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Apology Responses and Politeness of Pakistani English and British English Speakers: Culture and Gender Perspectives

Abstract

This study examines sociocultural, pragmatic, and gender differences between native speakers of British English (BritE) and Pakistani English speakers (PakE) in expressing apology responses (ARs). Based on a discourse completion task (DCT) using data from 60 speakers of both cultures, the study focuses on the variations in the use of apology response strategies in three severe and three non-severe situations. The findings show that the two groups use a variety of strategies in expressing apology responses. The majority of BritE speakers tend to use ARs with the relatively strong hearer-oriented strategies (Acceptance). PakE ARs, on the other hand, seem to be dominated by the frequent use of Acknowledgment, with speaker-oriented strategies. These results have proven that both male and female English-using Pakistanis are amazingly obvious and direct in their apology responses.

Keywords: *Apologies, Cross-cultural Pragmatics, Culture, Sociocultural, Speech acts, politeness*

INTRODUCTION

Culture and language are closely interconnected in a way that sociocultural conventions designate our way of thinking and speaking (Ngai & Janusch, 2015, 2018; Whorf, Carroll, & Levinson, 2012). Therefore, every culture has its own unique communicative patterns in its speech behavior. During intercultural interactions, people interpret the utterances of cultural “others” according to their own native sociolinguistic norms or the conventions of their own cultural settings. Many studies based on apologies have been carried out in isolation, and the interlocutor’s possible reactions to the act of apology have not been considered. Though scholars, have involved some of the pragmatic responses to the act of apology in their researches,

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investigations still lack the inclusion of socio-pragmatic subtleties and linguistic strategies. Gender, has an influence on using language in all cultures. Men and women differ in their linguistic styles: women in western cultures tend to keep their linguistic norms, even closer to the standard language than men do or are agents of upcoming linguistic changes. However, the vital aspect of how people belonging to different cultures, gender, and degree of imposition as well as languages express themselves while responding to an apology is missing in the previous researches. So, apology responses (ARs) are not among the major concerns of the investigations. In order to gain these results, the study poses the following research questions:

1. What are the relationships between gender apology responses in Pakistani English and British English speakers?
2. What gender and cultural differences in apology response strategies exist between Pakistani English and British English speakers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

An exploration into the literature that probes into ARs proves to be limited. There exist only a few studies about ARs which have mostly been conducted due to the analysis pertaining to the use of apology and not because of the prime emphasis on inquiry. Agyekum (2006) and Bataineh and Bataineh (2006) are of the view that apology responses perform an important part in corrective interchanges. Bataineh and Bataineh (2006) argue that apology responses regulate if the apologizee seems to be pleased with the excuse from the offender's admission of the misdemeanor. According to Pargament, McCullough, and Thoresen (2000), and Bachman and Guerrero (2006), other than pragmatic, linguistic and sociocultural components, AR studies have often been incorporated into studies of psychology and religious belief (as cited in Adrefiza, 2011; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Kitao & Kitao, 2014).

Gender Variations

Studies on language and gender have revealed the differences between male and female linguistic style. Classically, Lakoff (2004) concludes that men and women speak differently. Women use a large number of tags and fewer interruption forms in conversation than men do. In Western cultures, as stated by Holmes, 2008, Shaaban and Ghaith, 2000, and Mills, 2003, women often use prestigious expressions more than men do. Mills (2003, p. 49) further states that unlike men, women "have a more positive attitude towards standard language". The cultural dimensions are neither fixed absolutes nor contradictory, but they are relative and scalar; no culture is entirely individualistic or collectivistic or more collectivist than some other cultures, and precise realizations of the dimensions also depend on contexts. The current study investigates how cultural nuances and gender roles influence the use of apology responses of Pakistani English and British English speakers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This data-oriented study is based on a quantitative approach to investigate the apology responses of English-using Pakistanis and British English speakers in interactive situations. For data collection, a Discourse Completion Test (DCT, see Appendix A), having 06 items, was adopted from Thijittang (2010). Nevertheless, by using a written DCT as an experimental method, large quantities of data can be collected quickly and this is fewer costly in money or time. The procedure can enable researchers to identify the effect of different social factors on producing and perceiving apology responses by designing a sequence of situationally varied scenarios. In addition, data and results elicited by DCT are generalizable (Barron, 2003, cited in Ogiermann, 2009). The target population of this study was (30) Pakistani English speakers (15 males, 15 females) comprising of doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, army personnel and journalists, and (25) British English native speakers (15 males, 15 females). The only criteria for selecting the PakE participants from different organizations and institutions was that the respondent should be educated (at least up to the bachelor's level and have studied English as a compulsory subject) and should be in a job where the official written work is carried out in English. The sample of the current study was selected through *non-random, purposive and convenience sampling procedures*. The British English speakers were from the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL), University of Edinburgh, UK, and the Coventry University, UK. All the British English speakers were faculty members (English Department) of Coventry University, UK, Leeds University UK, and University of Edinburgh, UK. Pakistani English speakers' data was collected from their work places and British English speakers' data were collected through e-mail (as one of the limitations of data collection). The DCT data was analyzed by using SPSS-20, by assigning specific values (1-32, see table 1). One-way ANOVA was run to investigate the two groups' use of ARs. Nevertheless, in the present study, AR detailed strategies are grouped as follows:

Table 1
Apology Response Framework

	Coding Values	Strategy	Expressions in English
A		Acceptance (AC)	
	1	Absolution	"That's OK"
	2	Dismissal	"It doesn't matter", "Don't worry"
	3	Formal	"I accept your apology", "I forgive you"
	4	Thanking	"Thanks (for apologizing)"
	5	Intensifiers	"It's OK, really ", "It's Ok, It's Ok"
	6	Requests	"Please return it as soon as possible"
	7	Expressing Empathy	"I understand that stuff happens"
	8	Expressing Emotion	"I'm disappointed"
	9	Questioning/Surprise	"How could you do that to me?"

B	Acknowledgement (AK)	
10	Absolution plus	“That’s OK, but.....”
11	Dismissal plus	“It doesn’t matter, but.....”
12	Formal plus	“I accept your apology, but.....”
13	Advice/Suggestion	“You should be quite vigilant next time”
14	Accepting Remedies	“That sounds good”
15	Evaluating	“It’s ridiculous”
16	Accepting Promises	“I accept your words, but.....”
C	Evasion	
17	Deflecting/Explaining	“I have not seen you for a long time”
18	Providing Solution	“Go back and complete the task quickly”
19	Minimization	“Hey, it’s nothing buddy, just a carpet”
20	Expressing Concern	“Are you Okay”
21	Shifts of Topic	“Forget about that I’ll buy a new one”
22	Shifts of Blame	“It was a bad weather”
D	Rejection	
23	Refusals	“I don’t accept your apology”
24	Questioning	“What do you mean by sorry”
25	Complaining	“I was expecting this from you”
26	Warning	“I’m not gonna tolerate this next time”
27	Blaming	“You’re really carefewer and make me suffer”
28	Swearing	“You’re really shit”
29	Asking for Compensation	“You’ve to replace it with the new one”
30	Refusing Remedies	“No way, I just want the same camera”
31	Non-apology “Sorry”	“Sorry, I can’t forgive you”
32	Expressing Strong Emotions	“I’m getting mad, buzz off”

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

There were six situations based on severe and non-severe offenses from the DCT questionnaire.

Situation 1 *Employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter*

Table 1: S1 indicate that Pakistani English speakers, both male and female tend to use fewer Acceptance strategies ($M=.08$, $M=.12$). In contrast, British English speakers prefer to use more Acceptance strategies ($M=.40$, $M=.40$). The findings further elaborate that there is no significant mean difference between the male and female respondents of the groups. There is not a statistically significant difference in the use of Acceptance strategies in S1 ($p >.005$), though mean score highlights that British English speakers prefer the use of more Acceptance strategies than Pakistani English speakers.

Table 2*ANOVA Results of Situation1 (Employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter)*

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.08	.277	.12	.332	.40	.500	.40	.500	2(72)	5.221	.008	
AK	.60	.500	.52	.510	.12	.332	.12	.332	2(72)	5.778	.005*	
EV	.08	.277	.08	.277	.16	.374	.16	.374	2(72)	2.215	.116	
RJ	.36	.490	.40	.500	.28	.458	.24	.436	2(72)	.400	.672	

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

PakE speakers prefer to use more Acknowledgment strategies (M=.60, M=.52) than BritE (male and female) respondents (M=.12, M=.12). Nevertheless, we find the lower mean difference between Pakistani English speakers male and female respondents, similarly, there is no mean difference found between British English speakers’ male and female respondents. As a result, there is a statistically significant mean difference ($p = .005$) in the use of Acknowledgment strategies between the two language groups. Speakers of both languages tend to use fewer Evasion strategies in S1. None the fewer, Pakistani English speakers tend to use comparatively fewer strategies (M=.08, M=.08) than British English speakers (M=.16, M=.15). Both groups of male and female respondents are found using a similar number of ARs. Hence, there is not found a statistically significant mean difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Evasion strategies between two groups.

