of classic patriarchy are clearly broken. For example Habib’s decision to move to the city for his children’s education was sought against the wishes of his father Siraj Din, a typical feudal patriarch. Similarly, Kaneez after her emotional struggle emerges as a mother-in-law who happily agrees to Khawar and Firdaus’s decision to live separately in the city. Not only this, she agrees to marry, being in her late 60’s, Raees, a neighboring landlord who is shown to long desire Kaneez. Even Habib just shortly before his death begs forgiveness from Shahzada for his undue cruelty. Sikandar is also presented as a liberal, educated modern man who does not believe in lying restrictions on his wife and allows Zarri Bano to work on her long wanted profession. Pakistani society is presented as undergoing massive changes especially in relation to the position of

women in the society. For example, Firdaus, Fatima's daughter insists on acquiring education and eventually takes a job as a principal in Girls College in the city. However, caught amidst this shift of breaking of patriarchal structures female characters pay the heaviest price through sexual and emotional exploitation by their men. They do emerge as stronger and successful women by the end of the novel but this is achieved at the cost of emotional bargaining and suffering on the part of various women.

Following from Kandiyoti's point, we will analyze *The Holy Woman* as a novel set in the patriarchal settings of classic patriarchy which eventually shows a breakdown of harsh male centered structures. This paper will demonstrate how women are considered the 'property of the male head of the family. These women at times comply with their men either willingly or by force which makes them equal partners in the perpetuation of violence against other women. Similarly female characters such as Shahzada, Zarri Bano and Kaneez 'bargain' their desires with men in different ways to buy a sense of agency, safety, and acceptance in the male dominated settings. *The Holy Woman* focus on the various female characters caught within the stifling confines of patriarchy. Their needs and desires are cruelly rejected and denied in the face of harsh male dominance. However, as the plot continues Shahraz shows a transformation in the mind-set of various characters and the emergence of a new generation of young men such as Sikandar and Khawar who display a rather liberal attitude towards their women. Shahraz achieves this by breaking certain stereotypes commonly associated with Muslims, specifically and the Pakistani society generally.

In the light of the above presented examples from the text, Shahraz shows the dissolution of the patriarchal order and the breaking of certain stereotypes resulting in more tolerant men with the hope of a promising future for women. However, this paper aims to reveal that it is through the emotional bargaining of female desire, from a lower position against their men that allows these women survive male oppression and gender discrimination. We argue and conclude that the dissolution of patriarchal structure manifests itself through the sacrifice of female desires as various women in the novel, from the position of being a daughter, wife and mother, comply and accommodate with the wishes and desires of their men. Their expression of desire of any kind is denied and on the contrary women are often captured as passive recipients and 'objects of male desire'.

We use Kandiyoti's term of *patriarchal bargain* to explain how women in Pakistani society generally and within Shahraz's fiction specifically compromise, negotiate and strategize their position, no doubt always from a lower position of power to cope with the oppressions faced by them. For example, Shahzada in *The Holy Woman* bargains with her husband Habib to comply with him in his cruel act of helping him marry their

daughter to the Quran, as part of her obligation and duty to her husband. However, she warns to never forgive him and further emotionally distances herself from him. We see this as a ‘bargaining within patriarchy’ on the part of Shahzada, from a lower position. Furthermore, in all the cases of such bargaining that will be discussed, later on in the paper, women always find such deals working against their desires, hence the title of this article, ‘Bargaining the Female Desire’. We use the phrase ‘female desire’ to mean women’s choice of how they wish to use their body as well as sexuality. It may include their desire to marry, have children as well as a wish to contribute in decision pertaining to domestic and non-domestic realms.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Lau (2006) focuses on the contemporary south Asian women’s writings with specific reference to ‘home’ as a domestic territory and its emotional interplay in the lives of Asian women. She rightly notes that:

As writers in English, South Asian women have also had to negotiate their way linguistically and culturally, and their protagonists are in turn often portrayed negotiating their ‘circuitous ways’ within their domestic households to gain positionality, power and influence, power and influence within their families and societies. (Lau, 2006, p.1101)

In the context of Lau’s observation, Pakistani Anglophone literature is replete with female characters who have no choice but to negotiate their position in their households governed by patriarchy. Similarly, almost all of the women in our chosen novel are shown to negotiate, and bargain their positions to save themselves from harmful consequences. Shahraz is a fairly new addition to the Pakistani Postcolonial Anglophone fiction. Her immigration to the UK at the tender age of nine and her consequent exposure into British culture along with education allowed Shahraz to fully encompass the huge difference in gender discrimination and oppressions women face in both of the societies. We do not naively mean to state that women within the British societies are free of all patriarchal oppressions as patriarchy still lurks around in its modified form within many developed societies around the world. For example, Barkty (1990) highlights the ways in which female body is still under a modernized version of patriarchal control within the Western society by being subjected to the rigorous routing of make-up and beautification. Pakistani society in this regard is no exception to the inherent, psychological, physical and emotional patriarchal control over the female body. Shahraz’s genius as a writer perhaps lies in the fact that she attempts to highlight the negative aspects of Pakistani society by exposing how vulnerable women are, how hugely they are discriminated against and how female body and sexuality is a mere toy in the hands of men. On the other hand, she is also

capable of maintaining her optimistic stance by creating characters such as Sikandar, Khawar, and Younus Raees whose tolerance, liberalism and care for women never fails to pleasantly surprise us. Kidwai (2011) makes a similar observation that:

The most engaging element of this novel is Shahraz's dexterous delineation of the newly emerging Muslim woman of our time-resilient, self-confident, action-oriented, and resourceful...occurring from her modern education and skills. Another important factor accounting for this phenomenon is the collapsing of the old order under its own weight, and accelerated by socio-political and economic forces unleashed by the late modernity and globalization. (Kidwai, 2011, p. 80)

Siddiqui (2011) also praises Shahraz's fiction for its concern for social issues aggravated due to political and feudal system in Pakistan. He further claims that Pakistani fiction challenges and, "tries to break many stereotypical notions about Pakistan. Pakistan is not only a land of fundamentalism. It is also a land of different kind of music, extravagant parties and of course cricket" (Siddiqui, 2011, p.188). In this context, Zari Bano, seems to be a perfect example to illustrate Shahraz's attempt to show to the Western reader that the object of their much fascination, 'veil' is not a limiting or confining women in anyways. On the contrary, as Imtiaz and Zubair (2011, p.12) aptly point out that, "Hijab acquires new meaning as a domain-marker; the veil was intended to assert spatial boundary but ironically it becomes the protagonist transcendence of the spatial boundary. As evident by the observations presented above, Shahraz makes a keen observation of how women within Pakistani society tackle and struggle against gender biased rules pertaining to their sexuality and desire.

As mentioned before, by female desire we mean women's desire to assert their control on their sexuality, for example, right to marry according to their wish. Before we embark upon a textual analysis of the interplay between female desire and male dominance, it becomes pertinent to present certain insights relating to female sexuality. Muslim female sexuality, especially within South Asian societies such as Pakistan, is an important domain which finds ample scholarly attention. Menon and Bhasin (1998) highlight the precarious and troublesome position of female sexuality in the following words:

Women's sexuality, as it had been violated by abduction, transgressed by force conversion and marriage and exploited by impermissible cohabitation and reproduction was at the centre of debates around national duty, honor and identity. The extent and nature of violence women were subjected to when communities' conflagrated highlights not only their

particular vulnerability but an overarching patriarchal consensus that emerges on how to dispose of the troublesome question of women's sexuality. (Bhasin & Menon, 1988, p.20)

As the above quote indicates, women suffered in the worst sense imaginable in the historical event of partition. In other words, women were first raped, impregnated and then their violated sexuality became a problem, a nuisance that had to be dealt at the national level. This conjures up the image of a tissue paper that needed to be disposed of after use by men. In fact, female sexuality during the colonial era of the pre-partition times, as presented by Ahmad Ali in *Twilight in Delhi* remains an arena keenly controlled, exploited and manipulated by men. Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* brings to surface the inherent sexual repression, sexual fascination and gender discrimination embedded within the fabric of Muslim culture of Delhi. Whereas women in this novel remain faithful to their husbands, seldom re-marrying and seldom venturing outside the confines of their purdah, men on the other hand are free to sexual adventures, indulging in infidelity yet asserting unquestioned control over female sexuality. This clearly indicates that female sexuality is not only controlled and appropriated at the domestic level but also appropriated at the national and at times international levels as Spivak rightly asserts:

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the "Third World Woman" caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development. (Spivak, 1999, p.304)

Shahraz's Zarri Bano perhaps presents a perfect example of this 'violent shuttling between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development' as her modern and secular personality is made to shatter in the face of traditional conservatism. The basic aim of this 're-appropriation' of Zarri Bano was undoubtedly, as the paper will demonstrate, the control over female sexuality and the denial of female desire.

Other Anglophone writers of Pakistani origin have dealt with the issue of female sexuality and female desire in a range of different works. All of these characters exhibit an inherent desire to control their bodies and sexuality but fail in the face of patriarchal structures. Sidhwa in all of her novels *Water*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice-Candy Man*, *The Crow Eaters* and *An American Brat* majorly deals with the treatment of female sexuality at the hands of men within Pakistani society. Her female characters such as Zaitoon, Ayah and Lenny, and even Feroza at crucial times in their lives are overcome with realizations that their bodies and sexuality are not theirs in

reality; rather they are at the disposal of their men and their families who, guided by social customs, control them completely. Just as Zari Bano is awakened to the harsh reality of female helplessness in the face of patriarchal constraints in the following words, “men are the true creators in our culture mother, they mould our lives and destinies according to their whims” (*The Holy Woman*, p.87), similarly the harsh reality also dawns upon these women that, within the patriarchal structures women are doomed to find loopholes through manipulations, bargaining and compromises.

Qasim in Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride* controls Zaitoon’s destiny, his adopted daughter, and carves out her fate by marrying her to re-establish his long lost link with his past life in the Kohistani Mountains. He rejects his daughter’s desire to marry in the plains and uses her body and sexuality according to his own desire and needs. Ice Candy Man, in another novel by Sidhwa, of the same name, abducts, rapes, and sells the Hindu Ayah as a means of revenge under the guise of 1947 partition riots. He makes her change her religion, name and forcefully keeps her in the newly partitioned Pakistan by suppressing her desires. Zarri Bano is filled with a similar horror as her father, with great ease, exercises his control over her sexuality, exploiting her in the name of cultural traditions.

One striking feature in all of the above mentioned examples is the active suppression of female desire by men and the consequent female resistance in which they at times succeed but at the greater cost of emotional battles and sexual violations. In this regard, *The Holy Woman* presents an interesting example by highlighting how patriarchy manifests itself through subtle ways even in the lives of wealthy women apparently dwelling in magnificent houses such as Zarri Bano and Shahzada. Also, this novel allows an interesting interplay of patriarchal convergences with the bargaining of female desire as various women kill their desires in order to make their men happy or to save themselves from their wrath. It is precisely this ‘bargain’ of their desires for which they receive the titles of obedient daughters and dutiful wives.

## ANALYSIS

From a distance, a black Shogun Jeep carrying two men wound its way along the dusty road. The driver, a tall man in his early thirties, climbed out the vehicle...Removing his sunglasses he scanned the scene in front of him with amused interest...His gaze strayed past the crowd to a horse tied to a minar tree. Near the horse, under the large green canopy of the tree, stood a young woman. The stranger’s eyes halted in their track. Dressed in an elegant black Shalwar kameez, a matching black chiffon dupatta was casually draped around her shoulders and over her hair, forming a very becoming

frame for her strikingly beautiful face. (*The Holy Woman*, p. 12)

The very opening scene of the novel *The Holy Woman*, as described above, is replete with the image of a female body being held under the scrutiny of male gaze, a woman being ‘looked at’ by a man, a woman totally unaware and oblivion of the male gaze. This active ‘looking at’ at the female figure by a pair of male eyes, perhaps unconsciously, sets the grounds for the objectification of the female body and sexuality. As the story of the novel unfolds, we come across a striking interplay of the objectification of female sexuality, denial of female agency, and a conscious attempt of the male figures to disregard and suppress the female desire to uphold their male supremacy.

The novel begins with the arrival of the above mentioned prospective groom for Zarri Bano, a young, university educated woman who is looking to get married. This seems a very surprising and untraditional way of allowing young people to meet before marriage in a Pakistani society, especially considering that Habib, Zarri Bano’s father, is a feudal landlord belonging to a village in Sindh. The woman in question, Zarri Bano, is mentioned to be twenty-seven years old, again, another striking revelation to have a woman nearing her thirties and yet not married. Her rebellious spirit is also brought forward by her act of going to watch the village feat; a largely male dominated activity whereas Shahraz describes, “it was not common or socially acceptable for young women to join openly in all-male set of activities” (*The Holy Woman*, p.12). This young woman repeatedly comes across as a transgressive of all social norms and customs even not caring much about her bare head in public place to which her brother, Jaffar mildly reprimands:

Dearest sister, I wish you would make sure that your scarf manages to stay on your head when you are outside in public place. Look at your hair! It’s everywhere! It is not good for a woman to be seen like this...It creates a bad impression. Not only of you, but of us and our father. (*The Holy Woman*, p.13)

Jaffar’s remark about his sister’s careless behaviour and its possible negative effects on the family’ honor bring us to a realization that Zarri Bano is a woman belonging to a conservative and traditional feudal family of Sindh that is wealthy enough to afford their women an access to education and a relatively greater mobility. The little gestures of transgressing her set limits by Zari Bano, such as described above, are ignored and let off by the men of her family, father and brother. However, it is not far into the story that Habib emerges, with all his might, as a traditional feudal lord for whom women, including his beloved Zarri Bano, are nothing more than

‘commodities’ or ‘things’ to be owned and controlled. The main incident in the novel which establishes the strong patriarchal context is what we will term as the passionate expression of female desire. In other words, a woman effort to make her own assertion and claim to her sexuality. Zari Bano has been through a long list of suitors and finally meets a man she truly desires and expresses her admiration for him. Sikandar, in return, ignores her when meeting her in the presence of her family. Habib is not only furious with Sikandar’s conceited behaviour as he expresses, “that conceited bastard was more concerned with biscuits than giving my daughter the respect and attention she deserves” (p.23). He is further afraid as well as jealous of the mesmerizing effect Sikandar is able to assert on Zari Bano, as also confirmed by Shahzada’s observation, “Did you not see, Habib sahib, the look in your daughter’s eye and her reaction as she met him. She had never looked like that before” (p.22). Shahzada’s observation confirming ZariBano’s fondness and desire for Sikandar add to Habib’s growing anger, as he responds in a state of fury, “ Yes, I did’, he ground out. All the more reason for me to be more cautious.” (p.23). This sign of romantic association kindling between his daughter and Sikandar is clearly interpreted by Habib as a threat to the love and affection he shares with Zari Bano. In the Shakespearean sense, this Cordelia would surely devote half of her love and care to her husband, after marriage. But the King Lear-like royal Habib is unable to stomach the thought of another man sharing his daughter’s love. He thereby decides to disown Zari Bano of her ‘object of desire, i.e. Sikandar and most importantly her ‘right to desire a man’.

The tragic incident of Jaffar’s unexpected death which closely follows the meeting between ZariBano and Sikandar proves to be a good enough excuse for Habib who takes full advantage of the opportunity to prevent Zari Bano’s marriage with Sikandar. After consulting with his father, Siraj Din, he decides to re-fresh a long lost tradition of making Zari Bano marry the Holy Quran, thereby, turning her into a *Shahzadi Ibadat*, literally meaning a ‘princess of worship’ which translates as *The Holy Woman*, as the title also reads. This new role would forbid Zari Bano to marry any man but to live her life in seclusion, devoted to the rigorous study of the Quran, as well as preaching to the masses. In other words, Habib’s cruel decision is sought as a desperate measure to curtail Zari Bano and Sikandar’s blooming romance as Zari Bano by that time has visited Sikandar in his home, without the consent of her father, and has given full approval of Sikandar as her future husband. Thus, Jaffar’s death comes at the crucial point in the plot which allows Habib to strengthen his weakening grip over Zari Bano, denying her the right to marry and proving himself to be the master of her life as he had earlier told Shahzada, “I am the head of the family and I will decide what is good for my Zari Bano” (p.23). Zari Bano is hurled into one of the most painful and emotional conflicts of yearning for her ‘desired man’ as well being sacrificed at the altar of her father’s family tradition. This traditional practice is

entirely culture based with no religious validations what so ever. In fact Islam encourages women to marry and even remarry in the cases of widowhood or divorce. Female sexuality in Islam is channeled through marriage to ensure social stability and to reduce any threats to the purity of social order. Whereas Islam views female sexuality as, “a potentially dangerous weapon capable of causing great harm if uncontrolled”. Islam expects men and women to marry at the right time, to reproduce off-springs for the continuity Muslim race. Habib therefore rather than channeling his daughter’s sexuality through marriage, chooses to repress her sexuality by enforcing an anti-Islamic practice.

A close look at Habib’s relationship with Zari Bano reveals a strong father-daughter bond. Habib sees Sikandar as a potential rival in his love for Zarri Bano and a threat to their bond of affection. In other words, Habib wanted to remain the centre of Zarri Bano’s desire and when he felt Zari Bano replacing him with another male figure that Habib saw as an equally powerful in his own way to draw and claim Zarri Bano’s love. Habib explains this fear to Shahzada in the following words:

He barely glanced at my Zarri Bano, Shahzada! Men have been falling in love with my daughter since she was a teenager, where as he could not even be bothered to look at her properly. This man has the power to hurt my beloved daughter. I feel it in my very bones. (*The Holy Woman*, p. 23)

The above quote by Habib clearly indicates that Sikandar’s behaviour has been judged as proud, conceited and uncaring by Habib who feels angered at his lack of attention given to Zarri Bano and thus considers him too proud for his daughter. However, a close analysis, as already mentioned, reveals the inherent sense of insecurity Habib experiences at the thought of Zarri Bano being associated with another man. Not just any man, but Sikandar who is presented as equally powerful in masculine sense with a certain sense of honor, dignity and wealth that perhaps made Habib feel belittled. Thus, Zarri Bano is treated like a commodity that needs to be transferred from the possession of one man into the possession of another. She is treated like an object which is fought over by two powerful men. Apparently, Zarri Bano is given a choice to decide her own bridegroom, but in reality, it is Habib who decides her fate. A slightest flicker of appreciation from Zarri Bano’s part is met with harsh consequences from her father who, as Zarri Bano’s mother later confides in her, “your father prevented you from marrying Sikandar simply because he was jealous of him...He was afraid of losing you to him. He glimpsed something in your eyes that he had never seen before for any other suitor and simply couldn’t cope with it” (p.445). As evident from Shahzada’s remark, it was Zarri Bano’s expression of desire, and assertion of her sexuality that fuelled Habib’s hatred for Sikandar. As a woman in a patriarchal society she had no rights to openly display her emotions for any other man

before her father. Being a woman Zarri Bano is certainly disadvantaged in a society that only expects shyness and passivity from women. Women are expected to be in the passive position of being the ‘objects of desire’ by their men and not an in active role of expressing their ‘desire for’ men, even in the case of choosing a marriage partner. Ironically, Habib’s earlier remark only works to validate this observation as he feels angered by Sikandar’s act of ignoring and not ‘looking at’ Zarri Bano. We find this rather interesting that a father actually wanted his daughter to be ‘looked at’ by man, which, in a way, again reinforces the female figure being ‘the observed’ and the male being ‘the observer’ alluding to in the opting quotation of the textual analysis.

On at least four different occasions in the novel, Zarri Bano is presented in a passive position of being caught by the male gaze, in a passive position of ‘being observed’ and ‘recipient of male sexual desire’. In the opening scene as elaborated before, she is being observed by Sikandar while standing under a tree. The second incident comes a little later where on his second visit Sikandar again ‘looks at’ the sleeping Zarri Bano in her garden:

Zarri Bano woke with a prickly feeling of awareness that she was *being watched*. A tall shadow lay strewn over her body. Fully awake, her eyelids fluttered open and her gaze travelled over a pair of white linen trouser-clad muscular legs, to a broad-shouldered chest in a crispy starched shirt, and rested on the tanned handsome face in which a pair of cool grey eyes was steadily staring down at her. (The Holy Woman, p. 121)

The above scene fully alludes to the image of a woman objectified by male gaze and desire. Zarri Bano’s physical position of laying down, and Sikandar’s eyes ‘*staring down at her*’ actively conjures the image of a passive female body helplessly caught and captured by the much attractive ‘muscular legs and broad-shouldered’ male gaze who by ‘*staring down at her*’ symbolically reflects her inferior position in terms of gender, as well as a recipient of male sexual desire. This sleeping beauty is awakened by the ‘prickly feeling’ of male gaze (not a kiss as in the traditional Sleeping beauty fairy tale) which, in a way, re-affirms the notion of women as the passive objects of male gaze and sexual desire. The third incident again centers on Zarri Bano and Sikandar where Zarri Bano is asked to dance in a female gathering at her sister’s wedding. Though fully molded into her new role, Zarri Bano dances at the repeated requests of Ruby quite unaware that Sikandar was also watching her, “sitting hidden in the shadows at the far end of the hall” (P, 248).

The fourth incident follows later on in the novel when Zarri Bano travels to Cairo and meets Ibrahim Musa. His ‘dark eyes on her face’ during the first meeting and on their second meeting the following day, he, “stared at her face, noting the attractive dimple suddenly peeping in her left cheek” once again brings whatever is visible of Zarri Bano’s veiled body as the centre of male gaze and desire. In fact another incident between the two occurs where Zari Bano is sitting unveiled in the study and Ibrahim Musa enters ill prepared to find Zarri Bano without her veil. The consequent encounter again causes Zari Bano to blush with shame as, “her back throbbled, imagining his male eyes roaming on it” (p, 203). Musa’s act of ‘objectifying the female body is re-affirmed by his confession to himself that, “having *seenher* without the veil, his eyes had sinfully learnt to appreciate what lay behind the black garment” (p.204). The reference here is clearly to the female body and Musa is engaged in an active process of ‘desiring the female body’ which is later confirmed by his wish to marry Zarri Bano. She is once again caught and captured as an object of male desire and her body is exposed and looked at, and ‘appreciated’ by Musa just as previously done by Sikandar. Interestingly, Habib suppresses, denies and rejects her the right to her sexuality and Sikandar and Musa both are engaged in the processes of sexualizing her body. Zarri Bano is thus reduced to level of a ‘body’ that is left to the whims and fancies of the various men in her life.

Throughout the novel, Zarri Bano remains the centre of male desire. All the men in her life, Habib, Sikandar and later Musa *see* her as an object of their desire. Whereas Habib being the father expresses possessiveness over Zarri Bano, the two suitors actively hold her the centre of their male sexual desire. It is worth noting that female desire finds little if no expression at all in this male dominated scenario. The only expression of sexual desire from Zarri Bano is found at the beginning of the novel, which is quickly thwarted by Habib which again works to highlight gender discrimination. In addition to this, expressions of romantic desire seem to be a prerogative of the men only in the gender discriminated Pakistani society. This is quite significantly highlighted in this novel through the romantic association of a male character named, Khawar. He is the only son of a village Chaudharani Kaneez who was widowed at young age. Khawar expresses his desire to marry Firdaus, the washer woman, Fatima’s daughter from his village. Kaneez is outraged with her Son’s fascination with Firdaus, whom she considers beneath their social status. In addition to this, Fatima is the same woman whom her late husband had desired to marry. This gave Kaneez more reasons to dislike both Fatima and her daughter. When Kaneez objects to his son’s marriage, Khawar resists and challenges his mother’s decision and accuses her of being proud and leaves his house as a way of protest, an option denied to Zarri Bano by the virtue of her gender. Khawar remains steadfast in his protest and refuses to ever return to his mother in case she continues to refuse his marriage with Firdaus. As Khawar is Kaneez’s only son, he succeeds to emotionally blackmail his

mother and persuades her to allow him to marry Firdaus. Zarri Bano is unable to challenge or resist her father in a similar way, as being a woman the possibility of leaving the house as a protest would have held negative connotations. Whereas Khawar's mode of resistance is seen as a bold, courageous act of manly stubbornness, Zarri Bano's act, had she chosen to similarly abandon her father's house, would surely have been interpreted as a shameful act of a lustful woman who showed no regard for her father's honor. Thus, Zarri Bano bargains her desire of marrying Sikandar for the safety of her home and her father's honor.

Zarri Bano finds herself caught between the external conflict of Sikandar and Habib as both try to influence, convince and persuade her in their favor. She also suffers from an internal conflict of desiring a normal life, wanting to settle down, and desiring to have children, "How would she ever be able to quell the ache of an empty, forgotten whom, the longing to cradle a child against her breast. I want children too, like other women, Allah Pak! She beseeched"(p.163). Again her maternal desire is bargained in the patriarchal world whose master is Habib.

Throughout the novel, Zarri Bano, Shahzada and Kaneez remain engaged in a maddening fascination for the various male members of their family. Whereas Habib, Siraj Din and Khawar do not hesitate in scolding, teasing and emotionally blackmailing them, these women however always show obedience and passive acceptance in the face of male dominance. Zarri Bano bargains her sexuality in return for upholding her family honor. Shahzada bargains her desire to save Zari Bano in order to save herself from divorce and the possible threat of being disowned. Thus she experiences an acute sense of helplessness in spite of her financial wellbeing. Her miserable condition is ironically highlighted when Shahzada compares herself with her maid Fatima and admires the relative autonomy with which Fatima is able to decide her daughters' marriage, thus highlighting her own powerlessness in the following words:

Fatima, I wish I was a fishmonger's wife...For then I could protect my daughter's interests. Here I am a Chaudharani, but I don't even have enough power in my little finger to save my daughter from the fate that is awaiting her. (*The Holy Woman*, p.75)

For Shahzada, her home becomes, as cited by Lau (2006), "As well as being a symbol of protection and order, home can, in negative life situations, become a concretization of human misery: loneliness, rejection, exploitation and violence" (Cited in Lau, 2006, p.1112). Shahzada becomes a prisoner in her own home, and her house

becomes a symbolic manifestation of male authority which captures and exploits her. Shahzada yearns to save her daughter by arguing with her husband but in vain. Habib's threat of divorce silences her into passive acceptance, "In the darkness Shahzada's eyes shone with bitterness and hatred. She knew, with chilling precision, what she had to do. She would stand by her husband and endorse his decisions...I am just a puppet, a mere worthless woman to do you bidding" (*The Holy Woman*, p. 71). Shahzada, by passively accepting to play her role of a dutiful wife, bargains her desire to save her daughter from male tyranny in return to save herself from divorce. Thus she bargains from a lower position against the powerful Habib and in a way perpetuates in the oppression against her daughter.

Kaneez, another female figure in the novel, is presented as village Chaudharani who was widowed shortly after her marriage. She was raped as a teenager and silently suffered the psychological damage to her personality. On discovering her bitter secret, her husband rejects and humiliates her. Her only source of support is her son Khawar. In her maddening possessiveness for her son she bargains her ego and falls on her knees before Firdaus to have her son back. She desires for her son to marry a girl of her choice but Khawar's insistence on marrying Firdaus out wins his mother's stubbornness. Kaneez is portrayed as a woman who is repeatedly rejected by and exploited by various men in her life including her late husband who wanted to marry another woman and only half-heartedly accepted Kaneez as a wife. In other words, Kaneez becomes a target of sexual victimization in her early life and later a victim of emotional rejection and isolation from her husband. Therefore, Kaneez falls into the helpless condition of being over possessive of her son, the only man in her life who returns her love and affection. In the light of the above scenario, Kaneez sees Firdaus as a threat to her relationship with her son Khawar just as Habib interprets Sikandar as a threat to his love for Zarri Bano. This mother-son and father-daughter complex runs parallel in the novel.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that, in both of the cases Zarri and Kaneez back out and bow before the male desire. As we have seen Zarri bargains her desire for Sikandar and accepts Habib's decision, and Kaneez also backs out and accepts Khawar's decision of marrying Firdaus. Both of these women had to give up their own ambitions in the face of male pressure. Interestingly, all of these women, Kaneez, Shahzada and Zarri Bano try to voice their opinions, express their desires and even offer logical explanations before their men. However, as highlighted it is men who hold a superior position in the bargaining process and they easily succeed in pressurizing these women in the name of honor in Zarri Bano's case, threat of abandon, in Kaneez's

case, and threat of rejection and divorce, in Shahzada's case. Therefore, these women easily succumb before male dominance for the safety of their homes, and relationships bargaining their desires and wishes in the process. It is here that female desires are bargained as women's need of safe homes, emotional support and the responsibility to uphold family honor scares them into humble acceptance.

## REFERENCES

- Shahraz, Q. (2001). *The Holy Woman. Pakistan*. Alhamra Publishing.
- Kandiyoti, D. (1988). 'Bargaining with Patriarchy'. *Gender and Society*.2 (3), 274-290.
- Bartky, S. L. (1990). 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power'. In: *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.
- Kidwai, A. R. (2011). 'Recontextualisation of Muslim Society and Modernity in Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman'. In: Kidwai, A. R. and Muhammad, A. S. (eds.) *The Holy and the Unholy: Critical Essays on Qaisra Shahraz's Fiction*. India: Sarup Book Publishers, 80-105.
- Haider, Z. S. & Imtiaz, S. (2011). 'Under Western Eyes: Deconstructing the Colonial Representations in Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman'. In: Kidwai, R, Siddiqui, A. M. (Eds.), *The Holy and the Unholy: Critical Essays on Qaisra Shahraz's Fiction*, (pp. 1-25). New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers.
- Siddiqui, M. A. (2011). 'The Political or the Social? and the Present Pakistani Writers in English'. In: Kidwai, R, Siddiqui, A. M. (eds). *The Holy and the Unholy: Critical Essays on Qaisra Shahraz's Fiction*, (pp.183-204). New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers.
- Lau, L. (2006). 'Emotional and Domestic Territories: The Positionality of Women as Reflected in the Landscape of the Home in Contemporary South Asian Women's Writings' *Modern Asian Studies*. 40 (4), 1097-1116.
- Menon, R. & Bhasin, K. (1998). *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. United States: Rutgers University Press.
- Spivak, C. G. (1999). *A Critique of Post-colonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



## **REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN: A CORPUS BASED CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWS COLUMNS OF THE DAILY DAWN**

### *Abstract*

*In this paper, the differences in the representation of women in male and female writers' news columns written in the Pakistani daily newspaper Dawn are studied through corpus based critical discourse analysis. For this purpose, two corpora i.e. male journalists' corpus (MJC) and female journalists' corpus (FJC) are built, each having a word length of 24774 word tokens. The freeware, Ant Conc 3.4.1, is used to analyze the data, the keyness technique is used for keywords in their contexts, and critical discourse analysis of the occurrences is done. The results show the differences that exist in male and female journalists' discourses. The male writers' representation is significantly different from that of female writers. In the male journalists' writings, women are usually shown more passive either receiving some benefits from the others or receiving some sort of violence or torture. In the male writers' discussion, active roles of women in Pakistani society are rarely found. In the female journalists' discourse, on the other hand, active roles of women are more frequent as compared to passive roles. The study focuses on only one aspect of the issue. More researches are required to establish the differences in the male and female journalists' discourses about women.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The paper discusses the issue of differences in women's representation in male and female columnists' discourses found in a Pakistan's daily newspaper 'Dawn' by using corpus based critical discourse analysis. The paper explores the difference in the ways women are represented in news columns by female and male journalists.

---

#### **Muhammad Kamran Musa,**

Scholar M.S. English Linguistics

COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: kamran.musa@live.com

#### **Dr. Filza Waseem,**

Incharge Humanities Department

COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, M. A. Jinnah Campus, Defence Road, Off Raiwind Road, Lahore, Pakistan

Email: filzawaseem@ciitlahore.edu.pk

The purpose of the study is to find out the differences in representation of female and male newspaper columnists in the discourses associated with women. For this purpose two corpora<sup>00</sup>, from a very popular English Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, are gathered and analyzed by using the freeware AntConc3.4.1 to bring out the differences in women representation in male and female newspaper columns, where the keyness technique<sup>1</sup> for corpora exploration is used. Critical discourse analysis is a strong device to detect the invisible ideologies and agendas of discourses. It relates text to social practices and focuses on social power abuse, reproduction of inequalities and resistance by texts (Gee & Handford, 2012). Use of corpus linguistics techniques adds objectivity (Mahmood, 2009) to critical discourse analysis. The result shows the gender inequalities prevailing in Pakistani society. After rigorous analysis of the data it is revealed that the discourse patterns in male and female writings reflect a significant difference in the representation of the same object i.e. women.

The first and second parts of the paper briefly discuss corpus linguistics techniques for critical discourse analysis and background of the representation of women, the third and fourth parts explain methodology, results and data presentation and interpretation. Where, the final part gives the conclusion.

### **Corpus Linguistics Techniques for Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis focuses on text in relation to society and the working of political and cultural powers. Texts reflect, as Van Dijk asserts “the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted” (2001). Fusion of corpus linguistics’ techniques to critical discourse analysis allows quantitative analysis in addition to the qualitative analysis. In Mautner’s view, by using corpus linguistics techniques a researcher can handle a very large data easily with a minimum subjectivity level (2009).

Lukac (2011) analyzed websites contents by using corpus based critical discourse analysis in which he collected the corpus from 19 blogs, and by using keyness technique carried out a micro and macro levels of critical discourse analysis. Jabeen et al (2011) carried out a comparative study of the use of discourse markers in Pakistani and British English in which they built the corpus of Pakistani spoken English and compared its findings with ICLE-GB, Corpus based discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is very common in linguistic researches but has not yet

---

<sup>1</sup> Keywords are studied by placing them in the context in which they occur: keywords are defined somewhere below.

been applied to Pakistani newspaper columns to investigate the differences in male and female journalists' linguistic presentation of women.

### **Background of the Representation of Women**

An object may have more than one different linguistic depiction which is based on the social and cultural schemata of the reference creator. Frege (as explained by Morris, 2007) is of the view that a referent can have different senses which are reflected in the ways of referring to an object. Smith also argues "[t]he same object can be presented in different ways through different structures of sense" (Smith, 2007). Does the gender of the columnist influence the portrayal of women? If yes, what are the differences in the representation of women? Many researches (some of them are summarized in the next paragraph) focus on the issue of representation of women from different perspectives but none does a comparative study of male and female written discourses, to point out the differences.

Dragas (2012), Downing (2011), Lazar (2010), and Darcy (1994) have conducted researches on the representation of women but none of them compared and contrasted males' and females' description of women. All these researchers focused on women's representation in mass media and their findings are similar to one another. All the three researchers claim that women's representation in media is passive, and confined to some stereotypical roles only. In European media, women are shown engaged in domestic chores, dependent on their relative males, and busy with their children and least concerned with politics and social welfare. The results of this research might agree or disagree with the claims made by the researchers mentioned above. Are conditions of women in Pakistan different from those in Europe? Is their representation in *Dawn's* news columns different from that in European media?

### **METHODOLOGY**

In the present research, news columns of a Pakistani English daily newspaper, *Dawn*, are collected and interpreted by using corpus linguistics and critical discourse analytical techniques. The methodology includes the fusion of two methods which is usual in linguistics. Many linguists apply combined corpus linguistics techniques to discourse analysis, some of which have been discussed above. The main purpose of adding corpus linguistics to critical discourse analysis is to increase the objectivity of the research (Mahmood. 2004: Mautner 2009). Corpus linguistics technique is very popular because it interprets the data against quantificational facts. It is not confined to critical discourse analysis only but is extensively used in other linguistic researches like the study of emotional words (Nordmark & Glynn, 2013: Oster\*, 2010), study and teaching of literature (Wahid, 2011), analysis of writing (Romer & Wulff\*,

2010), and comparative study of spoken English (Jabeen, Rai & Arif, 2011). The reason why we have combined corpus linguistics technique with critical discourse analysis is first that, since the study aims to establish the differences in representation of women in male and female media discourse by applying critical discourse analysis, this tool alone can be applied to a few texts of some hundred words each and the results of such researches cannot be generalized (Bednarek, 2008). This means that by carrying out CDA (critical discourse analysis) without using CL (corpus linguistics), recurrent patterns in discourses cannot be quantified and explored. To find out usually associated discursive patterns used for women and the differences in their representation in male and female discourses, in journalists' writings in the *Dawn*, the addition of corpus linguistics techniques to CDA seems very appropriate. Secondly, to generalize the findings, a comparatively large data is required which is, unlike CDA alone, easily handled in CL based CDA (Bednarek, 2008). So, corpus linguistics adds not only objectivity to CDA techniques but also provides the possibility to deal successfully with the large available data and to investigate the usual recurrent discursive structures as well.

Two corpora are built to study the issue from the columns published in the *Dawn*. All the columns which appeared from September 2014 to February 2015 were selected. It was found that the corpus which consisted of female journalists' columns (FJC) was quite smaller than that of male journalists' columns (MJC). To equalize both the corpora, a selected number of words were removed from MJC. These chunks were removed randomly without studying the contents of columns to ensure maximum objectivity. Each corpus has 24774 word tokens. As far as the appropriate length of each corpus is concerned, the small length of 24774 word tokens each is sufficient because the research is about the difference in representation of women through CDA. The focus of CDA is on social and cultural patterns which are studied from the linguistic patterns and both the patterns i.e. linguistic and social are repeated in their contexts. Social patterns are repeated in the form of conventions, traditions or habits, whereas linguistic patterns are repeated in form of sentences, and paragraphs. As the repetitions are the essence of social and cultural patterns, so the findings of this research can be generalized to the writings of all Pakistani journalists, but for the sake of accuracy the findings are generalized to the *Dawn* columns as the corpora are limited to this newspaper only.

The corpora are explored by using AntConc 3.4.1 and keyness technique<sup>2</sup>, through which it is used to interpret the data. Three keywords<sup>3</sup> are studied in their contexts i.e.

---

<sup>2</sup> Key words are focused in their context to interpret the data

<sup>3</sup> Words which are more frequent in a corpus or important for a study

*woman* and *women*, *girl* and *girls*, and the pronoun *she*. The keywords are studied in two steps:

1. Semantic roles of the key terms are studied;
2. Associated social roles to the key words are focused on

## **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

Three sets of words related to women i.e. *woman* and *women*, *girl* and *girls*, and *she*, are explored in both the corpora by studying these words in their natural occurrence, i.e. key words in contexts (KWIC). They are studied and explained in two steps. At first level of interpretation, the focus of the researchers is on the semantic roles associated with key terms. It is noted whether women are in subject position of the sentence or in object position. If they are found in subject position, they are taken as active, and if found in the object position, they are taken as passive. Moreover, role is focused at phrase level too and phrases in which some sort of activity is present are taken as either active or passive. This division is further explored in the next session. At the second level, the semantic roles are further explained by explaining the social in/equalities related to women's representation issue.

### **First Level of Interpretation**

At the first level of the analysis, keywords in their contexts and associated semantic roles are focused on. The semantic roles are divided into two parts i.e. active roles and passive roles. Passive roles are further divided into two categories, i.e. beneficiary and patient roles. In active roles the women are shown as the subjects or doers of an action, whereas in passive roles they are located as the object of the sentence or at the receiving end of an activity. If women receive something which is in their benefit/s, the role is named as beneficiary. If they receive something negative, or anything against their eager will, the patient role is given to such linguistic representation. For example, in the passages given below extracted from MJC:

1. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of *women* and religious minorities that are on the receiving end of much *organized violence* in contemporary Pakistan.
2. Three Muslim winners were females.

In the first instance, plural pronoun 'they' is on subject or active position who is fighting for women. And women are on receiving end, in this instance it is a *beneficiary* role, but later in this sentence, women are the object of organized

violence which means they are in the *patient* role of an undesired action. In second extract, Muslim females are on subject position and are winners of a contest. In this instance they are shown as involved in some active role and having a capacity to change the world. Result shows the difference in the portrayal of women in MJC and FJC in the allotment of semantic roles.

### **The keywords *woman* and *women***

The first two keywords *woman* and *women* are searched in both the corpora and are studied to bring out the differences. At first level, keywords are labeled either as active, beneficiary or patient role, focusing on the associated event, or action.

After labeling, each role is quantified and mentioned in percentage in the table given below:

	<b>Semantic character</b>	<b>FJC</b>	<b>MJC</b>
1	Beneficiary	34.5%	21%
2	Patient	34.5%	55%
3	Active role	31%	08%
<b>Women/woman in MJC and FJC</b>			

The table shows that in MJC the most prominent role ascribed to women is ‘patient’ which is 55% of the total. Male journalists are more concerned with the problems women faced. Extracts given below give a glimpse of some associated patient roles with woman/women:

1. Women and religious minorities that are on the receiving end of much organized violence in contemporary Pakistan.
2. The absence of a marriage law also makes it difficult for women from these communities to change their names after marriage in their CNICs and passports.
3. One in three women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.
4. Attacks against women who stand up to demand their human rights and individuals who advocate for gender equality are often designed to keep women in their ‘place’. In some areas of the world, women who participate in public demonstrations are told to go home to take care of their children. Consider the recent example of a newspaper who is publishing naked photos

of a woman claimed that she was a well-known activist, an attack designed by them to shame this defender into silence.