Pakistani English male and female respondents tend to use more Rejection strategies (M=.36, M=.40) in S1. Surprisingly, females are found using slightly more strategies than male, though the difference is not significant. In contrast, British English male and female respondents prefer to use fewer strategies of Rejection (M=.28, M=.24) in S1. Also, there is an opposite reaction and British English males prefers to use more Rejection ARs than female respondents though the difference is a statistically minor mean difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Rejection ARs in the current situation.

Situation 2 *A friend promised to return a laptop after a week*

In this situation, where the offender is a close friend and the situation is rated as non-severe the results presented in table 3 signal that British English speakers prefer to use Acceptance strategies (M=.40, M=.60) more often in this situation. On the other hand, PakE speakers’ tend to assign low mean scores (M=.28 and M=.30) to Acceptance strategies in this situation, despite the fact that there is no documented statistically

significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of Acceptance strategies in non-severe situations.

Table 3

ANOVA Results of Situation 2 (A friend promised to return a laptop after a week)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.28	.458	.30	.438	.40	.500	.60	.516	2(72)	.558	.732
AK	.36	.490	.40	.516	.36	.490	.30	.483	2(72)	1.923	.104
EV	.16	.374	.16	.374	.16	.374	.40	.516	2(72)	.450	.811
RJ	.12	.332	.08	.277	.08	.227	.12	.332	2(72)	.450	.811

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

The results of Acknowledgment category, instead, indicate that PakE respondents as compared to the Acceptance category prefer to use more Acknowledgment strategies in this situation. The mean score of PakE male and female is (M=.35, M=.40). In contrast, BritE speakers as compared to Acceptance strategies prefer to use fewer (M=.36, M=.30) Acknowledgment strategies in this non-severe situation. Anyhow, there is not found statistically significant ($p > .005$) difference between the two culturally diverse groups. Results indicate that PakE respondents tend to use fewer (M=.16, M=.16) Evasion strategies in this situation. In contrast, the male respondents of BritE group tend to use fewer (M=.16) Evasion strategies as compared to females who prefer to use more (M=.40) Evasion strategies in this non-severe situation. Nevertheless, there is no reported significant difference ($p > .005$) in the use of Evasion strategies between two groups.

Similar to the Evasion category, the results of the Rejection category also exhibit that there is no difference in the use of Rejection ARs between the two groups.

Situation 3 *Head forgot to inform the junior to join the meeting*

In another severe situation, the offender, who is the head of an organization, forgets to inform the junior of a meeting. Results indicate that PakE respondents both male and female prefer to express more Acceptance ARs (M=.72, M=.60). Surprisingly, BritE speakers also tend to use more Acceptance ARs (M=.40, M=.48) in this situation. Eventually, there is not a significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of ARs in this situation between the two language groups. PakE male and female tend to use fewer Acknowledgment strategies (M=.16, M=.16) in this situation. Similarly, BritE speakers prefer to use more Acknowledgment ARs (M=.50, M=.40) in this situation, where the offender is a boss. In any case, there is no reported significant ($p > .005$) difference in

the use of AK strategies in this situation. The results of Evasion strategy indicate that both groups' males and females tend to use fewer Evasion ARs. BritE speakers are found comparatively using more EV strategies than PakE speakers with a mean of (M=.28: M=.20: M=.12: M=.12) respectively. Hence, there is no statistically significant difference ($p > .005$) between the two language groups.

Table 4

ANOVA Results of Situation 3 (Head forgot to inform the junior to join the meeting)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.72	.458	.60	.516	.40	.516	.48	.510	2(72)	.558	.732
AK	.16	.374	.16	.374	.50	.527	.40	.516	2(72)	1.923	.104
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.28	.458	.20	.408	2(72)	.450	.811
RJ	.28	.458	.12	.332	.12	.332	.16	.374	2(72)	.450	.811

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= "Acceptance" strategy, AK= "Acknowledgement" strategy, EV= "Evasion" strategy, RJ= "Rejection" strategy.

Unsurprising, the results of Rejection ARs show that PakE male respondents tend to use more Rejection ARs than female respondents with a proportion of (M=.28, M=.12). In contrast, BritE female respondents prefer to use comparatively more RJ strategies (M=.16) than male participants (M=.12). Anyways, there is no statistically significant difference ($p > .005$) between the two language groups.

Situation 4 *A colleague stepped foot on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator*

In this situation, a colleague stepped on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator. Here, there is no power difference between the interlocutors. Both interlocutors have equal social power and neutral social distance, and the situation is also non-severe. We can see in the table that English-using Pakistanis both male and female are found using fewer Acceptance ARs (M=.24, M=.32) as compared to British English speakers who tend to use more Acceptance ARs (M=.56, M=.40) in this situation. There is no significant ($p > .005$) difference in the use of Acceptance ARs in this situation between two culturally diverse groups.

Unsurprisingly, English-using Pakistanis both male and female tend to use more AK strategies in this non-severe situation (M=.52, M=.50) as compared to British English speakers who are found using fewer AK strategies (M=.12, M=.12). Hence, there is significant (P=.03) difference in the use of AK strategies between the two groups in this situation.

Table 5

ANOVA Results of Situation 4 (A colleague stepped foot on another colleague's foot in a crowded elevator)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.24	.436	.32	.476	.56	.507	.40	.516	2(72)	3.089	.052	
AK	.52	.510	.50	.527	.12	.332	.12	.332	2(72)	6.349	.003*	
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.16	.374	.24	.436	2(72)	.111	.895	
RJ	.16	.374	.12	.332	.16	.374	.12	.332	2(72)	.111	.895	

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

In terms of Evasion category, results show that speakers of both PakE (M=.12, M=.12) and BritE groups (both male and female) (M=.16, M=.24) tend to use fewer EV strategies in this situation and there is no significant ($p > .005$) difference within the two groups. As concerns the Rejection ARs, alike Evasion strategies both PakE (M=.16, M=.12) and BritE (M=.16, M=.12) tend to use fewer RJ strategies in this situation. There is no significant ($p > .005$) difference in the RJ strategies within two groups.

Situation 5 *Junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation*

In another severe situation, the transgressor is a junior officer and there is a social power difference between the interlocutors. Both male and female speakers tend to use a fewer Acceptance (M=.12, M=.32) ARs though English-using Pakistani females comparatively prefer to use more Acceptance ARs as the mean score indicates. In contrast, British English speakers prefer to use more AC strategies (M=.40, M=.52) though British English females tend to use more AC strategies in this situation as the mean score shows and there is no significant ($p > .005$) difference within the groups.

Table 6

ANOVA Results of Situation 5 (Junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	Errors	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
AC	.12	.332	.32	.476	.40	.500	.52	.510	2(72)	2.962	.058	
AK	.60	.500	.52	.510	.16	.374	.16	.374	2(72)	6.338	.003*	
EV	.08	.277	.12	.332	.32	.476	.20	.408	2(72)	3.789	.027	

RJ	.20	.408	.12	.332	.12	.332	.08	.277	2(72)	.361	.698
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Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

English-using Pakistanis prefer to use AK strategies more often ($M=.60$, $M=.52$) in this severe situation. On the other hand, BritE speakers tend to use fewer AK strategies ($M=.16$, $M=.16$) in this situation. Eventually, there is found significant ($p >.005$) difference within groups in the use of AK strategies in this situation. Unlike AK strategies, PakE speakers prefer to use fewer EV strategies ($M=.08$, $M=.12$) as compared to BritE male and female speakers who tend to use more EV strategies ($M=.32$, $M=.20$) Thus, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use EV strategies within the groups. In terms of Rejection ARs, results indicate that PakE male respondents tend to use more RJ strategies ($M=.20$) as compared to female ($M=.12$) in this situation. Similarly, though BritE speakers prefer to use fewer RJ strategies yet BritE male respondents tend to use slightly more RJ strategies in comparison to female respondents ($M=.08$) in this situation. Anyways, there is no significant difference ($p >.005$) with these groups.

Situation 6 *Workmate came almost half an hour late to see a colleague*

In this situation, the offense is non-severe as the colleague comes almost half an hour late and there is equal social power. We can observe that PakE both male and female prefer to use an almost similar number of Acceptance ARs ($M=.36$, $M=.40$). In contrast, quite surprisingly BritE male tends to use fewer AC strategies ($M=.36$) as compared to female respondents ($M=.64$) in this situation. In any case, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of AC strategies within these groups. We can see that PakE speakers prefer to use more AK strategies ($M=.44$, $M=.48$) in this situation. Contrastively, BritE speakers tend to use fewer AK strategies ($M=.12$, $M=.16$) in this situation. Hence, there is found significant ($p <.005$) difference in the use of AK strategies within these groups in this situation.