In their most part of discussion about women, male journalists create a picture of women in which they are facing some unwanted actions like violence, gender inequality, social, physical and medical situations. The second more frequent role in MJC is beneficiary, which is 21%, in which women are shown as a receiver of painless or pleasing action. In the extracts given below some beneficiary role in MJC are shown:

1. ...and increased the number of reserved seats for women in parliament
2. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of women

In both the extracts, women are passive, and receiving some support either in form of increment of reserved seats in parliament or fighting of a group for women rights to defend their rights. The least frequent role ascribed to women is the active role in which women's active effort for society has been shown. For example

1. Three Muslim winners were females
2. Stand up to demand their rights

In both the instances women are on subject position and doing some actions. For example, in first extract women are shown taking part in some contests and winning the race while in second sentence they are shown fighting for their rights. In MJC, mostly active roles of women are associated with some patient role. For example

1. when women claim their right to affordable modern methods of contraception , they are labeled as prostitutes
2. Girls and women who pursue their own life choices are still murdered

In first sentence, women's active claim for their rights is attached with its negative effect, where women are more passive than active and due to their weakness they are labeled as prostitutes, which they have to bear with. The same is the case with second sentence where independent decision making of women is described with their murder.

In FJC, on the other hand, active roles assigned to women are 31% which is almost one third of the total. Some extracts about the active roles are given below:

1. Indian viewers know now that Pakistani women step out of their homes, working offices, a Karachi road looks pretty much the same in rush hour
2. Thus she was a founder member of Shirkat Gah (1975) and the women`s Action Forum (1981).

In first instance, women step out their home and work in offices, discussion is about women`s active role in which they are shown doing official works while in the second instance noun phrase women`s action forum contains a reference to the active role. Moreover in FJC active role is not associated with patient role. The second and third keyword is she and girl/s. In MJC, semantic roles associated with she and girl are quantified in the table given below:

	<b>Role</b>	<b>She</b>	<b>Girl/s</b>
1	Patient	29%	50%
2	Active	57%	17%
3	Beneficiary	14%	33%
<b>MJC</b>			

In MJC, the most frequent semantic role associated with girl/s, like women/woman, is patient role, second more frequent is beneficiary whereas the least frequent role is active role but in she the most frequent role is active, and the second more common role is patient while the least frequent is beneficiary. From these statistical information, it can be said that when male writers write about the female human group, their focus is on the unfavorable situations the female group face that`s why in women/woman, and girl/s patient role is the most frequent semantic role whereas when they discuss a single female human they concentrate the achievements or heroic doings of the female personality that`s why active role is most frequent in keyword she.

In FJC active role found with *women/woman* is 31%, with *girl/s* 50%, and with *she*, 82% (table is given below). In case of *girl/s* beneficiary role is absent which can be interpreted that when female writers write about the *girl/s* active role and unfavorable situations which they face in society, they ascribe 50% patient and 50% active roles to the object, but the beneficiary role is not found. This can be interpreted that they don`t like to be blessed but they like to do some active jobs or face unfavorable conditions or challenges themselves, without taking help from men. In case of *she*,

the active role is 82% from which it can be assumed that in female writings discussion about a single female human the model of active role is used. However these are assumptions which are based on valid statistical information and are explored on the second level by focusing on KWIC.

	<b>Role</b>	<b>She</b>	<b>Girl/s</b>
1	Active	82%	50%
2	Beneficiary	9%	---
3	Patient	9%	50%
<b>FJC</b>			

### **Second Level of Interpretation**

At the second level, differences in association of social roles to women in MJC and FJC are discussed by focusing on the recurrent linguistic expressions which refer to the social patterns. The social roles associated with the key words in MJC are discussed. In MJC, the key word *woman/women* are found more passive and less active. In 76% of the discussion about *women/woman*, the passive roles of the object are discussed while only 8% instances active roles are discussed. The more frequent area of discussion is about the social problems the women/women have in the society.

1. Attacks against women who stand up for their human rights and individuals who advocate for gender equality are often designed to keep women in their `place`. In some areas of the world, women who participate in public demonstrations are told to go home to take care of their children. Consider the recent example of a newspaper publishing naked photos of a woman, claiming she was a well-known activist an attack designed to shame this defender into silence.
2. In other places, when women claim their right to affordable modern methods of contraception, they are labeled as prostitutes in smear campaigns seeking to undermine their credibility. Online attacks against those who speak for women`s human rights and gender equality by so-called trolls who threaten heinous crimes are increasingly reported.

In the extracts given above, the focus is on the dire situations which women have to face as a result of carrying out a positive role. Instead of mentioning the women`s

role actively, the reader's attention is drawn toward the threats posed as a result of those roles. In the first passage, it can be observed that women are depicted as standing up for their rights and gender equality and taking part in some sort of public demonstration, which shows the women's active participation in political and social affairs. But the effects of these roles are minimized by changing the focus from this role to their dangerous results that are: physical attacks, online attacks, or sexual scandals etc. The same linguistic technique is used in many other utterances in which women are portrayed as socially and political weak, their socially active roles are either simply not discussed or minimized. One such linguistic technique found in extracts is the use of sub-ordinate clause, as for example in second extract:

When women claim...

When the reader studies this sort of sentence, his or her attention goes towards the consequences of the action rather than the action itself. The syntactic position of certain phrases also adds to the emphasis of presentation. For example in the first extract;

Attack against women who...

The position of the *attack* phrase before the first action clause that is related to the women's demand or participation in some politically active role diverts the attention towards the consequence of the action before the active role itself is narrated. In some instances *women/woman* are positioned as an object on which different sort of unpleasant actions happened:

1. One in three women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime
2. There is no legal protection for women against domestic violence
3. Three married women aged 20 to 24 were child brides.
4. Women and girls cannot make decisions on their most private matters sexuality, marriage, and children.

In the extracts given above, the keyword *women* is surrounded by words like *child brides*, *powerlessness in making decisions on their private issue*, *domestic violence*, *absence of legal protection*, and *physical and sexual violence* which point to the prevailing social conditions of women in Pakistani society in the male writers' viewpoints. Extract no. 2 depicts the insecure position of women in Pakistan in the absence of any legal protection, and that they are powerless to take decisions about their private matters, as extract no.4 shows. It means, they are dependent totally on

their men who mistreat them. Though in all the four extracts the actual doers of the actions are absent yet the word women shows that doers are the related men. It can be inferred that women are very passive, even about their private issues they are dependent of men, and due to this dependency women are either the patients or beneficiary.

1. They have spent most of their time and energy over the past decade or so urging government action against `terrorists` and championing the cause of women
2. But to be fair, virtually unfettered political power does give the incumbent the authority to carry out reforms an elected government would lack the will to implement. In Musharraf's case, he did away with a discriminatory system of separate electorates, and increased the number of reserved seats for women in parliament

In both the extracts, women are shown receiving something from the other gender. In the first extract, a group is fighting for the cause of girl/s women, and in second instance the government is increasing the number of reserved seats for women which show the passivity of women. They are represented as passive to fight for their own rights. The male columnists' discussion about the keyword is not different from that of woman/women. In 86% of discussion, *girl/s* is presented as passive member of society.

1. There is little doubt about the significance of her cause girls' education. Millions of girls globally are deprived of education by terrorists, cultural bias and government apathy.
2. Thus, it has been observed that in recognizing that girls face far greater hurdles in gaining education, Islam encourages parents to educate their daughters.
3. Furthermore, in advocating against the unjust societal structures that create hurdles for girls' education

In all the three extracts, *girl/s* as patient of actions is shown. In all the three instances, the associated problems with girls are related to education. It can be seen that in Pakistan even getting education is very difficult for girls. Social structures are too imbalanced to spread knowledge equally in male and female members of the society. The keyword *she* has a different description than that of

the other two. *She* refers to a single female human who is shown as a very active member of the society. It is seen that in the case of the keyword *she*, the MJC assign more active roles, i.e. 50%, which can be interpreted that male writers usually highlight the active role of a lone woman. In the extracts given below, *she* is shown as fighting against the social and political obstacles.

1. She refuses to surrender
2. She sent to her superior. . .
3. She braved the threats

In FJC, *women/woman* has a different description. MJC, 31% active roles and 69% passive roles are attached to women. Most of these active roles of women are described with focus on the dangerous corollaries of the actions as has been discussed above. In FJC, women's actions, their development and their positive role is seen, as is clear in the extracts given below:

1. Pakistani women step out of their homes, work in offices
2. women who work are as respectable as their female relatives
3. the big discovery was that not a single woman was swathed in a burqa
4. To remind men that being Muslim is not merely about asking a woman to cover up but also as much about asking men to lower their gaze
5. Many women had faced far more difficult situations and had either compromised simply to retain their jobs

These four extracts point out that Pakistani women are not confined to their homes, that they are working in offices and they can choose whether to be swathed in veils or to cover their faces or not, because Islam not only asks women to cover their faces but asks men to lower their gaze as well. Female journalists' depiction, describes women as respectable, positive and active members of the society.

1. Parliament may have done its duty by enacting a sexual harassment law but the government needs to do more to enforce it meaningfully.
2. In 2010, when the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act was enacted, I was curious to see what difference it would make to the situation women faced.

Female journalists' discussion about women passivity (in beneficiary, patient positions) is different from that of males' where women are shown passive and weak. In FJC, the focus is on the responsibility of state and its institutions. For example in extract no.1 given above, government is asked to do its responsibility more effectively. Though women are beneficiary here as they are receiving some legal support, the readers' attention is shifted towards the government's responsibility about the enforcement of the law. The language shows that whatever the parliament and government have done is not their gift for women rather it is the women's right and that women are not satisfied from government as it is not fulfilling its duties related to women issues. In the second instance, the government's action is focused on by drawing attention on the results of the policy. Though in FJC, 69% associated roles are passive, the description makes the reader think about the responsible institutions/persons' failure rather than anything negative on women's own part. *Girl/s* in FJC is shown as more active, as a girl is shown tending the house, taking interests in writing letters, or having a high IQ level. The patient roles are related to school education as shown in the extract given below:

1. It is the story of a little girl who was pulled out of school by her mother on the advice of friends.
2. Tahira, a school dropout from a village in Chal 82% active semantic roles are associated with the keyword *she* in FJC. In FJC, a woman's interest and expertise are shown in the use of technology, as is given in the extract given below:

She mailed me a YouTube link

Sending of a You Tube link to other people shows the participation of women in modern technology and the social and educational background of women in the country in general as the girl's recipient of the link is also a woman.

1. She was assigned the task of teaching 'backward' children and keeping them off the streets when their parents were at work. She developed her unique method of educating the young child and her students did better than the 'normal' children of the rich.
2. In *The Absorbent Mind*, she describes what she terms the 'language mechanism' comprising nerve centers in the brain
3. Montessori terms the child's acquisition of language as a natural miracle complete by the time she is two years.

4. She steps into the workspace.
5. She received a letter from a girl
6. She had received this book from her brother

From the extracts given above in which the focus is on the application of a teaching methodology, women's role in teaching is seen. So women are not only getting education, using technology but they are teaching and preparing the generation as well. Moreover, somewhere in the corpus of FJC, they are found doing work in TV dramas, doing researches, facing unfavorable conditions, and supporting other women and children along with a very minute discussion about the patient roles. In the related discussion to the keyword *she*, 'brave girls' are shown as useful and active citizens doing work in every walk of life.

Women in general have two kinds of representation in news columns of Dawn. In MJC, women are shown weak, objects of every sort of societal violence and dependent on men even for their private matters. What is the role of women in country politics? Are Pakistani women getting knowledge, or engaged in any active role in society? In MJC, the questions raised are not addressed. It seems as if male journalists are only concerned with the problems women face. They are not concerned with their social or political roles. Even depiction of women in active roles is accompanied by a stress on the harmful consequences which the women suffer after doing some creative, social and political work. In FJC, women are shown as comparatively more active, taking part in politics, social affairs, education, research, acting and supporting their families. Female writers try to show women as the useful members of the society. In discussion of patient roles, the attention is focused on the responsible persons of the state and in the discussion of beneficiary roles, things which women receive are shown as the rights of women.

## CONCLUSION

There is a difference in the presentation of women in news columns written in the daily *Dawn* by male and female columnists. The present research finds that the representation of women in news columns of *Dawn* is affected, besides other things, by the gender of the writer. The male writers usually show the women as passive, dependent on men in all matters, having no interest in the use of technology, having a weak positive role in politics and objects of much societal and domestic violence. Their discourse depicts conditions in Pakistan for women as unfavorable to do any positive work, outside the domestic domain. The women, who try to work, have to suffer dire consequences. In female writers' columns, on the other hand, women are more active and less passive. They are depicted as working in every field of life.

They are working in offices, doing researches, working as actors, teaching in schools and as nurses, and fighting for their and others' rights.

The research is confined to the columns written from September 2014 to February 2015 and only semantic roles and social associated roles are concentrated on by the researchers, which is not enough to give a holistic picture of the differences in the representation of women in journalistic writing. To understand and explain the differences in the representation of women in national life, more research is required through investigation of multiple Pakistani newspapers. A comparative study with newspapers of other countries could also give insights into the issue of representation of women in journalistic writing.

## REFERENCES

- Bednarek, M. (2008). *Corpora and discourse: a three-pronged approach to analyzing linguistic data*. Diss. Sydney: University of Sydney.
- Downing, J. D. H. (Ed.). (2011). *Encyclopedia of social movement media*. California: SAGE publication, Inc.
- Dragas, M. (2012). Gender Relations in Daily Newspaper Headlines: the Representation of Gender Inequality with Respect to the Media Representation of Women (Critical Discourse Analysis). *Studiahumana.1* (2), 67-78. Croatia: The University of Applied Sciences Marko Marulić in Knin. Retrieved November 11, 2014, from [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com).
- Gee, J. P., Handford, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis*. Oxon: Routledge publishers.
- Jabeen, F., Rai, M. A., & Arif, S. (2011). A corpus based study of discourse markers in British and Pakistani speech. *International journal of language studies.5* (4), 69-86.
- Lazar, M. M. (2010). *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis*. UK: Routledge.
- Lukac, M. (2011). Down to the bone: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis of pro-eating disorder blogs. *Jezikoslovlje.12*(2), 187-209.

- Mahmood, M. A. (2009). *A corpus based analysis of Pakistani English*. Doctoral dissertation. Multan: Bahauddin Zakariya University.
- Mautner, G. (2009). Checks and balances: how corpus linguistics can contribute to CDA. Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage, 122–144.
- Morris, M. (2007). *An introduction to the philosophy of language*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Nordmark, H., Glynn, D. (2013). Anxiety between mind and society: a corpus-driven cross-cultural study of conceptual metaphors. *Exploration in English language and linguistics*. 1 (1), 107-130.
- Oster\*, U. (2010). Using corpus methodology for semantic and pragmatic analyses: What can corpora tell us about the linguistic expression of emotions?. *Cognitive Linguistics*. 21(4), 727-763.
- Romer, U., & Wulff, S. (2010). Applying corpus methods to writing research: Explorations of MICUSP. *Journal of Writing Research*. 2(2), 99-127.
- Smith, W. D. (2007). *Husserl*. New York: Routledge press.
- VanDijk, T. (2001). *Critical discourse analysis*. The Handbook of Discourse Analysis, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wahid, R. (2011). The Use of Corpus-based Techniques in Literary Analysis: Exploring Learners' Perceptions. *Asiatic*. 5(1), 104-128.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF MALE MIGRATION ON THE WOMEN LEFT BEHIND

### *Abstract*

*The present research explores the psychological and social consequences of male migration on the plight of women are left behind. A sample consisting of 10 married women from migrant households was selected from the rural and urban areas of four cities in Pakistan, namely Gujarkhan, Chakwal, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. Thematic analysis of the interview protocols yielded previously unrecorded results for Pakistani women. The findings of the research suggest that the impact of migration on the wives of the migrants is positive as well as negative. In the wake of male migration, these women face the strains in their personal lives, in their relationships with their husbands and in relation to social support. The research found that on a personal level, the women face social issues like gender discrimination and sexual harassment in absence of their men along with experiencing other difficulties like sexual frustration, and lack of social support. In term of relational factors, they felt lonely, anxious, a sense of insecurity and stress owing to the need to manage household affairs, run errands, and added responsibilities of looking after the children and the in-laws singlehandedly. The research also found that despite significant psychological and social problems, male migration also brought a positive transformation in the social roles of these women. These women reported increased their empowerment in terms of self-reliance, self-confidence, independence and decision-making abilities.*

**Keywords:** *Male migration; wives left behind; psychosocial impact of migration.*

### INTRODUCTION

This research utilizes qualitative research methods to explore the psychosocial

---

#### **Maria M. Malik**

*Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan*

*Lecturer, Gender & Women Studies, Email: mariamalik80@hotmail.com*

#### **Raiha Aftab**

*National Institute of Psychology,*

*Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan*

implications of male migration for the families left behind; it views the implications of male migration from the lens of wives who are left behind (de Snyder & Diaz-Guerrero 2003; Fuller-Iglesias, 2015). The psychological context of migration has always been an intellectual backwater, therefore the current research is envisaged to be of value not only in understanding migration and its impact on Pakistani women, but also in the contribution it would make a wider debate on the lives of the families left behind. Results discuss the themes that emerged from unstructured interviews with ten wives who were left behind.

Although much work has been conducted on the impact of earning and the return of foreign exchange to the country (Khan, Irfan, & Cohen, 1985), very little research caters to the effects of immigration on the relatives who are left behind. Migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon (Laliotou, 2008) and has been reported to be a bittersweet experience for those experiencing it (Alarcón & Garzón, 2011; de Haas & van Rooij, 2010; Yabiku, Agadjanian, & Sevoyan, 2010) whereas economic impacts of migration are as vital as the psychological and social consequences. In this study, the psychosocial impact of migration is defined as the psychological distress and change in social roles of the wives left behind in the aftermath of male migration in the respective families. Male members in patriarchal society are key decision makers in the family; the family unit rotates round their lives. Families, wives, and children of the migrants feel the loss of the person and this result in feelings of loneliness, low moods, lack of or loss of goal directed behavior and dismemberment of the family unit (de Haas & van Rooij, 2010). Socially, the migration of the spouse affects the mobility of the spouse and the family.

The concept of migration has a long history and can either be from one country to another or simply a move from the rural areas of a country to thriving cities and districts (Chen, Liu, Vikram, & Guo, 2015; Mu & van de Walle, 2011); the latest century has seen a significant increase in migration from countries with developing economies to the industrial countries (Arendt, Nielsen, & Jakobsen, 2012; Fuller-Iglesias, 2015; Naveed-i-Rahat, 1990; Sheikh et al., 2012; Yabiku, Agadjanian, & Sevoyan, 2010).

For Pakistan, the concept migration remains to one of male migration (Azhar, 2007). Pakistani men not only migrate as skilled workers, but also as unskilled workers to different parts of the world. In fact most of them belonged to lower income groups prior to immigration, and the majority of the migrants were young and married. Therefore the impact on the wives left behind is greater and significant enough to study. For example about 1.6 million workers migrated from Pakistan to the Middle East during the 1970s (Azhar, 2007). Therefore, equal number of spouses and families must have been affected.

Apart from its contribution in affecting the overall economy (For a detailed discussion see Muhammad, Ahmad, Shah, Alam & Jawad, 2010), international migration had some far reaching repercussions on the society, particularly on families whose members have migrated abroad. According to an estimate, the total number of Pakistanis working abroad have left about 12 million dependents in Pakistan; this indicates that around 12 000 000 people are living in Pakistan have somebody living abroad (Azhar, 2007). This means that about 13% of the population of Pakistan is directly affected by the phenomenon of immigration. Some Societies in Pakistan are now facing issues of planned migration and the phenomenon of international migration that gained special momentum in early 70's when sudden rise in oil prices by OPEC countries gave an unusual boost to Middle Eastern economy, is now a norm for some rural and urban towns in Pakistan (Muhammad et al., 2010).

In this regard, Ganepola (2002) examined the psychosocial well-being of individuals and families of those who have migrated overseas from Sri Lanka due to conflict-related reasons. The findings found that women faced difficulties in adjusting to absence of husbands, but did not feel it appropriate to disclose their emotional turmoil or sadness to those around them. Instead these women developed newer self-identities and tried to lead more meaningful lives for their children. They assumed the role of the head of the household. The financial comforts served to ameliorate the grief caused by the absence of their life partners.