Table 7

ANOVA Results of Situation 6 (Workmate came almost half an hour late to see a colleague)

ARs	PakE				BritE				DF	F	Sig
	Male		Female		Male		Female				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
AC	.36	.490	.40	.500	.36	.490	.64	.490	2(72)	3.089	.052
AK	.48	.507	.44	.510	.12	.332	.16	.374	2(72)	6.349	.003*
EV	.12	.332	.12	.332	.12	.332	.20	.408	2(72)	.111	.895
RJ	.20	.408	.12	.332	.20	.408	.04	.200	2(72)	.111	.895

Note: PakE= Pakistani English speakers, BritE= British English speakers. AC= “Acceptance” strategy, AK= “Acknowledgement” strategy, EV= “Evasion” strategy, RJ= “Rejection” strategy.

It can be noticed that both PakE and BritE speakers tend to use fewer EV strategies in this situation. The mean score of PakE both male and female is (M=.12, M=.12) and BritE speakers is (M=.12, M=.20) though BritE females prefer to use slightly more EV strategies in this situation, although there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of EV strategies within these groups. In accordance with EV strategies, results of RJ strategies are also quite similar. Both PakE and BritE prefer to use fewer RJ strategies in this situation, although PakE male respondents prefer to use slightly more RJ strategies (M=.20) than female respondents (M=.12) in this situation. In the same vein, BritE male respondents also tend to use more RJ strategies (M=.20) as compared to females (M=.04) in this situation. Nevertheless, there is no significant ($p >.005$) difference in the use of EV strategies within these groups.

It can be noticed that Acceptance strategies are expressed through a number of subsidiary speech acts as mentioned by researchers (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Holmes, 2008; Waluyo, 2017), and similar responses can be noticed in the current study. Both male and female participants' responses have similar illocutionary indicating force device (IFID) as Acceptance apology responses are represented through Absolution including dismissal based on the terms of “That’s OK”, “That’s alright”, “It’s fantastic”, “That’s fine”, “No issue”, “No problem” and “Don’t need to worry”. Wu and Wang (2016), Adrefiza (2011), and Adrefiza and Jones (2013) suggest that such an expression is uttered quite frequently as it indicates an Absolution comprising an indexical term “That’s” followed by an evaluation “OK”, “Fine”, “Alright” etc. including dismissal remarks signaling that the respondent does not agree with the wrongdoer's claim to have triggered a transgression (Waluyo, 2017; Wu & Wang, 2016; Saleem & Anjum, 2018a, 2018b). Another aspect is the use of religious and cultural-specific AR expression of PakE. The respondent is found using the religious term ‘Inshallah’ and cultural-specific term “Chan G” to show harmony with the interlocutor. It also shows Islamic teachings’ impact (or the term “*Inshallah*” is overstated in daily interactions in Pakistani culture) on the respondent to display solidarity and concern for the offended person. These utterances depict that the offender has not done any harm or damage. These utterances entail that the wrongdoer’s negative face is saved and balance is recovered.

The significant mean differences in the score of Acknowledgement ARs (see tables 2, 5 and 7) can be proof of a diverse demonstration of politeness and face principles in the two groups’ conversation styles. Allowing the perpetrator free completely, for most of PakE participants, may be looked at as harm to their immodesty and self-esteem, whereas for many British English speakers it can be looked at as differently, i.e. a

means of saving face by not permitting a severe transgression. As a result, both male and female PakE speakers, in a way, may agree to regret weakly in their Acknowledgements, making the violators feel a certain type of face-risk manifestation. As noted, Acknowledgement category clearly exhibits PakE speakers' preference for the use of cultural-specific and socio-religious ARs. In the current study, Acknowledgment ARs are expressed through a number of subsidiary speech acts. The Acknowledgement category that is illustrated through such face-risk utterances, somewhat, weakens the level of Acceptance in the ARs (Adrefiza, 2011; Saleem & Anjum, 2018). Such ARs, primarily, signal that the speakers depart from those of complete "Acceptance". The example in the table illustrates the responses from PakE and BritE data and the Absolution speech act is expressed through "It's OK", "Okay" at the start of the utterances. The speech act of expressing emotion (disappointment) "*but amazing thing for me is that you didn't even bother to tell me about it*" by PakE speaker and (suggestion for upcoming event) "*but please return it tomorrow*" uttered by the BritE speaker in the above example depict a face-risk toward the transgressor and denote the AR as an instance of Acknowledgment.

Female speakers also tend to use the Dismissal "*Ma'am, no worries at all*" from PakE and "*no worries*", from BritE data show their intent to approve the excuse. Nevertheless, the Elaborative term comprising "*Please you go, don't worry about me*", from PakE respondent, in fact, undermines the Acceptance as they risk the transgressor's public image. One exciting trend noticed here is that English-using Pakistanis female speakers tend to use elaborate expressions to show solidarity with the speakers. But one thing that needs to be kept in mind is that this response has occurred to the addressee of higher status, and the speaker has used the honorific "*Ma'am*" to mitigate the face loss of the interlocutor. On the other hand, if we see the response of BritE female speaker that is quite simple and short, the "*No worries, I'm Ok*" indicates that the speaker is not influenced by the status of the addressee, and still defuses the situation by protecting the offender's public self-image, although the use of "Dismissal" in addition to "Requesting" indicates the reply as an Acknowledgement.

In the current study, Pakistani English speakers seem to use fewer Evasion ARs as compared to British English speakers who are found favoring the use of this strategy. Though PakE speakers are supposed to be uncertain and unclear in their responses yet this trend is not observed in their AR behavior. They prefer to use more direct strategies even though their ARs are elaborate and prolonged than BritE speakers' responses. In the current study, BritE speakers are found using more Evasion ARs than PakE speakers whereas BritE respondents do not offer obvious or direct approval or Rejection in their reactions. Rather, they attempt to deviate their reactions through different manners, such as by expressing cultural-specific religious term "Oh God" by

PakE male speaker, and “Oh gosh” by BritE male speaker, and clarifying or explaining the importance of the task as the response from PakE speaker illustrates “*It was not just writing a report. It was our only hope to win the trust and annual appraisal from the committee members*”, and BritE respondent’s expression is “*I really wasn’t expecting you to be late*”, and expressing an expectation about past events as in PakE “*Honestly speaking, I have very little hope upon you*”, and BritE “*Let’s haste now, we got to be honest with our job*”. In the second example of females’ data, it can be noticed that there is no sign of acceptance and rejection of apology, rather female speakers prefer to use Evasion ARs with the question, “why did you do this?” from PakE data, and “how could you do that?” from BritE data. The “Evasion with Deflection and Questioning” responses expressed here do not clearly reveal whether the excuse is approved or denied. The responses in this category are speaker-oriented not hearer-oriented (Bippus & Young, 2019; Holmes, 2008; Jones & Adrefiza, 2017). The responses are negative in nature and remain face-threatening for the interlocutors, though an effort is made to restore equilibrium between the speakers.

The response from one female PakE speaker is quite elaborate and seems face-threatening for the addressee as well. It begins with address term “Gentleman” and Advice “*You got to make it sure that such stuff is not going to happen in future*” including “*if it happens again, mind you, without delay even for a moment, I will dismiss you from job*” further explaining the Warning “*I will not keep in mind, how many kids you have to feed*” adding the extremely face-threatening idiomatic expression “*Buzz off*”. The following response indicates quite positive pragmatics attitude of the speaker but seems negative as far as socio-pragmatic target language culture knowledge is concerned because the speaker has typically displayed the native nature of handling the situation and has translated the Urdu language strings in the target language. In contrast, the BritE response begins with Advice “*Be mindful of your responsibility*”, including a Warning “*I’m not gonna tolerate this ignorance next time*”. The BritE response does not seem as face-threatening as PakE speaker’s response is, and the BritE response is quite short as compared to the PakE response. It suggests that the English-using Pakistani speaker has displayed the kind of intent that is more negative in nature than the British English speaker’s response triggering the phenomenon of negative socio-pragmatic transfer in the target language.

CONCLUSION

The difference between the two groups, particularly the realization of AR strategies, do not appear to carry out the recognized misconception regarding the conversation variations of the two societies. As past studies of Aziz, 2000; Bippus & Young, 2019; Makarova & Pourmohammadi, 2019; Saleem & Anjum, 2018a claim, Asians, such as Pakistanis are uncertain, implied, and oblique in their conversation behaviors, that sometimes becomes difficult to understand what in fact they try to communicate.