Malik, Chaudhry, and Batzlen (1995) found out that despite the prosperity enjoyed by the migrant households due to the inflow of remittances, those households realized the heavy price of migration i.e. negligence of children, increased responsibilities, tensions and other emotional difficulties faced by women. It was also found that women suffered so much that they did their best to stop their sons and other male members from the successive generations to migrate for financial reasons.

Previous research has identified intensification in self-reliance and autonomy of women after male migration. In this regard, the case of women of Kerala is comparable to the circumstances in Pakistan. Research theorizes that massive male migration in Kerala has promoted active role of women in the management of family affairs. Gulati (1983) suggests that there is evidence to put forward that women in migrant households face many tensions, pressures, conflicts, and anxieties, which increases day-by-day. Similar findings were reported by research in other patriarchal societies (de Haas & van Rooij, 2010; Christine & Ragui, 2011). Researcher also has highlighted the need to focus on mental and physical health of the wives left behind (Gulati, 1986; Antman, 2012; Chen, Liu, Vikram, & Guo, 2015). The worst sufferers are the newlywed brides who are married to their husbands during the men's brief vacations from the Middle East. A young wife doesn't only have communication

problems with her new in-laws, but other things add up to make adjustment difficult; for example, conflicts can arise between the wife and the in-laws over sharing the remittances the migrant worker sends back home. This sometimes also restricts the social mobility of the wife left behind (Gulati, 1986).

Similarly, Go and Postrado (1986) observed that more difficulties in adjustment are experienced in households of married contract workers than in households of unmarried contract workers. The migrant's wife, more than anyone else in the household, feels the effect of the temporary separation. She experiences loneliness, worry and the burden of added responsibilities in her husband's absence. She plays multiple roles of a temporary household head, the decision-maker and of a single-parent when the husband is away (Fuller-Iglesias, 2015). These wives may not be happy with these extra responsibilities of taking care of and disciplining the children. The women live a life of dichotomy, where they experience an emancipation from the traditional roles which they would not experience if the husband was back home. Yet they face intense difficulties and social pressures in their husband's absence (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012). However, little research parallels the effects of male migration on the wives left behind in Pakistan.

According to Azhar (2007), the immigration of a male family member calls for a variety of adjustments and the assumption by other household members of additional responsibilities. It also generates a variety of psychological strains that are hardly pliable to measurement. The prolonged absence of a husband creates psychological, emotional and sexual problems for the wife. At times the psychological pressures can contribute to problems of physical and mental health. Due to the societal values, women do not express their distress verbally and keep their worries and anxieties undisclosed. With the passage of time, therefore the psychological conflicts born out of a husband's absence find expression through psychosomatic diseases.

In view of the immense importance of the phenomenon of international migration in affecting the overall society of Pakistan, there is a sufficient amount of literature on the topic. Although a lot of studies have been conducted on different aspects of migration like economic, cultural and sociological consequences of workers' remittances on the society, but there are very few studies which give needed insight on the psychological implications of migration.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The present research is qualitative in nature and aims to explore the experiences of wives who are left behind. The research answer calls by previous research to focus only on the personal experiences of wives as opposed to the effects of economic empowerment. It also focuses on the collective family experience as a result of migration. A rigorous reading and coding of the transcripts allows major themes to emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes and patterns from these in-depth interviews are analyzed inductively. The emergent themes are illustrated by select narratives. The researchers do not have experience of being left behind and thus selected an outsider's perspective during the development of research and data analysis.

### **Key Informants**

The participants were contacted through a key informant in each locale, who was explained the purpose of research to be conveyed to the sample subjects, ensuring the attainment of informed consent on behalf of the interviewees. In all of the cases the key informants were women who were relatives or acquaintances of the subjects. The key informants identified such household where male migration had taken place. Since these informants were known to the subjects therefore it was easy to gain their consent and cooperation for the in depth interviews. The informants attempted to engage the subjects in pre interview informal discussion and encouraged them to reveal their actual experiences and opinions about the subject under investigation by assuring them about the anonymity and confidentiality related to the interview data.

### **Rapport Building**

The key informants assisted in acquiring the informed consent, briefing about the research topic and establishment of basic level rapport with the subjects. Subsequently the researchers increased their efforts to develop a better rapport by spending extended amount of time with the women of the locales and the subject in particular. Since the interview questions were of private nature therefore, informal group discussions and talks with individual helped in building an environment of trust and sharing, before the actual in depth interviews were conducted.

The interviewer addressed the confidentiality concerns of the interviewees by briefing about the ethical practice of keeping the interview data strictly confidential and ensuring its use for research purpose only (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was developed by combining previous research on effects of migration on women and the objectives of the current research. It was designed following the method prescribed by Creswell (1998) to facilitate an unstructured interview experience and was informed by the relevant literature around migration and its impact. The semi-structured interview protocol was developed in English, it contained seven questions developed out of previous literature and concentrated on core issues defining the objectives of the current research:

- What are the effects of your husband’s migration on your life (wait for the respondent to answer. If the respondent doesn’t respond adequately, use the following prompts)
  - What are the major problems caused by the migration of your spouse?
  - What kind of additional responsibilities do you have now due to the migration of your spouse (listen to the respondent and guide the discussion towards education of children, care and discipline of children, dealing with in-laws, assets sale and purchase, construction of house)
- What are your major worries in the absence of your husband?
- What kinds of changes have occurred in your household due to the migration of the husband (listen to the respondent and guide the discussion towards decision-making, control, autonomy)
- What kind of effects the migration of spouse has on your personal life (listen to the respondent and guide the discussion towards self-reliance, self-confidence, sense of security, and confidence)
- If given a chance to decide, what would you prefer:
  - i. The presence of spouse with its consequential emotional

**Table 1:** *Probes associated with the interview questions*

## In-depth Interviews

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents over a period of 2 weeks. Two interview sessions were conducted with each participant. The interviews were conducted in an informal environment ensuring a genuine and trusting exchange discussion. Due to the good rapport between the interviewers and the subjects, the latter did not feel conscious and were visibly at ease during the interview. The answers were detailed and based on significant personal information. Although the interview protocol was developed in English but it was conducted multi-lingually in Urdu, Punjabi and Pothwari depending on the subject’s preference and for their native language.

Interviews were audio taped with an audio recorder. Each session lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Immediately after each interview, a brief summary was made based on the researcher's impressions of the information acquired through verbal and nonverbal communication of the participants.

### **Sample**

The sample comprised of 10 females whose husbands had migrated to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Gulf at least two years prior were selected through purposive sampling technique. Five of the women were from rural areas of Chakwal and Gujarkhan, whereas the other five were from urban vicinities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The ages ranged from 25 to 55 years. Most of the subjects from rural background were not formally educated, only one of them had passed Matric. The subjects from the urban areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi were educated. Their level of education ranged from Higher Secondary School Certificate. HSSC (FA) to MPhil. The years of their marriage ranged from 3 to 35 years. All the subjects, except one woman, had children. This particular woman was pregnant at the time of the research. A detail of the demographics are defined below:

**Table 1:** Demographic Specification of the Sample (N = 10)

Demographic	Categories	Frequency
Age (In Years)	25-35	3
	36-45	3
	46-55	4
Education	Illiterate	4
	Matric	1
	F.A./F.Sc.	1
	B.A./B.Sc.	2
	M.A./M.Sc.	1
	M.Phil.	1
Duration of marriage(in years)	3-5	1
	6-10	2
	11-15	1
	16-20	1
	21-25	1
	26-30	2
	31-35	2
	36-40	2
Duration of migration(in years)	3-5	2
	6-10	2
	11-15	2
	16-20	3
	21-25	1
	26-30	1
Family type	Nuclear	5
	Joint	5
Husbands' Occupation	Unskilled	4
	Semi-skilled	2
	Skilled	4
Country of migration	professionals	4
	Saudi Arabia	5
	Kuwait	2
	U.A.E.	3

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analyzing Data

Interviews were transcribed; although the interviews were translated into English yet few of the phrases could not be justified in terms of meaning by the translation so it was decided to use all the verbatim quotes in Urdu as well as in English.

The data was then subjected to thematic analysis. The research questions were employed as the coding frame and the responses of the individuals well as the interaction between the individual of the groups were considered as units of data.

The transcribed data was coded with the help of traditional method of color coding. Following the research questions as guides, the text was searched and coded. Different colors of highlighter pens were used to distinguish each code by a separate color and each code denoted a category. After identification of the main themes, the remaining data was re-coded.

### **Thematic Analysis**

The themes for the current research were data driven; however the label for each theme was chosen to match the themes used by previous researches. The objective behind this was to highlight the universality of the experiences of the participants. Twelve themes were identified by the thematic analysis: loneliness, worry, additional responsibilities, sexual harassment, social stigmas, sexual frustration, emotional insecurity, interdependence and social support, conflict with in-laws, communication issues and social empowerment. Below are the description of each theme and the experience of the participants:

#### **Loneliness**

Loneliness is the biggest complaint wives of immigrant husbands had in the course of our research. The dilemma of physical separation and the loneliness of these women were evident in their interviews. Most of these women were deeply distressed about their husbands being away from them. One woman expressed the absence of her husband as ‘the end of her life.’

**I feel very lonely because he is not only my husband but also a friend and companion to me.**

میں اپنے آپ کو بہت تنہا محسوس کرتی ہوں کیونکہ میرے خاوند صرف شوہر ہی نہیں بلکہ میرے دوست اور ساتھی بھی ہیں۔

Most wives experienced the absence of their husbands as a form of ‘stress’ and sadness. It was found that some of these women tried to get themselves involved in day-to-day life chores to such an extent that remembrance of their partner became minimal. The researchers felt that the feeling of abandonment was hidden behind the use of word lonely. This finding was in consistency with the past researches (Gulati, 1986; Arnold & Shah, 1986). One of the interviewee related that she had left her husband’s clothes and towel in the same places as he had left them for a year after he had gone away. It was also felt that the degree of expressed loneliness was directly related to the amount of time spent apart. It was reported that one can kill time and spent energies while waiting for better days to come; there are bound to be times

when other members of the family are occupied with their own work or when there is nothing much to do. This is when the loneliness becomes almost unbearable. Physical separation becomes even more pronounced when emotionally the wives feel lonely and need some attention. There were several other ways of mitigating the pain of separation and lessening the feeling of loneliness, such as communication, family and community networks. In situations where there is a lack of such social support, the wives tend to miss the husbands more severely as shared in a by an interviewee below.

**Now I feel the absence of my husband more severely as my children have all grown up and are occupied with their own lives. And I also feel lonelier now because my parents are not alive anymore.**

مجھے جوانی سے زیادہ بڑھاپے میں اپنے شوہر کی کمی شدت سے محسوس ہوتی ہے کیونکہ گلاب میرے بچے بڑے ہو گئے ہیں اور اپنی زندگیوں میں مصروف ہیں۔ میرے والدین بھی اب حیات نہیں لہذا اب میں زیادہ اکیلا پن محسوس کرتی ہوں۔

Most women reported that they then console themselves by reminding themselves of why their husbands had to immigrate in the first place. As most of them would say:

**When a husband has to move away from his wife, the reason for this separation is really crucial.**

جب کوئی خاوند اپنی بیوی سے دور ہو جائے تو اس کی ضرورت کوئی بہت بڑی مجبوری ہوتی ہے۔

One woman articulated the absence of her husband as a 'form of death'. Majority of the wives left behind expressed their feelings of emptiness and uselessness due to the absence of their husbands. They felt that a married woman's life is incomplete and meaningless without her husband. Periodic remittances in the form of gifts (received when acquaintances of husbands visiting on leave) and messages received from husbands also help to lessen the severity of the problem.

The plight of younger women was worse than older women. Therefore their interviews showed greater frequency of feelings related to loneliness. Additionally the feeling of loneliness was also related to the presence or absence of extended family and amount of interaction with local community like neighbors and friends. This was a surprise finding, as earlier it was reported that the young wives were the loneliest. During the current study it was found that the older women were equally keen on living with their husbands because according to them, they had lived their lives without their husbands with the help of their parents and younger children. Now that the parents were no longer there, the children had grown up and were living their

own lives, these women were immensely lonely. Therefore, they think that they need their husbands' company now more than ever.

### **Worry /apprehensions**

These women also claim to worry about the living and working conditions of their husbands in the country of migration. Contract workers face difficulties as working conditions are not always risk free. Therefore, the wives are bound to worry about their husband's life and health being at risk. The majority of the women shared that they spend quite a deal of their time wondering whether their husbands are getting the right food and sleep, and whether their living conditions are satisfactory and favorable or not. Some of the women also admitted to being worried about the uncertainty of their future and the uncertainty of their husband's job.

**I get worried for him because I do not know what he eats, how he lives and what kind of living conditions he has to put up with?**

میں اُن کے لیے بہت فکر مند ہوتی ہوں۔ بچہ نہیں وہاں وہ کیا کھاتے ہیں، کیسے گزارہ کرتے ہیں اور کس حال میں رہتے ہیں۔

Previous literature calls this a step towards cohesion where all family members tend to see themselves as part of a unit that is making efforts and sacrifices. Communication between couples is said to increase as they tend to take each moment of communications as an opportunity to bond (Fuller-Iglesias, 2015). However, for the present sample it is expressed as eustress. Additionally, there are a variety of anxieties that the wife of a migrant has, and this state of constant anxiety and worry takes a toll on her physical and mental health. Almost all the women interviewed admitted having a mixture of worries about the proper management of their household affairs and children's discipline and education.

**I become anxious when I notice that my children are missing their**

میں اپنے بچوں کو ابو کے لیے اُداس دیکھ کر بہت پریشان ہوں۔  
father.

Majority of these women also confessed to having worried about their children who are living without their fathers. When these children miss their fathers, they become upset and inattentive in school and are distressed on the whole. Therefore, the mothers also get worried on seeing their children being sad.

### **Additional Responsibilities**

In the absence of these male migrants, these women had started taking a more active role in the management of the family affairs, and are becoming less dependent if not all together independent. Women have taken up the responsibilities of their children,

households, management of their finances, and social interaction with the family in the absence of their husbands. But the interviews also revealed that these women were not satisfied and happy with these duties. The majority of the women thought of these duties as an obligatory burden which they had to fulfill while their men were away.

**Since my husband left I had to take all the responsibilities regarding our household, our children, my parents-in-law, the extended family and other external matters. I am hard pressed with the burden of these responsibilities.**

مجھ پر ان کے جانے کے بعد گھر، باہر، بچوں، خاندان اور ساس سسر کی تمام ذمہ داری آن پڑی ہے اور میں اس ذمہ داری کے بوجھ تلے دب گئی ہوں۔

One of the major additional responsibilities of Gulf wives that resulted from their husbands' immigration was the management of their children's education. Taking care of children's education is not the only added responsibility they have taken upon themselves. Managing family finances and remittances received from husbands, keeping contacts with husbands abroad and taking care of the health of the members of the family are a few of the other added responsibilities. These findings are consistent with previous study findings (Go & Postrado, 1986; Gualti, 1993; Zachariah & Rajan, 2001). In households where no close male relatives were present, these women even took over the responsibilities of sale and purchase of property, assets and construction of their houses. These women also shared that they had to compensate for their husband's absence in family events like weddings and funerals. Some of these women who were living in joint families were also taking care of their old and unwell in-laws, which increased the burden of their daily household routine.

### **Care and Disciplining of Children**

The upbringing of their children is also an important part of these women's responsibilities. One woman articulated the absence of her husband as a 'form of death'. Where there were young children to bring up, the spouse left behind had difficulty coping emotionally with the absence of the partner.

**My biggest problem is bringing up my children single handedly in the absence of my husband.**

میرا سب سے بڑا مسئلہ شوہر کی غیر موجودگی میں بچوں کی تربیت اور پرورش اکیلے کرنا ہے۔

Almost all the interviewees admitted to having problems in child-raising and disciplining. These women shared that the disciplining of their children single-handedly was a big problem for them because the children look up to their fathers as being the authority figure in the household and only submit to their mother's control to a certain extent, especially adolescents who are extremely difficult to manage. Excess of money and lack of paternal guidance in their education led these children to severe social and behavioral problems.

### **Social and Psychological Empowerment**

The husband's absence, increased economic resources at the disposal of these wives and the ability to communicate with him whenever needed have all become instrumental in transforming a shy, dependent woman into a self-confident autonomous manager with a status equal to that of any man in the society. Majority of the women admitted that the absence of their husbands has also brought forth a very positive change in them. They have become more independent and self-reliant in managing their households, making the decisions about the children's education and marriage. They have gained confidence for venturing out into the financial setup of society and dealing with bank and in property transactions. Even the illiterate women have become more self-aware and independent. They have learnt to manage their remittances and finances single-handedly with the advice of their male relatives. When these women effectively perform duties that were earlier carried out by their husbands, they feel a great sense of pride and achievement which gives a boost to their self-esteem. The women who manage their personal, family and financial lives successfully alone are greatly valued by their husbands (de Haas & van Rooij, 2010).

**1. I have changed pretty much since my husband has left. Now I make all the decisions regarding my children, the household and other matters outside the home and I do not rely on any one for anything.**

**1. Due to the absence of my husband I make all the decisions independently and now I am quite self-confident.**

(1) اُن کے جانے کے بعد مجھ میں بہت تبدیلی آئی ہے۔ اب میں اپنے گھر کے باہر کے، بچوں کے تمام فیصلے خود کرتی ہوں اور کسی پر انحصار نہیں کرتی۔

(2) خاندانہ غیر موجودگی کی وجہ سے میں تمام فیصلے خود مختاری سے کرتی ہوں اور اب مجھ میں کافی حد تک خود اعتمادی آ گئی ہے

Some of the women who stated that they were less independent felt it was due to the fact that they were living in joint family systems which gave them a very minimal margin of performing these duties on their own due to the presence of other male

relatives who would do these chores on their behalf. The women living in joint family systems are more protected and taken care of than the women living independently. These independent women exercise a great amount of control and autonomy in their households. Their problem-solving and decision-making abilities develop and are enhanced to quite a great degree due to their frequent interactions with society. These women start participating in public life as well as in private life. This finding is different from latest research conducted in patriarchal societies like Turkey, Egypt, Morocco etc., where research has found that gender roles have not been reversed or affected by society level migration. In this effect previous research has not that gender roles tend to become more stereotypical and more binding for women who are left behind then when their husbands were at home (for a detailed discussion on the issue see for example Day & Icduygu, 1997, King et al., 2006, and Hampshire, 2006).

### **Sexual Harassment**

Another issue of significance revealed in the interviews of these women was their experiences of sexual harassment in the absence of their husbands. In a patriarchal society like ours, women without their men are exposed to a variety of problems, and sexual harassment is one of them. Women in rural areas have to face more cultural and traditional constraints and are expected to stay at home for the care of family. Venturing outside their private domain in to the male dominated society renders them “vulnerable to different types of violence against them” (Khan, 2006). Few of the women openly admitted that they had faced harassment while their husbands were away.

**In my husband’s absence some of his friends and male relatives make obscured sexual suggestions.**

**میرے شوہر کی غیر موجودگی میں کبھی کبھی اُن کے رشتے دار مرد اور دوست معنی خیز قسم کی باتیں اور اشارے کرتے ہیں۔**

The harassers were usually neighbors, friends, colleagues and male relatives of the husband. These men assumed that these lonely women might be desperate and would not desire in male companionship and would not turn their offer down. Since these men perceive these lonely women as weak, vulnerable and easily approachable, they do not lose any time in pouncing on them. Women in Pakistan are not very independent. They are usually protected by their men. Therefore, the women who are alone are more exposed to these men outside their homes who might take advantage of their vulnerability.

## Discrimination

In a patriarchal society like Pakistan, the male as the main link in networks of kinship, as argued by Khan (2006) that despite cultural ethnic and linguistic diversity, Pakistani women have to face strikingly similar patterns of agriculture-based tribal, feudal, clan system and kinship network. Men want their women to be dependent on them; women living alone are looked down upon and are condemned for their independence and self-reliance because independent women are considered uninhibited or rebellious. It is a major social disadvantage to be perceived as rebellious in a society where “the women’s lives are guaranteed in exchange for obedience to traditions and social norms” (Khan, 2006, p. 74). Some women, during the interviews, revealed that sometimes they are criticized for living their lives alone, yet so independently.

1. I am always fearful that I might be defamed for living alone.
2. Before I leave home unaccompanied to run my errands I pray to god to protect my honor because I fear somebody can have corrupt thoughts by finding me outside the home all by myself .