Nevertheless, the results have proven that certain conversation functions/styles are not significant in their apology response acts, and both male and female English-using Pakistanis are amazingly obvious and abrupt. From a Gender perspective, in general, individuals in the two groups' data do not reveal different AR techniques, although in many cases the variations were relatively small or minimal.

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Appendix A

Apology Response Scenarios

Instructions

Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance you will have to say something. Write down what you would say in English in the space provided.

1. At the office, your employee forgot to pass on an urgent letter to you. The next day you complained to your employee that he/she did not pass it to you. He/she says.

Employ: Sorry Sir/Ma'am, I forget to pass it on to you. It won't happen again.

You: _____

2. Your friend promised to return your laptop after a week. However, he/she kept it for almost two weeks. Then you asked your friend to return it. He/she says.

Friend: O' Sorry yar, forgot, really I'll give you tomorrow, promise.

You: _____

3. You are a junior officer in an organization. Your head forgot to inform you to join the meeting so you missed it because of your head's negligence. Your head talked to you about his fault. He/she says:

Head: I'm really sorry dear; it just skipped out of my mind.

You: _____

4. In the officer's mess, a senior officer stepped on your foot passing by you. Senior officer says?

Senior officer: Ouch! Sorry dear, I didn't see you coming. Are you OK? Hope I didn't hurt you.

You: _____

5. You are a senior officer, your junior copied an article from a website for his/her presentation, which you found out. Your junior officer says:

Junior officer: I beg pardon Sir/Ma'am, forgive me this time, and assure you it won't happen again.

You: _____

6. You were assigned to do a report with your workmate. You were told to see him at the main door of the meeting room but your workmate came almost half an hour late. The reason of being late was because he missed the first bus. He says:

Workmate: Sorry yar I missed the train. Mom didn't make me to wake up early. And buses you know mostly come late but today came well in time and I was late.

You: _____

Institutional Intersectionality: Violence against Kashmiri Women in ‘The Half Mother’

Abstract

*In the present world, identity and identity formation determines the representation and manners of interaction. Intersectionality has become the predominant way of conceptualizing the relation between systems of oppression which construct our multiple identities and our social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege. This research examines ways in which marginalization and state-sponsored violence against Kashmiri women results from intersectional identity. The phenomenon of Kashmiri women becoming ‘half widows’ and ‘half mothers’ as the consequence of intersecting variables has been explored in the context of Shahnaz Bashir’s novel *The Half Mother* (2014). The findings suggest the various facets of Kashmiri women’s identity which lead to her oppressed status. It gives a deep insight into the female sufferings in particular and miseries of Kashmir conflict victims in general, it also throws light on the ways these human sufferings get depicted in literature.*

Key words: *Intersectionality, Kashmiri women, Half widows, Half Mothers.*

INTRODUCTION

In the constantly fluctuating world scenario, an individual human being is not acknowledged with a singular identity alone. The attitude, approach towards the world and behaviour of the individual is determined by the various disparate identities of that person. Not only is the person’s conduct determined by these identities but the way in which others treat the individual is also determined by these assorted identities. ‘Intersectionality’ is a term which caters to the consideration of these identities concurrently. The foundation of the concept of ‘Intersectionality’ has been credited to Crenshaw (1989), an African American lawyer working for the rights of the marginalized African American women and the multidimensionality of their experiences regarding their identities. Her argument revolves around the fact that the common procedure of the deconstruction of these identities and treating them in separate and exclusive classifications takes away the impacts which occur because of their simultaneous existence. When identity-driven categories like race, gender, class, power, and standing in the eyes of law are treated separately, they convey a completely different picture from the story which comes out when the identities are treated in an intersectional approach. The understanding and importance of this phenomenon therefore can only be treated in an Intersectional research (Walker, 2011, p. 15).

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This article explores the situation of Kashmiri women as affected by marginalization and state-sponsored violence. The phenomenon of Kashmiri women becoming 'half widows' and 'half mothers' as the consequence of intersecting variables has been explored. The study explores the intersectionality of Kashmiri women in Bashir's (2014) novel 'The Half Mother' which revolves around a woman whose son has been taken by the armed forces and she has no knowledge where he has been kept or even if he is alive. The article examines the novel in light of the Intersectional framework. Intersectionality facilitates in understating the ways in which gender intersects with other identities like race, colour, occupation, social standing, age etc. Intersection also becomes a tool to understand how various interactions contribute to the experiences of persecution and oppression. Keeping in mind the above ideas, this article analyses the oppression of Kashmiri women in the novel through the lens of intersectionality. The number of studies published on the atrocities and violence faced by the Kashmiri people is innumerable. Violence against women has also been the topic of many studies. Yet, the paradigm of looking at violence in the light of intersectional identities is different. The approach of mapping the multitude of factors responsible for specific atrocities committed against women is an addition to the understanding of the problem. Furthermore, doing so in the field of Kashmiri Fiction which relates the stories and narratives of the violated people is also unique in its approach.

The Kashmir Conflict

The present-day world is a global community and any action taking place in one part of the world has its reverberations throughout the globe. The major problem hindering the peace and prosperity of South Asia especially and the world in general is the conflict of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It has been more than 70 years that Jammu and Kashmir has been the bone of contention between Pakistan and India. The armed conflict between the local population and the Indian Security Forces has created a war zone in the disputed territory (Altholz et al. 2015, p. 21). The existing conflict between the two nuclear powers of the region, is laying the foundation of the right to control the state of Kashmir. Although the conflict has been labelled and rendered as a territorial dispute, in reality, it has been termed by the Kashmiris themselves as the militarised control of the state (Mathur, 2014, p. 5). As a result of this war-zone like ground reality, numerous cases of cruelty and abuse have been documented. The abuse against the civilian population includes cases of extrajudicial killings, murders, disappearances, acts of genocide, rape, kidnappings and torture. In addition to the clear-cut violations of human rights and liberties, legal impunity has been provided to the perpetrators of these crimes i.e. the Indian Armed Forces (Mathur, 2014, p. 6). The documentation of these atrocities has not been at par with the tragedy. Thousands of unmarked and mass burials in graves and grounds have been unearthed by the people themselves. There has been no answer provided to them yet by the state or any other human rights

organisation. The consequential social and psychological impact has been great. The trauma and mass damage to the minds of the people has no bounds (Shah, 2012, p. 13).

The Plight of Kashmiri Women

A major concern, which has risen out of the occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by the military is the ensuing violence. Within this, the matter of disappearances of people dominates the scenario. It has been reported that more than 10,000 disappearances have happened (Dsouza, 2016, p. 27). The result of this loss envelops a multitude of consequences and affected individuals and families. The primary victim remains the person who has gone missing, but the loss transits in its manifold concentration to the families of the disappeared persons. The families continue living a life of despair, unaware of the reality and in a limbo where they do not know what has happened to their loved ones and in what condition they are living, if at all alive. The suffering of the 'left-behind' knows no limits (D'Souza, 2016, p. 78). Within the domain of the afflicted persons, the women who are members of the family left behind are the worst affected. The disappeared person leaves behind mothers, wives, and daughters. Not knowing the official status of their loved ones, not knowing if they are alive or dead, the term 'half-widow' has been coined for the wives left behind (Dsouza, 2016, p. 28). According to the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared (APDP) the number of Kashmiri women who have been officially deemed widows is around 20,000 and those who have no knowledge if their husbands are dead or alive, and are therefore called half-widows is numbered to be around 1,000 (Seema, 2009, p. 193). Closely allied with this is the concept of half mothers or mothers whose children have disappeared and they know not of their condition.

When taking into consideration the impact of these disappearances, they appear and seem to be in reality, more toiling and damaging. The wife and the mother are left in a constant state of hope combined with despair. The lingering hope of having the loved ones returned or giving up that hope and mourning them properly and continuing their lives as widows or mothers of dead children remains the paramount question in their minds. The 'waiting' is deemed more gruesome and painful than the acceptance of the grief (Dsouza, 2016, p. 28). The continuous lingering between the threshold of knowing yet not knowing, the challenge of waiting or continuing with their lives as mourners, takes away their basic human emotional connection of being allowed to live with the dignity of being widows or mothers of dead children. In addition to the disappearances, the heinous crime which is practised against Kashmiri women is the state-backed use of rape as a weapon against civilians (Seema, 2009, p. 184). One of the most famous and well-documented cases of army personnel committing this crime is the incident of Kunan and Poshpura villages in the Kupwara district. It has been reported that 23 to 100 women were raped and gang raped. Women from the age of 8 to 70, were forced and tortured to please the soldiers. Not only was the rape backed by the state, but also went unpunished. In addition, the influence of 'higher authorities'

and backing of ‘influential’ people, the case went unsolved because of the cited ‘lack of witness’ clause when the whole village was testimony to it (Altholz et al. 2015, p. 16).

Doctors without Borders stated in a 2005 report that the rate of sexual violence in Kashmir is one of the highest amongst the conflict-ridden regions of the world (Kanjwal, 2011, p. 57) and Kashmiri women have the hard luck of being the recipient of all types of violence and torture. They are simultaneous mourners for children, husband, parents, and siblings; at other times they are rape victims, victims of physical and psychological assault at the hands of the perpetrators of the crime and society in general. The hardest thing lies in the fact that the identity of the Kashmiri woman is superseded by her connection to her relations with the men in her life and her role in society. The victimization of the Kashmiri women lies on the centrality of their identities; being women, mothers, wives, Kashmiris and Muslim. This manifold aspect of their oppression can be properly examined only under the theory of Intersectionality.

Intersectionality

The concept of Intersectionality was influenced by the awareness raised during the literary movements of Critical Race Theory in the 1970s and the battle cries of the movement of Black Feminism; the major focus of which was the oppression of ‘black’ women and the concept of ‘racism’ and racial marginalization (Wallaschek, 2015, p. 223). Emerging from the U.S. Black feminism, Indigenous feminism, third world feminism, queer and postcolonial theory, the term intersectionality, was officially coined by Crenshaw in 1989 (Hankivsky et al. 2009, p. 3). The concept revolves around the belief that women are discriminated against on the basis of their gender. Yet this is not the only form of discrimination which they have to face. Accompanying this is the marginalisation on the basis of race, social and political class system, economic background and many more. Intersectionality points at this multifaceted form of marginalisation as the intersecting roles played by the various identities. Thus intersectionality is the sum total of all intersecting discrimination faced by someone.

The different forms of discrimination are regulated by various identities (Crenshaw, 1994, p. 1) since the question of identity is paramount in mapping women’s position in society. Race and skin colour, caste, age, ethnicity, language, ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic class, ability, culture, geographic location, and status as a migrant, indigenous person, refugee, internally displaced person, child, or a person living with HIV/AIDS, in a conflict zone or under foreign occupation, all of these combine to determine one’s social location and ultimately determine the identity formulation of the women and the resultant oppression or marginalization (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 198).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study formulated on the basis of close reading of the selected text. The close reading of the text leads to the investigation of the various incidents and events in the plot to analyse instances where various factors act in intersection to determine the oppressive state of the women in '*The Half Mother*'. In addition to the close reading technique, the influence of historical and socio-political factors is also deliberated upon, which results in the rise of persecution. The major theoretical framework which has been adapted is Crenshaw's (1994) approach towards intersection. The rationale for taking up Crenshaw's theory lies in the fact that Kashmiri Women are fighting their resistance movement on multiple levels. They do not face discrimination only on the basis of their gender or being part of a colonial empire. Their problems rise from the heart of the structure of the society and political milieu of Kashmir Valley. Their identity as women, being Muslims, Kashmiris and belonging to the lower class of society enhances their pathos. In light of all of this, the Intersectional theory is relevant and appropriate for analysis. Present day theories of intersectionality cater to the institutional and dominating structures of society. This also works to bring out into the open how the powerful systems of society, politics and history work together and shape the understandings and experiences of navigating the world (Martinez, 2017, p. 8).

In this study, the intersectional theory is used to decipher the intricacies of the various tyrannical and oppressive behaviours and situations, which the Kashmiri women are forced to live in, and adaptations are made specifically in the theory to study the historical and socio-political context of Kashmir and Kashmiri society to examine the text in detail. The study examines the intersecting factors as well as the impact of the resulting violence in the text. In order to analyse the intersectionality, the novel is analysed from the perspective of plot, setting, characters and events. An interpretative approach is utilised to analyse the text. The sample of the study '*The Half Mother*' by Bashir (2014) is the journey of the Kashmiri woman, Haleema, who sets out on the journey of finding her missing son and gets involved in a struggle that is much bigger than her own grief and pain. The constant excursions of looking for justice and facing multiple hurdles has been beautifully portrayed by Bashir.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The Valley of Kashmir has been in a constant state of turmoil although before the 1980s a sense of peace pervaded amongst the people. After the dubious elections of 1983, the events took a turn for the worse and caused major changes in the once peaceful community. The backdrop of the novel, *The Half Mother* is set at the same time. The protagonist, Haleema is introduced in the opening of the novel as a woman going through serious misery and pain.

She hated having to believe she existed, to feel she was conscious. She hated the smell that sleep brought. She wished she were dead. (p. 3)

This is the dramatic opening of the novel that paves the way to the underlying misery and oppressive nature of tyranny which Haleema is going through. The starkness of her home, where she is forced to live alone and wait for the son who has been missing since the military took him away is detailed in a heart wrenching manner by Bashir (2014). In light of the famous ‘crossroad concept’ presented by Crenshaw, Bashir cites the example of ‘a woman of minority group’ navigating a crossing where she comes into the intersection of all biases standing against her (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 195) including patriarchy, race, colour, social status etc. Haleema here is depicted as a woman of a ‘minority group’. She is represented as a woman who faces horrors at the hands of the oppressing institutions. The oppressive institutions at work here, are delineated as the patriarchal society – ingraining her value in the concept of wife and motherhood, Indian Occupational forces – having killed her father and son, and the cultural norms which are forcing her to live a lonely life mourning her past alone. Her present condition, where she seems to hallucinate and talk to inanimate things is a result of all the pain she has gone through. Bashir (2014) carefully sets the stage of the underlying pathos and misery of the women who has had to suffer through the indiscernible pain of not knowing and waiting without any hope of a reprieve.

The plot progresses and we are transported through flashbacks to the time when Haleema lived a peaceful and contented life with her parents. The death of her mother was the first intrusion of lingering darkness in her existence. The story of her life with her father, her marriage and her consequential divorce are some substantial factors which determine the basis of the identity and personality traits which are specific to Haleema. With the birth of her son Imran, she gains the paramount identity of a mother and this holds the foundation of the plot and becomes the titular namesake of the novel. At times she is seen talking to vegetables calling them ‘*Dear collard green, apologies*’ or the cooking utensils ‘*Where have you disappeared? Where do I look for you now?*’ (p.4). This shows another important factor of intersectionality. The ‘systems of multiplicity’ and the inability to cut them in a clear-cut manner. Structural intersection encompasses the various ‘macro-level socio-political structures’ (Bailey, 2009, p. 17). Here these factors can be delineated as the oppressive regime, the occupational forces, colonial mindset and the patriarchal dependency of a woman. The problems which Haleema faces are not multiple but their impact is multi-faceted. The resultant trauma, PTSD, repetitions and other markers represent the impact of the structural intersection which Haleema is facing. Bashir carefully sets the stage of the underlying pathos and misery of the women through this haunting verses:

*The colour of everything is sorrow,
The colour of moon is sorrow,*

...

*The colour of my heart, in its own heart, is sorrow.
 The colour of my breath is sorrow,
 The colour of sorrow is sorrow.
 (p. 5)*

Haleema murmurs these verses on and off absentmindedly contrasting it to the wedding songs she would have sung had her son been with her.

In another flashback we are taken to a time when Haleema is living with her son, and Bashir (2014) cleverly builds up the growing tension in the Valley with the various stages of Imran's development and ageing. As Imran is growing, the focus remains on him with Haleema assuming the identity of the homemaker and the thread which knits the family of three together and keeps it in working condition. The social and political conditions of the Valley start pervading the plot of the novel as Imran grows up and starts understanding the changes appearing in the Village of Natipora, their hometown. It is through Imran's eyes that the reader is made aware of the influences of the insurgent actors as well as the militarization of the village in particular, and the Valley in general. In one such instance, the insurgency of the army is seen increasing in the neighbourhood when they start building a bunker beside their home and Ab Jaan tries to reason with them not to do so, resulting in him being bashed and threatened with a gun. A young Imran is seen angry at this and bursts out '*How dare you touch my Ab Jann? How dare ... I'll kill you.*' (p. 27). The intersection of the political forces alongside the maternal role which Haleema is playing at this point in time is of paramount importance.

The concept of Political Intersectionality comes into play in this oppressive time in Haleema's life. Political Intersectionality is described by Crenshaw as the presence of a woman in a system of overlapping facets like the subordination constructions, anti-feminism and racism dominating structures (Bailey, 2009, p. 18). In the novel, we can observe these structures in the form of Indian Occupied Forces, Militancy, Anti-Feminist ideology run by the inherent patriarchal beliefs and the social standing of the protagonist. With the looming threat of a disaster, Haleema keeps the spirit of the family high and plays the important role of the uniting factor. The sudden shift in the family's life appears when a sudden crackdown by the military results in the killing of 'Ab Jaan'. He is shot point blank by the military for raising his voice against the inhuman treatment the army showed to the villagers. With this incident, Haleema turns from a contented daughter living peacefully in her home to an orphan who has no means of income or support. She has not only to support herself and her son but also keep herself safe from the advancing evils. The factors responsible for the emerging problems in her life are delineated here as the political turmoil of the State intersects with the new found responsibilities which Haleema has to fulfil and pave her way through them. This intersection is the depiction of the specific turmoil of institutional intersectionality of a Kashmiri woman.