(1) ہر وقت یہی خدشہ ہوتا ہے کہ کوئی مجھے یوں اکیلے زندگی گزارتے دیکھ کر کوئی الزام نہ لگا دے۔

(2) میں گھر سے نکلنے سے پہلے دعا کرتی ہوں کہ مجھے یوں اکیلا کام کرنے دیکھ کر کوئی غلط بات نہ سوچے اور خدا میری عزت کو محفوظ رکھے۔

One of the interviewees confessed that she gained the reputation of having a doubtful character in the neighborhood just because she was taking her sick son to the hospital daily without any male escort. Other women also related such incidents where, while performing their household duties like paying their bills and shopping for groceries, they were thought to be having fun behind their husbands’ backs. Even other women looked down at women’s whose husbands were away. Another woman also related an incident when she was out to shop for groceries and was seen by her brother-in-law. When she returned home, she found him furious. On inquiring, she came to know that he was mad because he had seen her shopping alone in the market surrounded by so many strange men. The majority of these women had the fear of being labeled as a woman of bad character just because she is living on her own and doing her own duties without anybody’s help, especially a man’s help. Generally, Pakistani women are often not socially and culturally empowered to function without the protection and support of a male partner.

## Emotional Insecurity

The women, who live with their husbands not around, face a lot of fears and insecurities. These women endure emotional insecurities because they become emotionally dependent on their spouses, so that when the husbands are away these women feel unsure of themselves. An interviewee related that she felt very insecure without her husband, alone in the house. She checks all doors and windows repeatedly and is very sensitive to any strange sound or people around the house.

**I feel as if I live in a house that only has walls and there is no roof over me.**

مجھے یوں محسوس ہوتا ہے جیسے میں صرف دیواروں میں رہتی ہوں اور میرے سر پر کوئی چھت، کوئی سائبان نہیں۔

These insecurities are not just inner feelings but they are sometimes reinforced by their external environments. These women feel insecure because they look up to their husbands for providing security and safety to the house and the family. Therefore, when he is not around, they feel shaky and are unable to trust anyone. They develop feelings of social insecurity because of the people around them, who give them strange doubting looks and wonder what these women are really up to in the absence of their husbands.

**I feel very insecure because of my husband not being around and I do not trust anyone easily.**

میرے شوہر کے نہ ہونے کی وجہ سے میں بہت اپنے آپ کو بہت غیر محفوظ محسوس کرتی ہوں اور کسی پر آسانی سے اعتبار نہیں کرتی۔

## Sexual Frustration

Although sexual deprivation is a very significant issue in the lives of migrants and their wives, still it is not given due attention. Pakistani cultural norms forbid the people, especially women, to talk about their sexual needs and wants. Sexual relations between a husband and wife are of great significance in their marital life, without which it becomes quite difficult for either partner. During the interviews, only one out of ten women openly admitted to being sexually deprived.

**I miss physical intimacy with my husband severely because other than being a mother and a wife, I am a woman too.**

میں ایک بیوی اور ماں ہونے کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک عورت بھی ہوں اور میں اپنے خاندان کی جسمانی دوری کو بہت شدت سے محسوس کرتی ہوں۔

This finding was also supported by previous study (Arnold & Shah, 1986). While the rest of the women avoided giving any details about their sexual frustrations and only shared that no doubt they do feel bad about the physical separation, but they just accept it because it has to be endured. Some of them, especially older ladies also mentioned that they did not miss their husbands physically, or in other words, sexually. But the way they state it represents a whole element of loneliness and the amount of patience and they had to exercise.

**I have sacrificed my youth living the prime period of life  
without my man only for my children and their future.**

میں نے اپنی جوانی اور زندگی اپنے گھر اور بچوں کی خاطر قربان کر دی ہے۔

These women explained that their sacrifice started the day their husbands decided to leave for work abroad. They sacrificed their emotional and physical companionship for the betterment of their children and the family. These women endured the agony of separation from their spouses so that the financial conditions of their families could be improved, thus leading to an overall improvement in their living conditions. Thus their rights as women were sacrificed, as their roles as a wife and a mother. Previous literature seems to indicate that separation from husbands can result in a strain on marriages and some marriages may even break in face of such separations. In the case of the present research participant, it was felt that none of the participant felt that they had any choice in the matter. This may also be linked to lack of concern for the sexual needs of women in patriarchal societies (Tarar, & Pulla, 2014; for a detailed discussion on infidelity among migrant husbands can be read in Boehm 2011; Frank & Wildsmith 2005).

### **Hesitation in Disclosure of Emotions**

Spouses left behind did not generally discuss their emotions and feelings that absence generates, either with family or friends. The attitude that most displayed was 'just-get-on-with-it'.

**I don't really miss my husband a great deal**

مجھے اپنے شوہر کی کمی کچھ خاص محسوس نہیں ہوتی۔

Although families had extended kin support, where emotional endurance is concerned, relatives were little equipped to handle grief and the sense of loss. Almost all the women from rural backgrounds were hesitant in sharing their feelings about this issue. At first, they avoided giving any details about their personal lives and they dealt with the questions in a very casual manner by saying that we do not feel our

husbands' absence as being too much of a problem. But later, on further probing and rapport building, they started disclosing their feelings and problems regarding their husbands' migration. Though some of the interviewees from the urban background were quite open and frankly related their problems and their feelings about the issue, which was very helpful during the study.

### **Social Support in Joint and Nuclear Families**

Absence was strongly felt in nuclear households due to the lack of social support, which is provided in a joint family system. Women living in nuclear families showed more tendencies of anxiety and depression than the women living in joint family systems, because the women living in extended family systems were able to share their problems and to counter their solitude with their family's support around them. These women also felt more burdened by the additional responsibilities they had to perform while their husbands were away without the help of any family members or relatives. These women were independent but did not have interdependence with the family.

**My parents and siblings live in another city and I don't have any in-laws too therefore I have to deal with all the problems solely in my husband's absence.**

میرے والدین اور بھائی بہن دوسرے شہر میں رہتے ہیں اور میرے سسرال نجی نہیں ہیں جس کی وجہ سے خاوند کی غیر موجودگی میں مجھے ہر قسم کی مصیبت خود جمیلنی پڑتی ہے۔

The interviews showed that the women who were living cordially in joint family systems were supported by their families considerably. Majority of the women explained that these joint living arrangements were made when their husbands left home for work abroad. These arrangements were made to make sure that these women and their children were well taken care of in the absence of their male household head. The women who lived in the joint family system revealed that the everyday responsibilities of household and children were shared by other family members too. It was also found out that some of these women of migrant households are also depended for emotional support on women relatives or neighbors whose husbands had also migrated because they could understand each other's circumstances very well. These joint living arrangements were either with the husband's family or with the wife's family. The decision of living with either family was up to the woman and her husband.

**Since I live with my in-laws, I do not have any particular responsibilities outside the home. My husband's brothers and relatives are very helpful toward me.**

سرال میں رہنے کی وجہ سے مجھ پر کوئی خاص ذمہ داری نہیں ہے۔ میرے خاوند کی غیر موجودگی میں ان کے بھائی اور باقی رشتہ دار میرے بہت کام آتے ہیں۔

### **Conflict with In-laws**

Women living with their in-laws after marriage have to face confronting them alone, once their husbands are away. They cannot count on any emotional or moral support from their husbands in any matters of family dispute and have to deal with everything on their own. There is also no support network in the in-laws because of which these women cannot share their personal feelings.

**It's really hard to live with one's in laws when the husband is away. I have to bear everything alone and I can't speak my heart out to anyone.**

سرال میں خاوند کے بغیر رہنا بہت کٹھن ہے۔ مجھے سب کچھ اکیلے سہنا پڑتا ہے اور اپنے دل کی بات بھی کسی سے نہیں کہہ سکتی۔

This suppression of feelings leads to severe depression in many women. Comparatively, women living with their own parents after their husbands migrate are less likely to be despondent concerning family matters. During the interviews, most of women admitted to having severe conflicts with their in-laws. One woman articulated that she severely misses her husband during family disputes as she had to face them all on her own. The finding is consistent with the previous study (Gualti, 1983). Interestingly this has also been reported in international literature also. For example for a nation like Mexico, where multiple generations may exist in the same family unit, the wives of the migrant are criticized along similar lines (Fuller-Iglesias, 2015).

### **Communication**

There is little that the husband or the wife can do, under current conditions, to avoid physical separation. However, there are several ways of justifying the pain of separation and lessening the feeling of loneliness, such as communication and family and community networks. Periodic remittances, gifts and messages received from husbands through visits from friends returning on leave also help to lessen the severity of the problem. One way to amend a woman's problem of loneliness, mental strain and misunderstanding is to have constant contact with her husband through letters, telephone calls, email and the Internet chat. All the subjects in the interview

used all available means of communication, the most common being letters and telephone calls.

Therefore, it was discovered that frequent communication links between husband and wife plays a major role in easing the severity of loneliness and avoiding its extreme consequences. The interviewees revealed that these means of communication were also employed while making important decisions regarding the house, the children and other important family matters.

1. **I am constantly in touch with my husband through letters and telephone.**
2. **The internet and email has lessened the distances between us to a great extent.**

- (1) میرا اپنے خاوند سے فون اور خط کے ذریعے مسلسل رابطہ رہتا ہے۔
- (2) انٹرنیٹ اور ای میل نے ہمارے درمیان کے فاصلے کافی کم کر دیے ہیں۔

This relationship between the wives and husbands is of prime value for the relationship. Without adequate communication, fragmentation of the marriage occurs that may cause the relationship to diminish over time. This communication acts as emotional bondage between the spouses who live apart for long periods of time, and a break-up in this communication may result in irreparable strain on the marriage even after the migrant husband returns (Fuller-Iglesias, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

This current study investigated the psychosocial impact of male migration on the wives left behind and its finding suggests that the impact of migration on women can be positive, negative or both, depending on the ability and background, as well as the family environment in which the women are placed. A starting point for examining the impact is provided by the in-depth interview responses given by Gulf wives to the question about the problems they have faced and the benefits they have received from the migration of their husbands. Favorable outcomes of migration like rising incomes and living standards outweighs the disadvantageous ones like agonizing loneliness of divided families, the stress of expected roles and responsibilities entails lingering psychological problems and social challenges for the women in the wake of migration.

Women and men perform their traditional roles in a society where both the partners perform their duties and fulfill their obligations in separate spheres of life on reciprocal basis. Thus, women and men keep a fine balance by complimenting each other's role and create a complementary society. Due to the male migration the balance between these complementary roles is invariably strained and as a consequence the women in migrant households were obligated to take a new role which eventually led them to the change in their self-concept and self-identity.

This transformation in their traditional roles has both favorable and adverse effects on their lives. The positive changes are namely that of empowerment, self-reliance, independence, confidence and increased self-esteem. And the negative effects are regularly the forced change in their traditional roles due to the additional responsibility that are undertaken by them in the absence of their husband. This change in women role is sometimes incomplete, the women are compelled to change in the wake of the migration but the change is unwelcome since there is a discrepancy between her expected and personally desired role. Some time when the women are changed, the environment around her is not conducive therefore it does not accept her new role which also results in an incomplete change. The burden of responsibilities that is thrust upon her while the husband is away creates an immense strain and stress in the women which is further intensified by the agony of loneliness and distress. Therefore, the findings revealed by this study are of immense value in understanding the psycho-social impact of migration on the women left behind and could serve as a research base for any upcoming, conclusive or quantitative researches about this subject.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study has been successful in exploring the voice of the wives who are left behind when their spouses migrate to other countries. There are certain limitations in the research design which can help future research build-upon the findings of the current research. The current research employs a small sample. Though small samples are recommended when the researchers wish to study a phenomena in depth; however, this poses a threat to the external generalizability of the research. Future research may employ larger sample to explore the phenomena further and maybe use a more representative sample from a cross-section of the population. Also, future research can expand the understanding about the psycho-social issues by controlling the demographic and psychographic characteristic of the sample. The researchers felt that socio-economic status, location of residence, relationships between spouses, duration of marriage etc. were important predictors for specific psycho-social problems experienced by the wives.

Also future research may benefit from mixing other methods to gain a wholesome view of the experiences of these wives. Even though the interviews spanned over a two-week period for each respondent, the interview method was able to generate only a snapshot view of the experiences. Due to the sensitive and personal nature of the topic under study, the researcher could not question the participant after a certain point. Therefore probing was highly context dependent; secondly, rapport development and maintenance was also very precarious and had to be negotiated very carefully with each interview and each respondent. Use of multiple methods may help future research tackle this limitation; this may also help in probing the experiences in more subtle ways than the one allowed by the structured interview.

## REFERENCES

- Abbasi, N., & Irfan, M. (1983). Socio-economic effects of international migration on families left behind. *Studies in population: Labor force and migration (Report No. 7)* 14-16. IPIDE.
- Abbasi, N., & Irfan, M. (1983). Socio-economic effects of international migration on families left behind. *Studies in population: Labor force and migration (Report No. 7)* 14-16. IPIDE.
- Alarcón , A., &Garzón, L. G. (Eds.). (2011). *Language, migration and social mobility in Catalonia*. The Netherlands.
- Antman, F. M. (2012). The impact of migration on family left behind, Discussion Paper series, *Forschungs institute zur Zukunft der Arbeit*, No. 6374, <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201206146492>
- Arendt, J. N., Nielsen, C. P., & Jakobsen, V. (2012). *The Relationship between Pre- and Post-migration Qualifications and their Impact on Employment Status*. AKF and the authors.
- Arnold, F., & Shah, N. M. (1986). *Asian labour migration: Pipeline to the Middle East*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Boehm, D. A. 2011. Deseos y dolores: Mapping Desire, Suffering, and (Dis) loyalty Within Transnational Partnerships. *International Migration* 49 (6), 95–106.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.

- Chen, F., Liu, H., Vikram, K., & Guo, Y. (2015). For Better or Worse: The Health Implications of Marriage Separation Due to Migration in Rural China. *Demography*, 52(4), 1321-1343. <http://dx>.
- Christine, B., & Ragui, A. (2011). *Egyptian men working abroad: Labor supply responses by the women left behind*. Discussion paper series // Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, No. 5589, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn>
- Creswell J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five traditions*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Day, L. H., & Icduygu, A. (1997). The consequences of international migration for the status of women: a Turkish study. *International Migration*, 35, pp. 337–371.
- de Haas, H., & van Rooij, A. (2010). Migration as Emancipation? The Impact of Internal and International Migration on the Position of Women Left Behind in Rural Morocco. *Oxford Development Studies*, 38(1), 43-62.
- de Snyder, V. N. S., & R. Diaz-Guerrero. (2003). “Enduring Separation: The Psychological Consequences of Mexican Migration to the United States.” In L. Adler & U. Gielen (Eds.), *Migration: Immigration and emigration in international perspective*. Praeger: Westport, 143–157.
- Frank, R., & Wildsmith, E. (2005). The grass widows of Mexico: Migration and union dissolution in a bi national Context. *Social Forces*, 83(3), 919–947.
- Fuller-Iglesias, H. R. (2015). The view from back home: Interpersonal dynamics of transnational Mexican families. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41(11), 1703-1724.
- Go, S. P., & Potrado, L. T. (1986). Filipino overseas contract workers: their Families and communities. In F. Arnold, & N. M. Shah, (Eds.), *Asian labour migration: Pipeline to the Middle East* (pp. 125-144). Colorado: Westview Press.
- Gulati, L. (1983). Male migration to Middle East and the impact on the family. *Economic and political weekly*, 18, 52, & 53, 2217-26.
- Gulati, L. (1986). The impact on the family of male migration to the Middle East: Some evidence from Kerala, India. In Arnold F & Shah N. M, (Eds.), *Asian*

*Labour Migration: Pipeline to the Middle East.* Boulder, CO and London: Westview.

- Gulati, L. (1993). *In the absence of their men.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Gulliet, D., & Uzzell, D. (1976). *New approaches to the study of migration.* Houston, Texas: William Marsh Rice University.
- Hampshire, K. (2006) Flexibility in domestic organization and seasonal migration among the Fulani of northern Burkina Faso, Africa, 76, pp. 402–426.
- Hampshire, K. (2006). Flexibility in domestic organization and seasonal migration among the Fulani of northern Burkina Faso. *Africa*, 76, 402–426.
- Khan, S. (2006). Zina, Transnational Feminism, and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women. Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 74.
- King, R., Dalipaj, M., & Mai, N. (2006) Gendering migration and remittances: evidence from London and northern Albania, *Population Space and Place*, 12, pp. 409–434.
- King, R., Dalipaj, M., & Mai, N. (2006) Gendering migration and remittances: evidence from London and northern Albania. *Population Space and Place*, 12, 409–434.
- Lutz, H., & Palenga-Moˆllenbeck, E. (2012). Care workers, care drain, and care chains: Reflections on care, migration, and citizenship. *Social Politics*, 19(1), 15-37.
- Mu, R., & van de Walle, D. (2011). Left behind to farm? Women's labor re-allocation in rural China. *Labour Economics*, 18, S83-S97.
- Muhammad, N., N. Ahmad, M. Shah, I. Alam and M. Jawad. 2010. The impact of foreign remittances on the socio-economic conditions of households. *Sarhad J. Agric.* 26(1), 141-145.
- Mukhopadhyay, S., & Sudarshan, R. M. (Eds.). (2003). *Tracking Gender Equity under Economic Reforms Continuity and Change in South Asia.* Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

- Naveed-i-Rahat (1990). *Male out migration and matrix-weighted households: A case study of a Punjabi village in Pakistan*. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation Press.
- Sheikh, A., Naqvi, S. H. A., Sheikh, K., Naqvi, S. H.S., & Bandukda, M. Y. (2012). Physician migration at its roots: a study on the factors contributing towards a career choice abroad among students at a medical school in Pakistan. *Globalization and Health*, 8, 43.
- Tarar, M. G., & Pulla, V. (2014). Patriarchy, Gender Violence and Poverty amongst Pakistani Women: A Social Work Inquiry. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, 2(2), 56-63.
- Yabiku , S. T., Agadjanian, V., & Sevoyan, A. (2010). Husbands' labour migration and wives' autonomy, Mozambique 2000–2006. *Population Studies*, 64(3), 293-306.
- Zachariah, K. C., & Rajan, S. I. (2001). Gender Dimensions of Migration in Kerala: Macro and Micro Evidences. *Asia Pacific Population Journal*, 16(3), 47-70.



## **‘LAJ’, THE CONCEPT FOR HONOUR, SHAME AND MODESTY OF A WOMAN IN INDIAN POPULAR CULTURE**

### *Abstract*

*This article deals with the concept of honor, shame and modesty of an Indian woman as depicted in popular Hindi movies and as described in religious and cultural traditions. ‘Laj’ or ‘Lajja’ are the Hindi words used for modesty, shame and honor of a woman. The concept ‘Laj’ is complex due to its sensitivity and the feelings that a woman has to experience in the course of life. Laj is depicted in media as an issue of family honor. A woman has to obey certain cultural and traditional norms to secure her Laj. This article offers a socio-cultural analysis of a Hindi movie Lajja released in 2001, specifically focused on an Indian woman’s religious and social status in Indian society and underlying discriminations. This movie is distinctive because it brings to light different themes about a woman’s status (e.g. Husband’s lordship vs. Woman’s dignity and self-respect, female infanticide, dowry, exploitation, and class discrimination) in India while targeting atrocities committed against Indian women. This article describes the mainly feminine concept ‘Laj’ in the light of the themes as depicted in the movie and as presented in Hindu religious and cultural traditions.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Kit Winter:** Theo, for Christ's sake, life is not a movie.

**Theo:** Yeah it is. Come on, whatever you say, whatever you do, movies always got there first. Even that line you just said comes from a movie, um - Kevin Spacey in the end of, uh, Swimming With Sharks.

(Do the I, English Movie, 2003)

---

### **Azher Hameed Qamar**

Lecturer, Department of Psychology,  
University of Management and Technology (UMT),  
Lahore, Pakistan  
Email: azher.hameed@live.com

Movies may help the viewers to see the “for-granted” aspects of life in a clear exploratory perspective where things are not blurred as they remain in everyday life following conformity and submission. Status of women in the traditional complex societies is a topic that remains blurred under the automatic for-granted gendered constructs that rarely allow the society members to have another perspective. The sensitivity of women issues (regarding gender discrimination) is grounded in religious and social stereotypes and accordingly implied social system, often shielded by social and religious authorities. Hence, it is also a brave task to bring a woman’s life in the media in the form of narrative film story. Such movies may not grab much attention from the viewers seeking conformity with the society they live in, but spread a strong explicit message that follows them in everyday life. “*Lajja*” is one of the rarely produced movies in Indian context that drive a nail right in the heart of religious and social stigma of Indian culture that compromises a woman’s fundamental human rights in the name of “*Lajja*”. *Laj* or *Lajja* is a feminine concept related to the modesty, chastity, and honor of a woman in Indian society.