It is not long after that that the pinnacle of despair descends on Haleema. Imran is taken by the military by force. They state no reason for it and drag Imran away from his home and his mother's embrace. At this important turnpoint, Haleema feels the height of helplessness and powerlessness. She is seen pleading with the military

'You killed my father! Leave me someone to live with! How could you be so cruel'' (p. 56)

Her pleas go unheard and it becomes visible that her being a mother or a woman is of no consequence to the blood-lusting army. Her identity as a woman who has no one to back her, a mother with no means of keeping her son safe, a Kashmiri in the midst of turmoil, a Muslim in the oppressive heat of unacceptability and belonging to a poor class having no means of bribing or raising resources to help out her son are delineated. These intersecting identities converge to increase and heighten the marginalisation and oppression which becomes the fate of Haleema. As quoted in Bailey's essay, Crenshaw describes this oppression as a 'dimension of intersectional disempowerment' where multiple political and social 'projects' work to increase the streamlining and subordination of the hegemonic entities (p. 18).

Part II of the book describes the constant struggle Haleema is going through. At first it is the struggle of raising voices to help her find her son. The results are unproductive. The various events which are detailed by Bashir in the progress of Haleema looking for help, point towards the intersection of institutional power structures and her conceived vulnerability as a woman of no means working in intersection to increase her misery. Intersectional theory clearly proposes the concept of those in power exploiting the weak on the basis of their identities and helplessness. It comes into play openly when we see the constable in the Police Station openly telling Halima *'It has been a long time since we filed an FIR. ... Actually, we cannot lodge an FIR against the Army.'* (p. 63). In addition to the powerlessness of state institutions like the Police, the so-called independent media also remains unable to help out Haleema. When she goes to the news agency to get her son's news reported they refer her to the Radio in an effort to resolve her problem. The Radio people also appear to be unable to run the news and they refer her to the TV station and from there to the newspaper. In short, the institutional and independent powers in Kashmir are all under the control of the Army and cannot do anything without their say so. The streamlining of Haleema's efforts can be seen under the lens of her being a 'cultural – outsider'. In addition to her being a woman – considered less than a man – she is also a Kashmiri Woman which multiplies her presence on the extreme margins, which is compounded by the patriarchal and colonial setup of the institutions in Occupied Kashmir resulting in further restrictions and marginalisation.

The journey of her search for her son takes her from one door and one office to another, at times she is seen pleading with the SSP while at others she is looking for Imran in the hospitals. She tries to attempt suicide by snatching the guard's gun. This also results in a complete lack of empathy and reaction. The guard becomes symbolic of the institution of Police when he seems to '*look vacantly*' and patronises her by snatching the weapon from her. The behaviour of the SSP is another example of how Haleema is treated as less than a citizen of the state or even a human being. The discrimination and derogatory attitude which Haleema has to go through at the hands of the Member of Parliament, Bhat is a clear example of how her being a young Kashmiri woman is working against her. At first, he listens to her tale of loss and gives her the hope of helping out. It is when she goes back to him week after week that he comes to his real reason of stringing her along for so many months and asks her,

'Have you ever thought of yourself? ... You are wasting your beauty and time in vain.' (p. 83)

Bhat propositions her to spend time with him and forget her son. The reason which he gives for this disgusting behaviour results from her defencelessness as a young woman with no supporter and protector. In the specific case of a woman who is already fighting on multiple levels with the hegemonic powers, her gender, religion and class are brought out in the forefront as the reasons for her ongoing oppression. The structural barriers result in further intersection of various 'group politics' which add to increasing the domination of a woman. Time passes and Haleema keeps searching for Imran despite her failing health. People tell her about various ways for finding her son. She is sent to search various army cantonments. She hears detainees who have been freed from the detention centres talking about a barber who might have some knowledge of the prisoners and she goes to meet him. The unfolding scene introduces another family deprived of bare human decency. The barber lives with his widowed daughter and her son. The daughter's husband had been cruelly killed by the army in a fake encounter leaving a pregnant wife and four sisters and parents, mourning for him. The girl who remains unnamed is an insight into the common and generalised pain which the Kashmiris are suffering. The barber relates his fate to Haleema describing his helplessness and lack of position in the eyes of the world:

'My daughter is a widow now. ... Showkat was their sole son among four daughters, he was the only bread earner ... His father is old and senile ... Looking at their fate I called her home to ease them of some burden.' (p. 98).

The pain and misery intensifies for the women who have to face countless problems because of the loss of their loved ones, primarily the male members of the family. They are left behind in the world, having no means of sustenance and society treating them as pariahs. The intersectional power play of the societal norms and values and the

institutional structure converging to outcast them is apparent. They have no place to call their own and no acceptance from the community at large. Another woman who is floating in the same boat of misery and helplessness as Haleema is Jana Akhtar. Her pain is intensified because of the circumstances. Her son had been freed from the detention centre in very poor condition. His health has depreciated and he is unable to carry his own weight. Yet, Jaan Akhtar is ecstatic and jubilant because she has found her missing son. But the happiness remains short-lived. The army plans a fake encounter; declares her son an insurgent and after killing him throws his body in the forest. The mother, who had gained happiness after finding the son back, is again pushed into the well of despair. The girl who is narrating the incident to Haleema terms the times to be the replication of *Karbala*. The factors which are a constant presence behind all these sufferings and misery are the intersection of the state-backed terrorism and the multifaceted identities of the women having to face it.

The ultimate result of this continued misery and oppressive environment is the resultant trauma. Haleema continues losing her health. She starts having hallucinations and is afraid of her lonesome existence. '*Her mind was full of noises and dark thoughts ... her mind was full of despair and frustration ... everything seemed frozen in time*' (p. 106,107). With time, the feelings of self-loathing and self-destruction start appearing. The continuous guilt which accompanies her because of her inability to save her son from being taken by the military escalates with the feelings of failure in finding her missing son. She states '*I am broke ... I wish to die but this hope pulls me back ... I don't know what will happen to me. I might faint and fall on a burning stove someday or I might not wake up one morning.*' (p. 109). She experiences feelings of self-loathing and self-destruction and recounts the suicidal tendencies which she keeps in check to keep the hope alive. These memories and flashbacks of the past are some of the impacts of the slow and gradual deterioration of her health and mental wear.

The novel closes with the death of Haleema who lived her life searching for her son. She is described '*She has become a pair of exhausted, languidly rolling eyes ...*' (p. 176). She moved from a happy homemaker to a human rights activist and the leader of the voice which was raised against oppression and violence faced by the Kashmiris in the Valley and outside. They were neither welcome nor accepted in mainland India which proudly declares Kashmir to be an inseparable part. The intersection of State sponsored violence, social values, historical context and multiple identities held by the Muslim Kashmiri women intensify and multiply the torment.

CONCLUSION

Bashir's (2014) novel is an excellent example of institutional intersectionality leading to the oppressive attitude against the Kashmiris. The novel depicts the situation which the Kashmiris are facing; the international community claims to be working to alleviate this misery, yet they are unable to counter it at the ground level. The intersection of all

the institutional factors, religious discrimination, social and cultural norms, the political situation of the State, gender, class and racial discrimination: all work hand in hand to intensify the wretchedness faced by the Kashmiris. The women of Kashmir, who remain the target of every predicament, have to face the physical, psychological and social impact of these intersectional factors and thus become disadvantaged and destitute in every sense of the word.

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Smartphone Applications in Skill Development and Women Entrepreneurship: Analyzing Perceptions of Young Females' Smartphone Applications in Skill Development and Women Entrepreneurship

Abstract

The use of smartphone applications have brought a massive change and empowered the personal and professional lives of women by providing a platform to enhance their talent. Main purpose of this study was to examine the usage of smartphone applications in skill development and digital entrepreneurs among females. Further the research study explored how smart phones provide platforms for early startups and how the young women are implementing the skills to their practical life. Qualitative research approach was used by focus group discussions. The study concluded that there are lots of beneficial uses of smartphone applications. Smartphone application works as a platform which gives lots of opportunities to women to enhance their abilities, skills and entrepreneurship. It is in-expensive and user-friendly medium of learning and earning and aiding in the empowerment of young women

Keywords: *smartphone applications, women entrepreneurship, skill development*

INTRODUCTION

Smartphone applications dramatically increased as a valuable learning tool for practical skills and as a business platform for females. They are playing very beneficial role for women to learn skills and also opened the gates for women digital entrepreneurship. This study is an attempt to examine the usefulness and the role of smartphone applications in both perspectives, and how they are helping females to shape their capabilities. Smartphone applications represent a new paradigm in this relationship between technology and female empowerment. Technological development in the field of electronics and telecommunication has brought about a revolution in the life of people. The technical products so developed have brought about a noticeable change for the better in the personal and professional lives of people by enhancing their

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capabilities and empowering them to enrich their life and life experiences. The diffusion of innovation theory by Rogers elaborates how innovative ideas and technology gains momentum and is accepted among consumers. It explains the process of acceptance and implications of new ideas and technology. The recognition of technology to enhance individual skills is continually increasing. The implementation of new technology and ideas are producing more opportunities for entrepreneurs (Zanello, Mohnen & Ventresca, 2016). The acceptance of smart phones has empowered women whether working or non-working. Smartphones have a lot of applications that are totally about skill learning and business startups opportunities for women. Women can set up an online business sitting at home. These current facts and future projections indicate that mobile technology has already become one of the most ubiquitous technology devices in human development, and this is the most widely used device for accessing market information in a business domain.

In order to promote skills and employability of women there are lots of apps for women to enhance their skills for example for artists and others who are looking for new ways to embrace creativity. These apps will also help in increasing exposure or discover the work of others, from peers to art historical masters (Shashank & Prateek, 2019). The ratio of women entrepreneurs is very low as compared to men in developing countries like Pakistan. There are multiple reasons for the low percentage of women entrepreneurs including business problems, social problems and technical issues (Tulus, 2009; Aslam, Latif & Aslam, 2013; Roomi, & Parrott, 2008; Afshan, Shahid & Tunio, 2021). However women are struggling to fight these problems and create their space to work and become financially independent as women entrepreneurs in the rural areas are empowering themselves through self-employment in the agricultural and non-agricultural businesses (Ahammad & Moudud-ul-Huq, 2013). Mobile applications have also transformed the use of social media applications as it is no longer just a means of communication with others but also a platform for business and learning. Mobile apps are considered to be the cheapest and perhaps the most effective marketing tools for business and easiest tool of learning skills. Skill development in case of women is not only to prepare them for jobs but also to improve their skills as well as Health Management, Decision Making, Self-confidence or Conflict Management (Ahmad, Sinha & Shastiri, 2016).

Mobile phone technology as a tool can facilitate women's active participation in business, access to market information, promote economic growth, and alleviate poverty (Huyer & Sikoska, 2003). Mobile technologies enable women entrepreneurs to access market information about their products without physical travel since trading exchanges take place in virtual market space created by mobile phones and a layer of the application software. Smartphone applications have allowed women to recognize, create and nourish their skills and entrepreneurial opportunity through online selling

and realize that their free time can be used to earn profit. This research attempts to identify the important role of smartphone applications and how women are utilizing these tools to start their small business. Developed and developing nations have come to understand that women's entrepreneurial activities contribute to socioeconomic growth and utilizing the full potential of all human resources is essential for sustainable development (Jobber, 2010). Mobile marketing apps have been progressively employed as business gadget innovations in developing economies. One identified opportunity is the application of technology to enable women entrepreneurs' access to market information with ease (Kapinga Montero & Mbise, 2019). Mobile phone technology as a tool can facilitate women's active participation in business, access to market information, promote economic growth, and alleviate poverty (Huyer & Sikoska, 2003).

Presently, the use of smartphone apps can be seen in areas such as communication skills, photography, editing, blogging, education, cooking and baking, clothing, knitting, handicrafts, gardening, beauty, art and crafts, jewelry, home and event decor, graphics and many more. Mobile applications satisfy users on different levels of the pyramid of needs owing to their sense of belonging. Now there are other lots and lots of applications available on our phones for learning skills and earning with your skills. It seems that there are apps for almost every task and have changed traditional businesses (Laudon, et al, 2016). Mobile Applications provide a platform to begin new learning such as new languages. There are several applications for skills development like Pinterest, Reddit, tumblr, She Trades etc. and also there are several apps which give the platform to present oneself like Instagram, YouTube , blogs, etc. Tools for personal branding are various and include blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, Quora, Slideshare, podcasts, wikis, and videocasts (Clark, 2011; Chen, 2013; Elmore, 2010; Harris & Rae, 2011; Kleppinger & Cain, 2015; Pace, 2008; Poepelman& Blacksmith, 2014; Vitberg, 2009).

This study is carried out with the expectation that it contributes academically and practically to the better understanding of what opportunities prevail for female entrepreneurs if they choose to learn any skill or start or operate their skills in business by using mobile phone applications. smartphone applications have allowed women to recognize, create and nourish skills and entrepreneurial opportunity through selling online and realize that their time can be used productively. There is low investment and operating costs involved in startups through social networking mobile apps like Instagram that eventually motivate women entrepreneurs. Since, many women can run their businesses from home and at their own convenience; this has helped them to have a better work-life balance, where they can effectively manage both their professional and personal lives simultaneously. These days both men and women are connected

with smartphones and women are also starting their startups through social media platforms or applications and learning beneficial life skills. Thus the reason for selecting this topic is to find out how women are earning money through these apps and what are the basic tips for others.

The significance of the study is that mobile apps are a very beneficial gadget for women to learn skills according to their interests and needs. Through this research people came to know about the very important role of mobile apps and how women are utilizing these tools to start small businesses. People come to know what type of knowledge and skills are required in today's digital world to develop professionally and succeed as an entrepreneur. Through this study women can find that there are lots of applications which can act as a turning point in women's life; the only thing that they need to know about are the benefits of mobile apps. The specific focus on girls is because the narrative of empowerment is most frequently applied to them.

Research Objectives

1. Analyzing the trend of smartphone applications in skill development among females
2. Identifying the anticipation of smartphone apps in women entrepreneurship and empowerment.
3. Find out how smartphone is providing platforms and giving ideas to women for early startups.
4. To examine the implementation of the skills in practical life.

Research Questions

R Q: How do mobile applications play a contributory role in women's lives?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chattu et al, (2013) mentioned that Information Technology plays an important role in the field of women empowerment. Women must be encouraged to bring their vision and leadership, knowledge and skills, views and aspirations into the development agenda from the grassroots level in order to make it accessible to all women. Wally & Koshy (2014) argued towards the internet penetration rate of mobile phone and social media and argued that over 80% utilized social media for social and commercial purposes. Srinivasan (2015) has cited mobile applications as a game changer for rural women entrepreneurs. However, the advantages it has given to the urban woman have not been seen by her rural sister on the other side of the digital divide. While traditional IT requires women to adapt to technology, mobile applications can be adapted to effectively address the unique socio-cultural, political and economic needs and sensitivities of this segment, making it a potential game changer for rural women as a whole, and rural women entrepreneurs in particular. In addition Komunte, (2015) investigated the use of mobile Technology among women entrepreneurs and the findings of the study revealed that the majority of rural and urban women were micro entrepreneurs. On the other hand Schiemer, (2017) investigates how young Egyptian

women are accessing and utilizing mobile technology to contribute to their socio-economic empowerment. The findings indicate that mobile phones are normalized within their life. Kapinga et al, (2018) illustrate the role of mobile marketing application for entrepreneurship development in Iringa, Tanzania. This paper reports the co-creation process of a mobile application contextualized to Tanzanian women entrepreneurs to facilitate access to market information for improving their business performance and livelihood. In the same way, Nikita and Tauffiqu (2015) found that skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled potential women. Moreover, YouNie, (2016) examined the detailed impact of mobile fashion applications among females and explored how fashion systems have been reshaped by mobile applications through the role that fashion apps play in the current fashion system in both western countries and China. Mobile internet applications generally nourish the discourse of fashion bloggers and communities of interest.

Ganito explained that our lives are increasingly performed within a mobile context. There is unanimity over the profound impact mobile communications are having on the way we live, interact with others and perceive the world. The mobile phone also acquires symbolic aspects in different cultures and groups and is closely related to aesthetics and fashion, rendering it a cultural object. Grounding this research in previous findings and feminist theory, this paper presents a view of the mobile phone as new media and a “technology of gender”, a place of gender construction and transformation. Now women are polishing their skills and contributing to the economic development of the country due to mobile phones. On the other hand, Johnson (2017) mentioned the importance of developing, maintaining and promoting one’s personal brand with specific mobile apps. Personal branding is the process by which an individual actively tries to manage others’ impressions of their skills, abilities and experiences. Self-awareness and understanding one’s strengths and weaknesses in order to effectively present the self is essential to building a personal brand. Many tools are available on social media to convey one’s personal brand. Ching-I Cheng & Damon Shing-Min Liu (2008) proposed an intelligent system, called “Mobile Fashion Advisor” aimed to create a virtual fashion assistant to give suggestions on the use of clothing and help users avoid buying clothes that are never worn.