Mujhe Lajja aati hai  
I feel a sense of shame (*Lajja*)  
(*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001)

“Don’t you have a sense of shame? You are defying family traditions. You cannot go against your father/husband. Your immodesty will ruin the whole family”. In Indian cultural context, these sentences are ‘whispered’ or ‘shouted’ very often in the middle and lower middle class families to protect the modesty of the woman and honor of the family. The consequences are dangerous for the woman who fails to understand this ‘whisper’ and for the family who do not communicate this ‘message’. A traditional Indian woman is not an individual identity, but she is a central figure in an Indian family where she upholds the family honor by preserving her social status as identified by the mainly male dominated religious epics and socio-political forces. The gendered concept of modesty and shame, thus takes an important place in the description of an Indian woman. Indian culture, dominated by Hinduism but influenced by many other religions and traditions, gives a ‘feminine’ description of modesty and shame that is similar to other South-Asian cultures in many aspects.

As soon as a baby-girl steps into girlhood, she learns to behave like a ‘modest’ girl who is the honor of the family that must be protected by her obedience and under the supervision of the male members of the family. Media, as an important factor in presenting culture, unveils the social practices of different cultural ideas related to a woman. Cinema is a big and popular media source that reflects and affects cultural and social attitudes. Portrayals of a woman in Hindi cinema display a picture of

Indian society that is also not limited to India. ‘Woman’ in Hindi cinema and other popular media has been used as a concept to express religious, cultural, and social aspects of the gendered Indian society. Influenced by religious myths and epics, traditional norms and values, and politics of patriarchal social system, a woman is presented in specific roles. Some of the ideal roles a woman is portrayed are; a traditional obedient wife devoted to her ‘husband-lord’, a kind mother sacrificing for her children, a beloved fighting against cultural and social norms for her lover. Besides, in negative roles she is an item-girl, an adulterous and murderous woman. Another aspect of a woman description in Hindi movies is a victim for revenge, humiliation and disgrace. An attempt, successful or unsuccessful, to rape a woman is an easy and effective way the villain chooses to humiliate the hero. The roles a woman is portrayed also describe a man as a protector, a lord, an easy prey for woman’s ‘lust’ and ‘beauty’, and a destroyer of honor and shame.

Presentation of a woman in Indian media describes her central character in a family oriented patriarchal society where she as a traditional woman, consciously or unconsciously, resists the modern feminist notions and western individualism (Fazal, 2009). Hence, the presentation of a woman in Indian media in different positive and negative roles is a reflection of the mythological description of a woman disposition, cultural and religious description of gender roles, and a conflict of traditional and modern Indian woman. Hindi cinema is mostly occupied with musical, romantic and action movies, but there are few movies that addressed social issues and specifically woman issues. Hindi movie ‘*Lajja*’ released in 2001 is one of the movies dealing with woman issues in Indian society. In this article, I am discussing the understanding of the concept of honor, shame and modesty named as *Laj* or *Lajja* of a woman as depicted in the movie. The article offers a narrative analysis of the movie in its socio-cultural perspective pursuing the description of the status of the woman in Indian popular culture. This study investigated;

- How does the movie *Lajja* portray the social status of a woman in Indian society?
- What are the institutionalized forms of gender discrimination, as presented in different narratives in the movie?
- How do the core religious texts describe a woman?
- How do the religious and social power structure locate woman in the social sphere of life?

This movie is distinctive because it brings to light four different themes about a woman’s status in India while targeting atrocities committed against Indian women. The movie met with controversy by different religious and cultural schools soon after

it was released. The movie portrays ‘Woman’ or ‘Sita’ (the ideal woman) who in an effort to gain ‘*Atm-samman*’ (self-respect) challenges the so-called religious and cultural settings for the women. The movie presents the questionable status of a woman in Indian society under the following narratives.

1. Woman as an entity of reproduction: A pregnant woman escapes from her husband’s home who after being impotent in an accident wants to get the baby. The woman cannot find shelter in her parents’ home because it is against the family’s honor.
2. The Dowry Practice: A girl, whose father was humiliated and threatened to break up the marriage by her in-laws for dowry, refused to marry.
3. Ascribed Chastity: A pregnant stage artist is rejected by her lover on suspicion for having relations with the old man (owner of the theatre) who tries to exploit her. She was tortured by the mob for challenging the religious texts about a woman from ‘*Ramayana*’.
4. Violence of Discrimination: A Dalit (lower caste) woman being gang raped and killed by the upper caste because his son and daughter of the *Thakur* (upper caste landlord) are in love.

In the light of above-mentioned themes as depicted in Hindi movie ‘*Lajja*’ and relevant religious literature, this article explores the mainly feminine concept ‘*Laj*’.

## **METHODOLOGY**

*Lajja* is a movie that provides stories of four women who faced inequality and discrimination. Selection of the movie was primarily based on these different stories of the women life, yet directed towards the same gendered status. To focus on the meanings of the reality portrayed in the movie and to examine the topics (Denzin, 1989), the researcher engaged himself with the movie as a nonparticipant observer (Tan and Ko, 2004). The researcher watched the movie several times and divided the whole movie in four parts that told about the different narratives. Emphasizing the literary aspects of the movie, characters, settings, plot and symbols were focused to unveil narrative and ideological constructs in the movie. Every part was carefully watched, significant dialogues were noted and their relevancy with religion and culture identified. Sub-themes were emerged from each part of the movie and a connection was investigated with reference to the four major themes of the narratives.

Meanings of the narratives were interpreted at referential, explicit, implicit and symptomatic levels. To reach the clarity about the religious depiction of the status of the women in the movie, it was important to review status of a woman in Hindu religious scripture. For the purpose, authentic religious text was studied and used to interpret the religious themes. Hence a significant section of the findings includes a review of religious literature regarding women. A detailed discussion provided a socio-cultural analysis of the social context and social reality in connection with a woman's status in Indian socio-religious context and underlying ideological reality.

## DISCUSSION

I do! I do feel a sense of shame (Lajja)! A land where womenfolk are given the exalted position of Goddesses...a land where people scale mountains...singing glories to the Goddess Mother...a woman, a mother, was raped and burnt alive. And no one even bothered to enquire. Such is the hypocrisy of a nation in which I was born. I feel shame (Lajja) of that! To see my men-folk remain mute spectators to atrocities, perpetrated in their presence...I feel ashamed (Lajja) to acknowledge their impotency. I feel ashamed when I see womenfolk rendered helpless. Even today, in several villages...the female child is killed at birth. Several unmarried girls kill themselves...for fear of not taking enough dowry to their in-laws. And yet others are burnt alive after marriage. Even before a girl can think for herself...she is married away...as if she were a burden they want to get rid of. A woman who has not borne a child... is spurned with the label of a barren woman. I do feel a sense of shame (Lajja)! (Lajja, Hindi Movie, 2001)

### Laj or Lajja

*Laj* is derived from Sanskrit word *Lajja* meaning shyness, modesty or shame that also indicates a woman's feelings in the presence of strangers (especially in an Indian cultural context). *Laj* is also used for *Purdha* (veiling) that has been a cultural feminine trait in Indian history (Singhji, 1994). The concept is complex due to its sensitivity. The situations and feelings that a woman has to experience in the course of life at one hand and on the other male authority and responsibility to protect her *Laj* are culturally constructed regardless of any religious affiliation. During 1947 riots in India (at the time of partition of United India into India and Pakistan), hundreds of

women were either killed by their own men, or they committed suicide to save their chastity that might be ruined by the opposing faction to humiliate the target group. The women who were abducted or missed were later (at the time of reunion after partition) abandoned by their families because they might not be pure and not fit for the family anymore. Even today honor-killing, dowry-killing, physical and psychological torture for a woman not being fit in the family for any reason, using females for tribal disputes, and abusing them to humiliate the opposing group or person is still in practice. That is why; *Laj* is depicted as an issue of family honor in literature, movies, songs and folk-literature.

A woman, performing her role as daughter, sister, wife or mother has to obey certain cultural and traditional norms to secure her *Laj* that is in fact the honor of the whole family in the society. Thus, *Lajja* or *Laj* is a required output of a set of instructions and restrictions designed and implemented by the culture to control all aspects of social behaviour of a woman including her clothing, way of talking and other verbal or non-verbal gestures. To explain this feminine concept, it is important to understand a woman's disposition and status in Hinduism and Indian culture.

### **Woman in Hindu Religious Scripture**

India, a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country of over one billion population, is a complex blend of religious traditions and ancient customs. Hinduism is a dominated religion and due to its adaptable nature was historically influenced by the other cultures and religions that came to India but at the same time also influenced other non-Hindu cultures (Jones and Ryan, 2007). While giving a description of Hinduism as a religion, Flood (1996) finds it problematic to reach a certain definition of Hinduism due to the absence of a single historical founder, a belief system, and a centralized authority. He (1996, p.7) refers the saying of Jawaharlal Nehru, first prime minister of independent India that Hinduism is "all things to all men". Anyhow four Vedas (Ancient Hindu scriptures) are considered the foundation of Hinduism. Other influential religious texts are *Manusmriti* (that is considered the authoritative scripture for describing rules of good conduct) and Hindu narrative traditions, the epics of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* (that are often considered as fifth Vedas and also an integral part of folk-theatre).

*Manusmriti*, known in English as the Laws of Manu was first translated by Sir William Jones (1796) as "The ordinances of Menu". *Mahabharata* is significant because of *Bhagavad-Gita* (Songs of the Lord) and presentation of female destructive powers, whereas *Ramayana* is distinctive for the description of *Sita*, the ideal woman (Jones and Ryan, 2007; Flood, 1996). These epics also hold a distinct place in Indian

culture and society. Though there are contradictions within the religion and also cultural variation across the country that has shaped a multifaceted perception about the status of the woman, but a woman's disposition as described in religious scriptures and as presented in epics is a mystery. She is a goddess and a demon as well. In social life, woman is an integral part of the family welfare and gods bestow prosperity on the families where a woman is being honored. Contrary, the families not honoring the female relations are destroyed gradually. *Manusmriti* encourages men to seek family welfare by honoring the family women;

Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law, who desire (their own) welfare. Where women are honored, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honored, no sacred rite yields rewards. Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. The houses, on which female relations, not being duly honored, pronounce a curse, perish completely, as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek (their own) welfare should always honor women on holidays and festivals with (gifts of) ornaments, clothes, and (dainty) food. (*Manusmriti*, 3:55-59)

She is a queen of her son's household and gods are pleased with the families where woman is honored and cared by fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. A mother is like a god and she must be respected and obeyed by sons and their wives (Sarasvati, 2009). *Mahabharata* portrays a mother as a shelter; she is the dearest, and she deserves protection, love, respect and obedience because she gives birth, she feeds and nursed. Nevertheless answering the question, why a woman should not be trusted, we see from Eve (Biblical Myths) to Pandora (Greek Myth), a woman's identity shares some similarities, increasing the mystery about the woman and her varying status under the influence of certain myths. A woman forced by the 'curiosity' tends to go against the Divine directives, thus tempting a man to follow her; she acts as a satanic weapon to allure the Man. Hinduism gives a much similar disposition of a woman. *Manusmriti* describes a woman as a creature of impure desires and inconsistent soul that is polluted with greed, wrath and wickedness. She is naturally greedy, heartless and disloyal. "(When creating them) Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct."(*Manusmriti*, 9:17)

*Mahabharata* is also not different while presenting a woman's disposition as stained with sins, tricks, illusions, and lust. A man is responsible to protect himself from the natural weaknesses of a woman, and she must be guided, protected and controlled by the man. Otherwise due to dangerous disposition she may bring disaster to the whole family. According to *Manusmriti*;

Her father protects in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence. Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families. (*Manusmriti*, 9:3-5)

According to Sarsawati, the description of a woman's nature in *Manusmriti* has influenced the customs and tradition in India. "Such distrust and such low estimate of woman's nature and character in general, is at the root of the custom of seclusion of woman in India" (Sarsawati, 2009, p.54). She further describes the classification of Hindu religion as masculine and feminine religion, where feminine religion is to obey her husband-lord. She is like a 'marital property' and husband has the right to abandon her and deprive her of the property if he is not happy with her.

Though as a mother, a woman has high esteem in Hinduism, yet the gender of the offspring does matter. A woman having sons is regarded more respectful. "May you be the mother of a hundred sons" is a traditional wedding wish and *Punsawan Sanskar* ceremony during pregnancy is a pray for son because a sonless woman is unfortunate. Kapoor (2005) while giving positive and negative pictures of a woman in Hindu scriptures also discloses a contradiction. A woman is like a goddess having a sacred body. She is the queen of the house. Kapoor says that in Vedic times, women and men were equal in many aspects, but after Muslim invasion in India, women were restricted to home. Anyhow, while giving a negative picture of woman in Hindu scriptures he refers *Veda* and other Hindu scripture that describes the woman an inferior creation. *Niyogpratha* (ancient Aryan custom of childless widow or women having sexual intercourse with a man other than husband to beget child), *sati pratha* (custom of burning the widow with the body of her dead husband), and *dasipratha* (keeping the slave girls) were the ancient Hindu traditions. Being a widow was not less than a curse. She was considered ill-fated and was not allowed to live like a normal woman. She was restricted to live her life alone, not participating in any household ceremonies. Even today, becoming a widow, though the widow is not burnt with the husband, she has to live a dreadful life. Lamb (2000)'s study in North India uncovers a widow's dilemma for being a woman without a husband. She has to

go through the religious rituals (including head-shaving) and to live the widowhood with 'modesty' and 'faithfulness' to her dead husband. Everything that gives meaning to life should be avoided. Eating little and poor food (absence of anything that can make the body strong and beautiful) and wearing a white dress with no ornaments (absence of anything that is colorful or cheerful) will make her unattractive for others. Her weak and ugly body will control her 'desires'. Thus, all the pains and suffering she may experience is necessary for her devotion to her 'husband-lord', her '*Laj*' as a widow and of the whole family.

Therefore, the desire for sons, discriminated attitude towards widows or the women having only daughters and controversial description of a woman's disposition are a part of Hindu religion. Kapoor (2005, p.58-63) gives references from *Vedas* and *Manusmriti* for both sides of Hinduism.

Chapter 9 of *Manusmriti*, the textual tradition of Hinduism, provides the law for husband-wife relationship. It gives permission to a husband to punish his wife or to bring another wife in certain conditions. For example;

For one year let a husband bear with a wife who hates him; but after (the lapse of) a year let him deprive her of her property and cease to cohabit with her. She who shows disrespect to (a husband) who is addicted to (some evil) passion, is a drunkard, or diseased, shall be deserted for three months (and be) deprived of her ornaments and furniture. She who drinks spirituous liquor, is of bad conduct, rebellious, diseased, mischievous, or wasteful, may at any time be superseded (by another wife). A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year, she whose children (all) die in the tenth, she who bears only daughters in the eleventh, but she who is quarrelsome without delay. (*Manusmriti*, 9:77-81)

This description of a woman's disposition and status in Hindu religious scripture gives an overview of the formation of concept of a 'modest' woman with a sense of shame in a Hindu society. The culture of sub-continent including Muslim societies of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India has been influenced more or less by this description and the way they are portrayed to define a woman role in the society in movies and dramas.

## Lajja, the Movie

In the beginning, the researcher has referred to closing dialogue of the main character Vaidehi of Hindi movie *Lajja* (2001). Vaidehi is a pregnant woman living in New York. Her husband is unfaithful and abuses her in different ways. She ran away from her house. Her husband (after being impotent in an accident) came to know about her pregnancy and chased her to India to get his heir. Her parents' response was exactly the same as can be expected by the Indian parents, "Once married, woman's home is her husband's home. The home a woman enters after marriage, she ought to leave only in death." (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001). In a famous Pakistani movie *Daachi* (1964), a Tonga (horse-cart) driver, while singing a well-wishing song, advises the maiden bride to protect the *Laj* of her family in her in-laws, even if the bridegroom is not a match for her. For the sake of family's honor and Vaidehi's modesty, her parents forced her to go back because their family and her husband's honor are on risk because of her 'unwise' step to leave her husband's home, "People will point fingers and will say bad words. The honor of our family is in your hands, as also your husband's honor." (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001). Vaidehi's reply was a question and the voice of a sensitive Indian woman who is mute for the sake of her *Laj*, "in every family, it is the woman who shoulders the honor, but the woman has no honor" (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001).

The vulnerability attached to a female is not natural but cultural. She is taught to play a role where she has to obey what the 'protector' says. Husband-wife relation is meaningful as it establishes the status of a woman to build up her own family where she practices her natural abilities to bring up and to nurture the children. However, a family for a woman in Indian culture is not limited to her husband and children but the in-laws (husband's parents, brothers, sisters). A man, with the confidence of having more strength and bravery than a woman has, performs his role as a guard, protector, and care-taker. Unfortunately, very often this culturally constructed 'authority' is practiced to dominate as absolute authority leading to violence against woman. This violence varies from traditional practices to intended crimes according to the status of the woman in the family. Few examples the traditional practices of gender-based violence are:

- Child marriage
- *Sati* (burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband)
- *Devadasi*, a woman who serve gods (a Hindu religious tradition in which girls are married and dedicated to a deity or temple)

- Forced pregnancy and abortion

Besides religious and cultural traditions, other reasons include the greed for property and excuse for second marriage. Some of the perceptions about woman's role and gender discrimination are;

- Discrimination on the basis of physical and mental strengths.
- Discrimination on the basis of social and economic status.

A female child should be trained to serve the male members of the family because an ideal wife is the one, whose love is selfless like mother and whose service is dedicated like daughter (this concept goes for an ideal daughter and an ideal mother as well). A female child should learn the submission of her own will. This is the role she has to play towards her parents when unmarried, and to her husband when married. The real home of a daughter is her husband's home, and she is supposed to leave her parents, brothers and sisters one day (Qamar, 2010). Alarming gender discrimination statistics in India also indicate the vulnerability of women in a society where male dominancy is religiously and culturally supported. Due to social control of these traditional forces, not all the gender-based discrimination cases are properly reported.

### **Woman as an Entity of Reproduction**

Vaidhei, in this movie, was seen as an entity of reproduction that was required by her husband for the child. She was also forced by her husband to mix up in the gatherings where a woman was used for business relationships. When Vaidhei resisted to join such gatherings, she was labeled as old fashioned.

Mere vicha rpurane zaroor hai lekin, aapke vichaar ganday  
aur giraune hain

My thoughts are definitely old, but your thoughts are dirty  
and nasty

She, after a sheer disappointment from her husband, condemned his living style and refused to be objectified for his business deals. She was pregnant, and she came to know that her husband wanted to take over the baby and her worth was no more than a vessel to bear the baby. She took a bold step, and while compromising on so-called

*Laj*, she ran for her *Atm-Saman* (self-respect). Her journey begins and she discovers the truth of an Indian woman while observing different types of violence.

### **The Dowry Practice**

Maithili, the first encounter of Vaidhei and the second woman in the movie, is a young bride who along with her father is being humiliated by the groom's father because the dowry money is less than the demanded. She felt the grief of her father for being a girl's father, "My poor Papa...He was begging each person for forgiveness as if...he's committed a grave sin by giving birth to a girl." (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001). She could not stand this and finally refused the groom. She thought it better than to go to a family where she is valued by her dowry. When everybody was shocked on her reaction and her father was crying, her grandmother appreciated her saying; "You have raised a woman's dignity. If we were the first to take this initiative, the dowry tradition would be no more".

Dowry is the money, ornaments, property and other things 'gifted' by the bride's parents to their daughter that is either culturally obligatory or demanded by the groom and groom's parents. In case dowry is not gifted or not up to the requirements of the groom's parents, a bride has to pay the price. She may be tortured physically or mentally and even she might be killed. Dowry, even if not demanded explicitly, groom's parents formally expect it from the bride's parents in a sophisticated way, saying "Whatever you will give to your daughter after all belongs to her". It is usual that a girl's parents start collecting dowry since her birth. Dowry, though demanding or taking is considered a crime in India, yet the situation could not be changed significantly. Dowry remains in practice in different forms before and after marriage. Number of daughters in a family is an easy way to understand the sadness and economical pressure they exert on the family head. Dowry is also one of the reasons why people want sons. Sex selective abortion and female infanticide are illegal but an easy way to get rid of this 'burden'. Why not spend some money in the beginning instead of spending a huge amount of money whole life?

### **Ascribed Chastity**

Woman is vulnerable, at her home or at a workplace. She is not trustworthy, even a lover singing love songs for his mistress and vowing his loyalty with her can get suspicious about her. *Rama* and *Sita*, as central characters of famous love story and Hindu religious epic *Ramayana*, portray the ideal Indian woman showing her strong devotion for her husband-lord and a perfect Indian man proving himself as a protector of his honor '*Sita*'. *Sita*, after being abducted by *Ravana* (the villain in the story) and

then rescued by her brave husband and lover *Rama*, was asked to go for a test named as *Agni pariksha* (to go through the fire to prove her purity) for her purity. *Sita*, living away from *Rama* in the possession of *Ravana*, was suspected to be 'touched' by *Ravana*. Thus, if she could successfully go through the *Agni* (fire), she is pure. That she did and succeeded. Santoshi(2001) as a producer and director of the movie *Lajja* evokes the question of modesty in *Ramayana*. Janki, the third woman in the movie, a stage artist in a folk-theatre, is performing the role of *Sita* in *Ramayana*. The theatre owner tries to exploit her but after continuous failure; he poisons her lover with doubts about her modesty. Her lover gets suspicious about her and asks her to abort the baby. Janki, after being shocked by such a behaviour from her lover, refused to abort the child, "If I am chaste, and then I'm chaste with this child. Not otherwise. If he accepts me, it has to be with the baby. Or not at all."(*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001). She reacts on the stage while performing *Agni pariksha* and questions the credibility of Lord *Rama* while telling about her devotion to *Rama* and her vulnerability as a woman.

Every moment I spent in Lanka felt like eternity but I took your name and survived. And the outcome is that...you question my chastity. You worry about your family, goodness and gallantry but never thought about your life partner. I too could have stayed in the royal palace like *Urmila* but I considered you God and came to the forest with you. I did my duty as a wife and you are punishing me!

If I'd given in to *Ravana's* wish, both of you would lose the war without fighting. Then...what would happen to your gallantry, your lineage, righteousness?

As for the test, both of us have stayed away from each other. Both of us should undergo the ordeal by fire. (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001)

Reacting this way about the *Ramayana*, Janki questions the 'ideal' role of *Sita*. Therefore, audience shows their reaction as a 'true' guardian of the religion. Consequently, being tortured by the mob for challenging the religious texts about woman from '*Ramayana*', she lost her child and got mad.

A husband-wife relationship is a trust relationship both ways. Husband spends most of his time out of the house as the bread-earner of the family and woman performs her duty at home as a mother and a wife. Yet a woman is guided by her husband by verbal instructions or non-verbal gestures how to live at home. She is told about 'strangers' and relatives. A set of instruction about do's and do not's, and supervision

by in-laws is necessary to protect *Laj*. Hence, the ‘fears’ give meaning to the traditional concept of a bride’s *Laj*. The way she talks, walks and interact, describes her modesty and nobility. A girl with little outspokenness and openness may be taken as a ‘vulgar’ woman as compared to a boy who with the same attitude might be considered a ‘confident’ man. If one of the women in the family is ‘vulgar’, people may have wrong perceptions about the other women in the family.

### **Violence of Discrimination**

The fourth woman in the movie is a Dalit (lower caste) woman, Ramdulari, who is gang raped and killed by the upper caste *Thakurs* because her son and daughter of the *Thakur* (upper caste landlord) are in love. Ramdulari is a mid-wife who has strong feelings for women's rights. We see her role in Dalit community as a savior and a preacher. She is against the village tradition of drowning a new-born girl into milk to get her back as a son in the next birth. She resisted this tradition, saved a new-born girl’s life and scolded the merciless father, “If this was done to your mother, how would you take birth? Murderers! This is a latent mother! What will remain in the world if you kill a mother?” (*Lajja*, Hindi Movie, 2001). Ramdulari was also seen as a woman right activist in the movie. She was running a vocational training school where she educated village women about their rights and dignity. She was seen counseling a woman whose head was shaved and face was smeared with black ink by the *Thakurs*, because she refused the bounded labor. However, finally Ramdulari was a victim of the revenge of the *Thakurs* for challenging their “*Laj*” by her son.

Since, at present female infanticide and sex-selective abortions are common in India, women are decreasing in numbers as compared to men. A girl is a burden because she needs extra care to protect her *Laj*. A huge amount of money is needed for her marriage. She is not considered to carry the father’s name in lineage.

These four themes about the status of a woman in Indian culture as depicted in the movie *Lajja*, gives a gloomy picture of the Indian society where a woman is ‘respectable’ if she has *Lajja*, and knows how to be consistent in the religious and cultural domains designed for a woman. All the four themes describe a woman’s discriminated status in Indian socio-religious context with a consensus on considering woman as a property or object in all spheres of life.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this article, I tried to uncover the gendered issues in Indian society having their roots in religious and cultural traditions that cannot be resolved by forced

implementation of the law. The pride that arises for being a man is 'natural' in the society where a 'man' is defined as a '*Pati – Parmeshwar*' (Husband is God). Further practices of dowry, concepts of *Laj* constructed under male dominations, prejudices about woman disposition increase the false sense of pride in men. Similarly, the reservation mentioned by Indian government about the article 5 (Sex Role Stereotyping and Prejudice) and article 16 (Marriage and Family Life) of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) also show the complexity of religious and cultural traditions in a vast and multifaceted Indian society and to some extent an inability to address these issues comprehensively. I suggest that before implementing any law that may challenge the cultural stereotypes, members of the society should be prepared to abide by the law through education and their participation in their respective contexts. Since gender stereotypes are reinforced by the complex cultural and religious notions, all segments of the society must address these issues on political, academic and institutional level.

## REFERENCES

- CEDAW. (1979). *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>, Retrieved on 22-01-2016.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). Tender Mercies: Two Interpretations. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 30, 37–57.
- Fazal, S. (2009). Emancipation or Anchored Individualism? Women and TV Soaps in India. In K. M. Gokulsing & W. Dissanayake (Eds.), *Popular culture in a globalised India* (pp. 41-52). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Flood, G. D. (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, C. A., & Ryan, J. D. (2007). *Encyclopaedia of Hinduism*. New York, NY: InfoBase Publishing.
- Jones, W. (1796). *Institutes of Hindu law, or, the ordinances of Menu, according to the gloss of Cullúca: comprising the Indian system of duties, religious and civil*: Printed by the order of the government.
- Kapoor, S. S. (2005). *Hinduism, an introduction*. New Delhi: Hemkunt Publishers.
- Lamb, S. (2000). *White Saris and Sweet Mangoes: Aging, Gender, and Body in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Qamar, A. H. (2010). Bringing up a Daughter! Islamic Perspective and Muslim Societies. *PSYKOLOGISK TIDSSKRIFT*. Psykologisk Institute, Trondheim: NTNU
- Santoshi, R. (Writer). (2001). Lajja In R. Santoshi (Producer). Hyderabad: India: Santoshi Productions.
- Sarasvati, P. R. (2009). *The High Caste Hindu Woman*. Charleston: Biblio Bazaar LLC.
- Singhji, V. (1994). *The Rajputs of Saurashtra*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Tan, J. & Y. Ko. (2004). Using Feature Films to Teach Observation in Undergraduate Research Methods. *Teaching Sociology*, 32, 109–18.

## ISSUES IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: FEMALE RESEARCHER'S DILEMMA IN A RURAL SETTING

### ABSTRACT

*In this paper I explore the issue of insider/outsider status with reference to the ethnographic research especially in terms of positionality, creation of knowledge and power. The data used herein was situated in the larger study conducted for the doctoral dissertation. During the process of research I frequently had to re-evaluate my strategies to interact with the respondents and for that matter I was constantly switching back & forth between my positions as an insider and outsider. In the rural community of Cholistan desert of Southern Pakistan, where I conducted ethnographic field research for my doctoral dissertation during the year 1998-1999, I had to face the dilemma that how to position myself, i.e., as an insider or outsider. I was considered as an insider because of my ethnic roots in the area, as well as my grasp over the language. Yet, at the same time, being an urban and educated female, I was an outsider especially in the presence of their relatives from around the area. During research my dilemma was and how to locate myself in relationship to different individuals, without compromising the objectivity of my research.*

**Key Words:** *Pakistan, Cholistan desert, Insider/ outsider, pastoralists, Ethics of caring, passionate detachment*

### INTRODUCTION

Field research is the systematic process of investigating an issue through face to face interactions & observations of everyday life. The researcher conducting field research in a rural setting has to tackle various issues, like where to conduct the research,

---

#### **Dr. Rukhsana Hassan**

Assistant Professor

Head Department of Gender Studies

Fatima Jinnah Women University

The Mall, Rawalpindi

drukhsanahassan@gmail.com

whether to conduct fieldwork as an insider or an outsider to the research communities, and whether to conduct research in a setting which is familiar or unfamiliar to the researcher (Naples 2003; Bailey 2007, Macionis 2005). According to Carol A Bailey (2007:38) “opinion are mixed on whether it is better to conduct field research in a familiar or an unfamiliar setting. Some argue that if a person is familiar with the dynamics of a setting from participants’ perspectives than there is a little need to undertake the research.” Whereas, other scholars are of the opinion that familiarity with the setting provides researcher a firm foundation on which to build on.

In the rural community of Cholistan desert of Southern Pakistan, where I conducted ethnographic field research for my doctoral dissertation during the year 1998-1999, I also had to face the dilemma that how to position myself, i.e., as an *insider* or *outsider*. I was considered as an *insider* because of my ethnic roots in the area, as well as my grasp over the language. The locals thought of me as one of them in the presence of *Punjabi* farmers or government officials whenever they visited the area. Yet, at the same time, being an urban and educated female, I was an outsider especially in the presence of their relatives from around the area. The predicament I had to face was which methodological perspective I need to adopt? Whether the strategy of “passionate detachment” (Haraway 1985) or “ethics of caring” (Collins 1990), and how to locate myself in relationship to different individuals, without compromising the objectivity of my research.

In this paper I explore the issue of insider/outsider status with reference to the ethnographic research especially in terms of positionality, creation of knowledge and power. The data used herein was situated in the larger study conducted for the doctoral dissertation. During the process of research I frequently had to re-evaluate my strategies to interact with the respondents and for that matter I was constantly switching back & forth between my positions as an insider and outsider. I had to, as Sharon Bays (1994 as quoted in Naples 2003) has demonstrated; renegotiate my identity as an insider or outsider throughout my fieldwork. The research not only provided me opportunities but also challenges to study ‘my people’. It is my position that my association with same ethnic group & gender, knowledge of the language were uniting forces and created a bond of sisterhood during the process of interviewing, on the other hand my urban residence, socio-economic & educational status was the force that created distance between me & my respondents. Although the common culture between me & the community was helpful in gaining access, and developing rapport, but at the same time I had to decide how to maintain my naiveté in the culture that was familiar to me and how much distance to be kept in order to maintain the objectivity of the research.

The objective of the research, as Brayton (1997) has rightly indicated, is to capture and accurately convey "reality", be it the reality of an event or experience or the truth of a population and for that matter the researcher want to include the participant's perspective and voices in all aspects of the research process. Recent discussions on the issue of insider/outsider status have revealed the fact that the boundaries between the two positions are very fluid (Eppley 2006; Kee 2000; Lee 2000; Naples 2003). According to Oakley (1981) being an 'insider' to particular communities enables researcher to understand and empathize with participants' point of view. As according to Naples (2003) the proponents of "insider" research are of the opinion that non-natives may not be able to gain in-depth understandings of cultural practices and beliefs that are available to insiders as they have greater linguistic competence and can blend in well with the community members as compared to outsiders. On the other hand, according to her, advocates of 'outsider' research insist that non natives can be more objective in observing & analyzing the social setting and cultural beliefs. Scholars have documented that the processes & the outcomes of field research are greatly affected by the reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the community members (Bailey 2007).

Feminists believe that the traditional social science research is dominated by male bias as well as patriarchal values and beliefs which shape both the construction and definition of how research is done, data is interpreted & knowledge is determined. They have also questioned the issues of power and control in the research process, i.e., how problems are defined, which knower's are identified and are given and how research findings are constructed. It has been well documented that there exist power issues between the researcher and the researched as well as how the researcher's decision making in the field affected participant observation and the role of participants' in affecting the direction of the research (Brayton 1997; Eppley 2006; Ntseane 2000 Mariam & Muhammad 2000; Anderson & Jack 1991 Cotterrill 1992, Lee 2000; Naples 2003). According to Lather (1988:571), "the overt ideological goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct both the *invisibility* and *distortion* of female experience." Brayton (1997) is of the opinion that in traditional research, knowledge of women's lives has been absent or constructed from the perspective of men.

Reinharz (1992:262-263) is of the opinion that in contrast to much of mainstream research which generally seeks to attain value neutrality, feminist researchers will often integrate personal experiences into their research. Along with it, the social location of the researcher (e.g. age, race, orientation, class) is also one of the important factors in shaping the research process. This close relationship between the researcher & the respondents, according to Reinharz (1992:262) has also initiated a

debate among feminists researcher about “how to walk that fine line and "work out the tension between objectivity and subjectivity". Charmaz & Mitchell (1997:194 as cited in Naples 2003:32) are of the opinion that a researcher has to find a middle ground between “deference to the subjects’ views” and “audible authorship” and stress that they do not pretend that their stories present autonomous truth, but neither do they share the belief that ethnography is biased. This middle ground in turn will address the dilemma of “privileging the researcher’s voice over others whose lives were the subject of inquiry” (Naples 2003:31).

Naples (2003) is of the opinion that a feminist researcher enables respondents to share their deeply felt experiences. They acknowledge that power is infused in social relations including relationships between the researcher & respondents. Brayton (1997) believes that women as researchers bring their own experiences and history into the role of researcher and the research process. The feminist researcher may be both insider and/or outsider to the environment and topic they are exploring. As insider, they have a stronger understanding of the dynamics of social relationships that inform the prevailing situation. The issue of inequality may be overcome through the affiliation of the researcher with the real situation where participants may feel more comfortable in sharing information with someone who has the knowledge about the context (Matsumoto, 1996:165). By contrast, the feminist researcher who lives outside the situation being examined may also be able to change the imbalance of the power relations with the participants. Having to explain personal experiences and feelings with an outsider allows women the space to critically assess their own lived realities. It reinforces their location as author and expert to the situation.

It also gives women the opportunity to safely criticize their community, organization or situation without fear of discovery. Striving for balance and equality between researcher and participant entails negotiating the often blurry insider/outsider relationship between the two parties. Feminist scholars like, Naples (2003, 1998a); Bays (1994); Wasserfall (1997); Williams (1996); Smith (1992); Collins (1990) have discussed in detail the issue of power between the researcher & the researched and are of the opinion that the power relations between the two should be non hierarchical. As women, both researcher and participant share a common location in the social world on the basis of their gender and can communicate on the basis of this similarity. It is also a fact that the research on women issues need to recognize the differences between women based on class, religion ethnicity, and geographical locations. According to Naples (2003) this can only be possible when dialogic reflective strategies, which are based on having an ongoing dialogue between and among participants and researchers, are adopted. This strategy was also supported by Susan Stern (1998) who believed that conversational strategy is an integral part of

ethnographic research and points to the significance of friendship which in turn leads to more egalitarian research.

## RESEARCH SETTING & METHODS

Cholistan is a vast desert in the southern part of the Bahawalpur division of Punjab province in Pakistan. Lying between 27° 42' and 27° 45' north latitudes and 69° 52' and 73° 05' east longitudes (Arshad, Rao, Akbar 1995), its total area of 26,000 km<sup>2</sup> (10,399sq miles, 6,400,000 acres) cover about two-thirds of the total land area of Bahawalpur Civil Division and about 8 percent of the total land area of Punjab province (FAO 1993:10). Formerly part of the princely state of Bahawalpur, Cholistan is now administered as part of the districts of Bahawalpur (50% of the area), Rahimyar Khan (40% of the area), and Bahawalnagar (10% of the area). On its west, lies the Thar Desert in Sindh and on its east the vast desert of Rajputana (Rajasthan) in India.

The Cholistan desert is about 480 km long and its width varies from 32 to 192 km. locally, the desert is also known as *rohi*. Cholistan Desert is divided into two distinct regions: because of differences in topography, soil and vegetation, the southern part of Cholistan presents a true picture of desert and is known as **Greater Cholistan**, while the northwestern portion is called **Lesser Cholistan**<sup>4</sup> Greater Cholistan makes up 70 percent of the total desert area<sup>5</sup> (FAO 1993). The main human use of the desert is pastoral nomadism. Because of its arid climate and lack of water for irrigation, agricultural activities are limited to the area bordering Lesser Cholistan. The climate in the region is characterized by hot and dry summers with temperature ranges between 50°-53°C. During the summer months, especially in May and June, low pressure triggers very hot dry winds, locally known as *loo*. The temperature during winter ranges from 6°C to 15°C with occasional frost during December.

---

<sup>4</sup> . The area of Lesser Cholistan borders the irrigated areas and many pastoralists have their semi permanent settlements in the area of Lesser Cholistan.

<sup>5</sup> . Lesser Cholistan is devoid of high sand dunes and much of its desert area consists of wide-open level spaces, or flats, of alluvial clay locally known as *dahars*. In fact, these *dahars* were more leveled and smooth as compared to the majority of metallic roads as well as jeepable tracks in the area. Clayey loam dahars with sandy soil support the scrub vegetation. The main vegetation that these dahars can support are *Haloxylon salicornicum* (or which is locally known as *Lana*), and *Haloxylon recurvum* (locally known as *Khar*). Greater Cholistan is characterized by huge sand dunes, predominantly comprising coarse to fine sand or sandy loam, with variable masses and height. The height of these sand dunes ranges from 100-500 feet. The vegetation of these sand dunes differs from place to place depending upon texture and structure of the soil

Settlement of the pastoral nomads selected for the fieldwork was about 45 miles south of Bahawalpur City at *Kakaranwalatoba*<sup>6</sup>. The estimated total population of Cholistan in 1991 was 97,000 (FAO 1993), which is scattered over a large area. This site was chosen because of its population size, ethnic heterogeneity, and broad mix of pastoral and agropastoral activities as well as its proximity to four other settlements. The majority of the population in these settlements belongs to three major clan groupings of the area, **Panwar**, **Channan**, and **Laar**. Apart from these major groups there were households that belong to the **Sheikh** and **Dahey** clans. Around 56% of the households in these settlements derive their sustenance from the livestock they own, while 44% are agro-pastoralists. Within the Cholistani community three categories may be identified on the basis of household herd size and land holdings in 1998-99. Of the 104 households in the sample, representation was ensured from households of all economic strata. The monetary value of these productive assets was calculated by taking the prices quoted by the respondents (also my personal observation) at the time of fieldwork. The three economic strata are:

• Poor (miskeen) 20,000/annum	Less than PRs
• Middle (malдар) 50,000/annum	From PRs. 21,000 to PRs
• Rich (ra'ees) above/annum	From PRs. 51,000 and

Almost all the respondents agreed that the prevailing structure of stratification has emerged on the scene in the recent past because of the concentration of herd ownership in the hands of absentee herd owners and agro-pastoralists, commercialization of livestock and livestock produce, as well as an increased percentage of land ownership. Increased involvement in other economic activities as wage labor, small businesses, and to some extent employment in government departments has also increased economic inequality among Cholistani pastoralists.

---

<sup>6</sup> .During the summer months runoffs from the monsoon accumulate in natural or man-made depressions called *tobas*. The life of each toba depends on its size, evaporation, and the number of livestock and humans surrounding it. Some tobas are covered and are specifically for human consumption, and these are known as *kunds*. In Cholistan every clan in the area has specific rights to its water point or toba. Rights to toba mean the right to camp there and to water livestock until the toba dries up. These rights are originally established by excavating the toba and keeping it desilted. The tobas managed by government departments are open to all the pastoral population of the desert, while private toba sare primarily used by their owners. Each toba has a specific name and also serves as a reference point during the pastoral transhumance

Following a period of initial appraisal and rapport building exercises, case study households & key informants were selected in each of the selected settlements ensuring the representation from all socio-economic groups. An extended period of intense interaction with these households and their neighbors enabled the researcher to gather detailed information regarding their life style, socio-cultural values, festivals, religious beliefs as well as political & economic activities. Apart from it information was also collected on the changes that have occurred in the Cholistani community over the period of last two decades, and the affect of these changes on intra-household relationships. In-depth interviews, group discussions, case studies and observational tools were used to gather information on these topics through a process of methodological triangulation. Detailed field notes were recorded. Efforts were made to question intensively both male and female respondents but there may be a female bias to the work that follows as being a female researcher I was more inclined towards the female respondents. In fact it enabled the researcher to gain insight of both male & female perspectives on various issues affecting the lives of Cholistani pastoralists.

During the initial stages of research process I tried to rely on the traditional interviewing. The community members, especially women, used to ask me what benefit they would get out of my work? What is the use of wasting so much time on useless questions? These questions were difficult to answer, and I knew that the benefit flowed in one way only: in my direction. I wanted information from them and I could offer very little in return. These questions had bothered me since the first time I entered the field. Every morning before getting ready for the field I used to ask myself, What right do I have to ask these people questions regarding their lives, their income and assets, and the innermost details of their personal lives and interpersonal relationship. Why would Cholistani women want to talk with me? Why would they like to disclose intimate details of their lives to an urban based, educated and economically privileged woman like me? What would be my reaction if someone from their village would come into my home and start observing me and asking same questions?"

This critical thinking enabled me to reexamine my research methodology. Therefore, instead of depending totally upon the technique of interviewing, I tried to utilize the technique of interpersonal dialogue (especially with women) and group discussions. In this case they used to ask the same questions of me which they were expected to answer, as a result instead of being mainly subjects of research they were participants in it. My life and their life opened to each other. The women were as curious about my life as I was about theirs. They wanted to know more about me, my family life, and my relations with my in-laws and with my husband. They sympathized with my

childlessness and especially, with my sonlessness. Therefore, I found it useful to tell them about my own family affairs. This not only made the setting informal, but also helped me in my discussion with them about the intimate details of their family life. They felt at ease while discussing issues regarding their love and sex life, their relations with their husbands and in-laws. Mayer (1975) has rightly observed that people want a balanced exchange of information with the fieldworker.

Being an outsider, only when I was able to establish a relationship of trust, understanding and friendliness, after a long and tiring effort and spending long hours in conversing informally, sharing and observing their daily work and problems, did women feel free to relate intimate details of their lives. They used to discuss issues that matter to them the most, especially their relationship with their in-laws and their husbands. Once, I was able to develop an intimate relationship with them my gopa<sup>7</sup> became their safe haven. Therefore, they mostly share their information on issues, which can't be discussed in the presence of others, at night in my gopa, after they were done with their daily household chores. It was their time, their time of peace and relaxation. I used to listen to their views, and to what they themselves had to say about their own lives. They often started talking about matters that were not very relevant to most of my question but I never intervened. All of their narrations were equally important as they reflected their experiences and their memories of their childhood. During the course of their narration they not only expressed their feelings regarding their overall situation but also their insightful opinion on various issues affecting the population of Cholistan as a whole.

Despite their remoteness and lack of basic social services, they exhibited signs of their awareness regarding various issues affecting their lives. They also realized the importance of education and regretted their lack of it, and believed that the major cause of their poverty is their lack of education. During the field work among Cholistan pastoralists I experienced the advantages and disadvantages of being both insider & outsider. As discussed above common culture, belonging to same ethnic group and gender was a useful tool in establishing rapport, and being accepted by the community members, but at the same time this easy access to all information is not without problems, as Ntseane (2000) has documented, "because of the interlocking nature of culture, gender & power." Reexamining the research methodology not only enabled me to understand the complexity of my insider/outsider status but also shed light on the multidimensional power relation that affected & shaped my research. My positionality was subjected to variations. Having same language and cultural

---

<sup>7</sup>. Residential unit. Gopa is a form of hut made up of leaves and branches covered with cloth. The exterior and interior base walls are then plastered with a mixture of mud and cow-dung.

background I was granted a general insider status, but as I was not the actual resident of the area, therefore I was considered as somewhat of an outsider to the community. My fictive kinship role<sup>8</sup> and my grasp of the local language reduced the social distance between me and the participant of my research but it did not eliminate it altogether, as the sub-cultural factors like education, urban residence, & economic status I was considered totally different from the community members. Having my ethnic roots in the area, along with the knowledge of the language, I was considered as an insider and they thought of me as one of them in the presence of *Punjabi* farmers or government officials whenever they visited the area. Yet, at the same time, being an urban and educated female, I was an outsider especially in the presence of their relatives from around the area.

Another issue which I had to face as an *insider* was that the participants in a shared culture used, in our conversations, cultural understandings such as language, proverbs & non verbal expressions to explain prevalent issues, & concepts with the assumption that as an insider I would be able to understand which in turn resulted in the problem of interpretation. In Kondo's opinion, "these cultural meanings are themselves multiple & contradictory they cannot be understood without reference to historical, political, & economic discourses" (1990:300-301). Apart from it being a female researcher I had to face the hostility of some women, because I as a woman seemed to be breaking the very norms of self-effacement and humbleness<sup>9</sup> that they were trying to teach their daughters. They used to wonder why I was trying to reach such heights in education as it wouldn't relieve me from my household duties, and I would have to do the *tookar-bhaji* (cooking of bread and curry) just as they did. Some would say that because I didn't have any kids or mother-in-law, I had no work to do and was free to roam about anywhere. This hostility on part of the women was no surprise to me as I was aware of the fact that my gender was going to stir up contradictory currents emanating from the concurrence of my role as a researcher and my identity as a woman in the society, so I had to maintain a delicate balance

---

<sup>8</sup>. As a "daughter" or "niece" I used to help out in various errands and as a "granddaughter" I often offered my services in cooking, dish washing, fetching water or repairing clothes. It was customary for married girls to bring gifts when they used to visit their natal families, so I too had to get some gifts for community members whenever I went to Bahawalpur. Although it was impossible for me to bring gifts for all community members every time, I tried to compensate by giving money for their functions, or if someone was going to Bahawalpur to get some vegetables or fruits, tea biscuits or candies.

<sup>9</sup>. My form of speech and few of my actions were quite contrary to what they believe and were trying to teach their daughters, e.g., my addressing of my husband by his first name, asking him to help me with my chores when he was around, my pinpointing when he was wrong and not waiting for him to finish eating (rather eating together), so on and so forth.

between them. I had to be on guard in order not to provoke social and sexual hostility. I had to be very careful though, not to make village women suspicious and threatened by my talking to their men alone. I was always careful to ensure that I was not entirely on my own with a male informant, and used to talk to men in the courtyard or in the open and maintained a reasonable distance with them by immediately assuming the role of daughter, niece, or sister.

Throughout my fieldwork there was a constant tension within me to appear traditional and yet gain acceptability as a professional, and while accepting certain norms I had to make sure that I did not completely conform to their female stereotype. The fact I was doing research was not important but how to keep my family ties intact (despite my childlessness) was. Almost all my female respondents wanted to advise me on how to manage this tragedy and kept the interest of my husband intact. They were curious about my family background, the number of brothers I have, and about my education. The most frequently asked question was about the benefits of my research to them and how it will affect their life and how it will solve their problems. Despite their good intentions, their perceptions and mine regarding data collection didn't always coincide. They used to get bored and tired of repetitious questioning, as they saw no need for me to interview different households and male and female members of the household repeatedly.

Another aspect which made me an outsider in the community was my social status, as all my respondents both males & females had low economic & educational background. So the interviewees felt that I was an outsider to the community. Issue of power was another dimension that I have to negotiate. For example my academic status was not a threat to women in the community, but my urban residence and my norms were somewhat threatening to them. As discussed earlier while conducting ethnographic field research, I had to face a challenging question that relates to the location of me in relation to different residents of the communities without compromising the quality of my research.

In order to tackle with the issue I resorted to different methodological approaches, one was 'ethics of caring' (Collins 1990), 'passionate detachment' (Haraway 1988) along with reflective strategies. Collins (1990) describes 'ethics of caring' with reference to three interrelated dimensions, i.e., an emphasis on Individual uniqueness, appropriateness of emotions in dialogues, and capacity of empathy. The strategy of 'passionate detachment' (Haraway 1988) is based on developing a close relationship with residents and reflecting upon these relationship after each field trip. This was challenging to sustain, as discussed earlier, once the researcher is in the field, the fieldwork roles and relationship keeps on shifting. Although building relationship is

an important and essential part of gaining trust and access to the community, so I had to address various issues like, how to intervene effectively to assist them in their personal crises, or to help them fight against social evils before interacting with the participants. While doing so I had to make an attempt to keep a distanced stance in an effort to achieve more objective analyses. While conforming to reflective strategies I have to rethink my plan of action during the process of research because as an ethnographer we interact with human beings therefore each delicacy and detail of reflective exercise needs to be taken care of. Which stretches from accommodation and boarding in field work to dress codes that need to be adopted, to the point where one should contemplate as to who should be the primary respondent and how should the respondents be addressed at large. Plus, as El-Or (1997) points out about the phenomenon of conviviality between the investigator and respondents i.e. it do offers hospitable conditions but it tends to be misleading at times, my contention is that it is productive to have such “intimacy” but to what extent is yet to be examined

## **CONCLUSION**

Adopting feminist research methods gave me the flexibility to be able to relate to Cholistani women in ways that conforms to their terms rather than on my terms. It is not sufficient to simply add women to the research equation. Feminist research is not simply having women engaged as researchers. During my research I came to realize, as Hsiung (1996) has mentioned that I had oversimplified the binary power relationship between the researcher & the researched and overlooked the multidimensional power relationship shaped by the prevailing cultural values, gender educational background and my urban association. It seemed that due to my identity, urban affiliation and overseas residence I was excluded from much of their experience therefore I was an outsider. As an ethnographer we are never fully inside or outside the community. Our relationship to the community is constantly negotiated and renegotiated in everyday interactions. These interactions are enacted in shifting relationships among community members.

From my field experience in various settings I have come to the conclusion that the respondents of a particular research setting are also active participants in the research process and can play powerful roles in shaping what we investigate and find out about their lives and communities in which they live & interact. Although building of relationship & trust is an important part of ethnographic field work still during the course of field work I had to constantly ponder on issues like, to what extent I should intervene in the personal crises of community members, or to help in their issues with government officials, and neighboring Punjabi farmers? Should I be extending

financial help to my respondent during their financial crisis? Where & when should I draw a line to be a researcher or an advocate? As a result of the questioning “my people” strategy of “ethics of caring” coupled with “passionate detachment” had to be utilized. Intertwining the two enabled me to gain a profound insight to the issues faced by Cholistani women and thus was able to uncover the enigma of reproduction and perpetuation of those inequalities; it also assisted me to maintain the objectivity of a research. Numerous new lessons were learned in the course of every research where one had to face new dynamics and several challenges every time. Despite reexamining my research methodology during the research process, the dilemma remains that whether it is possible for a researcher to situate oneself as a participant observer in the lives of others without affecting them?

**REFERENCES**

- Anderson, K. and Jack, D. J. (1991). 'Learning to listen: Interview techniques and analyses', in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, S. Gluck and D. Patai (eds.), (New York: Routledge), 11-26.
- Arshad, M, Rao, A. R and Akbar, G. (1995). 'Cholistan Desert in a State of Flux'. *Desertification Control Bulletin*, 25, 55-58.
- Bailey, A.C. (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Sage Publication: USA. *Hmong Community*. Ph.D dissertation, Anthropology UCLA.
- Brayton, J. (1997). *What Makes Feminist Research Feminist? The Structure of Feminist Research Within the Social Sciences*. The Women Studies Research Unit, University of Saskatchewan. Retrieved March 2008, from [www.unb.ca/PAR-L/win/feminmethod.htm](http://www.unb.ca/PAR-L/win/feminmethod.htm).
- Charmaz, K and Mitchell, R.G. (1997). 'The Myth of Silent Authorship: Self, Substance & Style in Ethnographic Writing' in *Reflexivity and Voice*, (ed). Rosana Hertz (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage), 193-215.
- Collins, P.H. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. (Boston: Unwin Hyman).
- Cook, J. and Fonow, M.M. (1986). 'Knowledge and Women's Interests: Issues of Epistemology and Methodology in Feminist Sociological Research'. *Sociological Inquiry*, 56(4), 2-29.
- Edwards, R. (1990). 'Connecting Medical Epistemology. A White Women Interviewing Black Women'. *Women Studies International Forum*, 13(5), 477-490.
- El-Or, Tamer. (1997). 'Do You Really Know How They Make Love? The Limits of Intimacy with Ethnographic Informants' in *Reflexivity and Voice*, (ed). Rosana Hertz (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage), 169-89.
- Eppley, K. (2006). 'Defying Insider-outsider Categorization: One Researcher's Fluid and Complicated Positioning on the Insider-Outsider Continuum'. *Forum*:

*Qualitative Social Research*. 7(3), Retrieved March 2008, from <http://www.qualitative-research.net>.

- FAO (1993) *Pakistan: Cholistan Area Development Project*. Report No. 59/53 ADB – PAK. Food and Agricultural Organization. Rome
- Flick, U. (2006). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London, UK: Sage).
- Haraway, D. (1985). ‘A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s’. *Socialist Review*, 80, 65-105.
- Have, T.P. (2004). *Understanding Qualitative Research and Ethnomethodology*. (London, UK: Sage).
- Hsiung, P. (1996). ‘Between Bosses and Workers: The Dilemma of a Keen Observer and a Vocal Feminist’, in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, (ed.) Diane .L. Wolf (Boulder: Westview press), 72-95.
- Johnson-Bailey, J. (2000). *The Ties That Bind and the Shackles That Separate: Race, Gender, Class, and Color in a Research Process*. Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Adult Education Research Conference .University of British Columbia. (eds.) Thomas J. Sork, Valerie-Lee Chapman, and Ralf St. Clair, Retrieved March 2008 from <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec2000/>
- Kee, Youngwha. (2000). *Conflicts of Insider /Outsider Status in Research with Korean Americans*. Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Adult Education Research Conference. University of British Columbia. (eds.) Thomas J. Sork, Valerie-Lee Chapman, and Ralf St. Clair. Retrieved March 2008, from <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec/2000/>
- Kondo, D.K. (1990). ‘*Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*’. (Chicago: University of Chicago press).
- Lee, M. (1999). *The Role of Cultural Views in the Interpretation of Significant Life Expectancies*. Proceedings of the 40th Annual Adult Education Research Conference Dekalb: Northern Illinois University. Retrieved May 21-23, 1999, from (accessed March 2008) <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec/1999/>
- Lee, M. (2000), *Interviewing Within Your Own Culture Away From Home: Its Effect on Insider/Outsider Status*. Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Adult Education

Research Conference. University of British Columbia.(eds.) Thomas J. Sork, Valerie-Lee Chapman, and Ralf St. Clair. Retrieved March 2008, from <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec/2000/>

Macionis, J. J. (2005). *Sociology*. (USA: Pearson Education, Inc).

Maguire, P. (1987). *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach*. (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press).

Merriam, S and Muhamad, M. (2000).*On Dealing with Insider/Outsider Issues in a Cross-Cultural Team*. Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Adult Education Research Conference. University of British Columbia.(eds.) Thomas J. Sork, Valerie-Lee Chapman, and Ralf St. Clair. Retrieved March 2008, from <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec/2000/>

Matsumoto, V. (1996). 'Reflections of Oral History in a Japanese American Community', in *Feminist Dilemma in Fieldwork*, (ed.) Diane L. Wolf, (Colorado: Westview press), 160-169.

Maya, A. (1975). 'On Becoming Participant Observer', in *Encounter and Experience, Personal Accounts of Fieldwork*, (eds.) Andre Beteille and T. N. Madan (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii).

Mohanty, C. T. (1991). 'Under Western Eyes: Feminists Scholarship and Colonial Discourses' in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, (eds.) Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 51-80.

Naples, A N. (1998).*Community Activism & Feminists Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class & Gender*.(New York: Routledge).

Naples, A N. (2003).*Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis and Activist Research*. (New York: Routledge)

Ntseane, G. (2000).*The Insider/Outsider Dilemma in Researching Other Women in Botswana*. Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Adult Education Research Conference. University of British Columbia. Thomas J. Sork, Valerie-Lee Chapman, and Ralf St. Clair (eds.).Retrieved March 2008, from <http://www.edst.edu.ubc.ca/arec/2000/>

- Oakley, Ann. (1981). 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms'. in *Doing Feminist Research*, (ed.) Helen Roberts (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 30-61.
- Ralph, D. (1998). 'Researching from the bottom: Lesson of Participatory Research for Feminist', in *From the Margins to the Centre :Selected Essays in Women's Studies Research*, (ed) DAWN Currie (Saskatchewan: The Women Studies Research Unit, University of Saskatchewan), 134-144.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Smith, D. E. (1992). 'Sociology from Women's Experience: A Reaffirmation'. *Sociological Theory*.10(1), 88-98.
- Stern, S. (1998). 'Conversation, Research & Struggle over Schooling in an African American Community', in *Community Activism & Feminists Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class & Gender*, (ed) Nancy A. Naples (New York: Routledge), 107:27.
- Wasserfall, R. R. (1997). 'Reflexivity, Feminism and Difference, in *Reflexivity and Voice*, (ed). Rosana Hertz (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage), 150-168.
- Weston, M. (1988). 'Can Academic Research be Truly Feminist? In *From the Margins to the Centre: Selected Essays in Women's Studies Research*, (ed.) DAWN Currie, (Saskatchewan: The Women Studies Research Unit, University of Saskatchewan).142-150.
- Williams, B. (1996). 'Skinfolk, Not Kinfolk: Comparative Reflections on the Identity of Participant-Observation in Two Field Situations', in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, (ed.) Diane L Wolf (Boulder: Westview), 253-61.
- Young, J. (2005). 'On Insiders (Emic) and Outsiders (Etic): Views of Self, and Othering'. *Systematic Practice & Action Research*, 18(2), 151-162.

# Notes To Contributors

The Journal of Gender and Social Issues (JGSI) is a research journal published on a biannual basis by Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi. The JGSI provides a forum for the dissemination of findings related to Gender and Social issues from related academic disciplines. The journal aims to enhance the understanding of social, environmental and cultural factors affecting individuals and society as well. The journal welcomes articles from all disciplines allied to social and gender issues. Importance is given to original and empirical research. However, comprehensive and up-to-date review articles and book reviews are also considered for publication. The JGSI follows the blind peerreviewing policy.

**Submission of Manuscripts:** The original manuscript along with two copies should be submitted to the Editor. Authors are requested to include with each copy of the manuscript a cover sheet, which shows the title of the study, the author's name and the institutional affiliation. The first page of text should omit the author's name and affiliation. However, it should include the title of the research. It is desirable to duly acknowledge the contribution of all authors, organizations and institutions involved in the research. Certification of sole authorship must be provided in the case of a single author. Coresearchers must be equally recognized. The journal is not responsible for any conflicts dealing with authorship.

The authors are strongly encouraged to submit manuscripts on disk/CD or soft copy via email prepared using MS Word. The file should be clearly labeled with the author's names, file name and software version. Each manuscript should be accompanied by a statement that it has neither been published nor been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted material from other sources. The author will be responsible for ensuring that the article contains no plagiarism and contains no material that has been reproduced verbatim from any other sources. All accepted articles will become the property of the publisher.

All parts of the manuscripts should be typewritten and printed on one side of the paper,

font size 12, Times New Roman, left aligned, double spaced with margins of at least one inch on all sides. The manuscript should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper. Authors should also supply a shortened version of the title suitable for the running head, not exceeding 50 character spaces. Each article should be summarized in an abstract of not more than 250 words.

Manuscripts including tables, figures, illustrations and references, should be prepared in accordance with the publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition). Instructions can also be obtained from the university web page at [www.fjwu.edu.pk](http://www.fjwu.edu.pk)

**Graphics:** Maps, tables, and figures should not be embedded in the text, but should be included as separate sheets or files. A short caption should appear above each table with a clear legend and any footnotes suitably identified below. All units must be included. Figures should also be completely labeled.

Authors are also encouraged to submit photographs that are relevant to their articles. Photographs (high quality) must be captioned, labeled and presented on separate pages with their position in the text indicated. The size should not exceed 16 x 12.5 cm (5" x 8"). Electronic images may also be submitted in high resolution digital format (at least 300 dpi). Images on disk or CD-Rom should be supplied as high resolution TIP or JPEG files. If not produced by the author, the photograph source must be mentioned.

**Reprints:** A copy of the journal and twenty reprints will be supplied free of cost to the first author. Additional reprints may be obtained by ordering in advance from the Editors. For this prepayment is required.

**Correspondence and submission** of manuscripts should be addressed to: The Editor, Journal of Gender and Social Issues, Fatima Jinnah University, The Mall, Rawalpindi.

**Online submission** of articles can be made to [journal@fjwu.edu.pk](mailto:journal@fjwu.edu.pk)