The APEC project (2018) presents case studies of successful women entrepreneurs engaged in ICT business or actively integrating ICTs into their business. Ying Lau, (2018) examined the development of a healthy lifestyle mobile app for overweight pregnant women. Mobile apps are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous platform for delivery of health behavior interventions among overweight and obese prenatal women. Apps are a favorite technology platform for healthy diet advice, appropriate

physical exercise, and weight management because they are user-friendly and advantageous. Mobile apps create new opportunities to set behavioral goals, provide healthy lifestyle counseling, and facilitate self-monitoring of prenatal women who use applications to look for pregnancy well-being related data, talk about issues with companions, and look for exhortation from experts to manage their pregnancy dynamics. Hossain & Rahman (2018) analyzed social media with regard to the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities for women and reported significant contribution to the economy of the country as women comprise half the entire population. Iftikhar et al (2020) explained the impact of YouTube Tutorials in Skill Development and their results conclude that there is an overall positive impact for skill development on the youth with YouTube tutorials helping in understanding and building aptitude among youth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study introduced qualitative methodology through Focus Group to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of smartphone applications among females. The population consisted of young female smartphone application users and digital female entrepreneurs of Lahore. The participants were nominated through 'quota sampling technique' with key selection aspects that they should be using smartphone applications for learning skills or as a business platform. 48 respondents were sampled, 24 of whom were using smartphone apps as an earning platform and the rest of the respondents used smartphone apps to learn or polish their skills. Eight focus groups consisting of 6 respondents each were formed. All discussions and sessions were bilingual and were recorded, both in Urdu and English.

General Information about Respondents

Focus groups	Entrepreneurs	Applications
Group 1	Members included: 2 Saree designers, 2 handmade craft brands, a bag designer and a leather artist.	Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Udemy, Fuzia, Domestika, Uber
Group 2	Members included: 2 graphic designers, 2 self-taught resin artists, an etching artist and a scented candle maker.	Canva, Pinterest, Instagram, Youtube, KineMaster, Behance, Careem
Group 3	Members included: 2 handmade custom embroidery pages. a child accessories brand, 2 ventures of hand painted khussas and a jewelry designer	Artform, Youtube, Instagram, Picsart, Pinterest, We heart it, Bykeya

Group 4	Members included: 3 food and baking brands, a crochet artist, a handmade bag designer and a nail and string artist	Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Grocer, Dribbble, Uber
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Learner And Users

Group 5	Members included: 2 art bloggers, 2 makeup artists, a lifestyle influencer and a home decorator	YouTube, Remind me, Five-minute crafts, Skillshare, Redecore, Daily life, Instagram
Group 6	Members included: 3 food bloggers, 2 housewives, a ceramic artist and a medical blogger	YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram Facebook, Food fusion, we heart it
Group 7	Members included: 2 travel bloggers, 3 fine art students, 2 students of media and a calligrapher	YouTube, Fitness guru, Tasty, DIYs and Crafts, Trip advisor Instagram
Group 8	Members included: 2 food and nutrition students, a food table designer, 2 mommy bloggers and a student of fashion designing.	YouTube, Instagram, Domestika, Pinterest, Udemy, Fuzia

Interpretation and Data Analysis

The responses were composed under five primary themes, which facilitated in finding out the important role of mobile applications in both skill development and entrepreneurship among females.

Theme 1: Makes women more skilled and organized:

The majority of participants acknowledged that mobile apps are helping women in every aspect of life and providing new opportunities and platforms. They can manage their daily routine tasks easily and also learn new skills or make themselves more productive with smartphone applications. These apps are making them more skilled day by day and helping them in organizing their routines and budgets etc. Majority of the respondents stated that they use smartphone applications to learn new skills. The apps keep women updated, groomed, skilled, organized, productive and creative. Smartphone apps are the best way to learn skills and techniques easily, and they connect everyone. Smartphones and their applications have been added to our culture to make women aware, to educate them and to change their attitude and opinions towards a particular task successfully. One of the participants from group 5 stated that these apps are helping women a lot to become entrepreneurs, learn skills, and run businesses. "Being a mother and having a dual career as a pharmacist and an entrepreneur of jewelry designer, these apps help me a lot in organizing or managing my routine". Another participant from group 4 states, "it has become a productive tool

for keeping me organized because I have short term memory loss so different reminder apps have become my second brain” and as an art student I am addicted to Pinterest for exploring new and creative ideas”.

Theme 2: Minimize the traditional, financial and personal barriers for learning and business:

Most participants strongly agreed that women are tackling different problems in underdeveloped and patriarchal countries like Pakistan where smartphone apps are playing the role of hope and wheel of empowerment for females. Most females are not allowed to go out, start business and sell their products or learn anything apart from formal education. These applications are playing a beneficial role in molding women into entrepreneurs by creating a business all from their phone. Smartphone apps give the opportunity to start a business without any big financial support. Females can easily work from home within their comfort zone because these apps enable women to combine work with family commitments by reducing time pressures. Smartphone apps are particularly useful in countries where there are restrictions on women’s mobility. Most importantly it gives an opportunity to learn from any international institute through online courses and minimizes geographical barriers. A participant from group 7 stated: “Not every artist has the resources to display their work in exhibitions and to set up their own art gallery, for showcasing their art, applications have made it so much easier for the artists to take their work to the international level while sitting at home”. Participants also acknowledged that apps encourage and minimize the barriers for elderly and aged females to start their own startups without any age and education limit. Participants from group 2 stated: “smartphone apps are really taking female development and home business to great heights”. These apps have become a necessity for small businesses to survive and are the backbone of women’s home-based business. She quoted: “Smartphone apps are playing the role of ladder for females”.

Theme 3: Encourage females to increase their exposure and utilize their talents

Majority of the respondents trusted that these applications encourage females to work or learn innovative skills and make them more creative and talented by telling women that they have life outside of their house other than as a wife, a mother or a sister and help them to nourish their hidden qualities. They provided several platforms where females can polish their skills and then showcase them to the wider audience. Females are encouraged by other females through these apps to enhance their capabilities and empower them to enrich their life experiences. There are places where women help and motivate each other through virtual communities. This encourages and empowers the females to learn skills and start their own startup and become financially independent. Females can explore all kinds of ideas especially through Pinterest and learn a lot of things through YouTube. Moreover, in terms of business they can learn marketing and advertising also through different smartphone apps. Smartphone applications help females in boosting confidence and self-grooming because when females see other

females they get encouragement and inspiration, and also improve or empower them with the help of these apps. This gives ideas for shaping old techniques with the latest trends as a participant from group 3 quoted: “I am very good at embroidery from the beginning but I was not able to use this skill in the latest creative way. When I started using mobile applications, I explored some new ways of using embroidery and started using it on hoops and wall hangings and started my own business. It enhances my exposure and as well as polished my skill”. Majority of the participants appreciated that Instagram has always proved to be a very effective tool for home based business by making working patterns easier and accessible.

Theme 4: Helping to create balanced and flexible professional and domestic workload

Most Participants acknowledged that smartphone applications help them in managing their personal and professional life side by side. Work through these apps doesn't require 24/7 presence and is easy to understand and manage. Females can set their own rules and guidelines for working since they are not doing a 9 to 5 job. It helps females in managing their studies or universities along with their work or businesses. Married females look after their children and home along with their work. Applications help women in balancing their domestic and professional work load, and make the women self-sufficient so that females can do their work or learn from home according to their own personal schedules and make them efficient in saving time and energy from household chores like grocery and shopping etc. One of the respondents stated: “smartphone applications encourage women to think about if you may have certain values as a working woman, you have the autonomy and the authority to create a work environment that works best with your needs and the needs of your family. Being a digital entrepreneur, it gives us the opportunity to live our life more authentically, while at the same time allowing us to create a corporate culture that's more in line with your values”. However, a few of the participants argued that domestic workloads pretty much remain the same and sometimes it creates more disturbance in your life, and it may increase your workload both domestic and professional. But the majority of the participants highly appreciated the role of applications that give the opportunity to live life more authentically.

Theme 5: Financial support and contributing in economy

In response to financial support and contributing to the economy the participants trusted smartphone applications and favored that definitely females through smartphone applications are contributing to the economy. Smartphone apps are helping women especially in patriarchal entrepreneurship but there are more applications like, mouqa online, ghar par, uber, food pansociety with a lot of social, personal and domestic pressure makes them able to run their own businesses. Smartphone applications are supported in numerous ways not only for providing employment and

earning sources for women but because these women can then become independent and self-sufficient. It is contributing to the economy since women are now aware of their rights, they are being mindful and know how to use their skills to earn money. Females' online businesses are creating jobs for other local workers and artists and contributing to the economy just like their male counterparts. Women empowerment and economic development are closely related and the majority of the respondents believe that nowadays due to smartphone applications females are creating a lot of work for other vendors and local talented people. These apps promote cultural crafts also and give chances to our local craftsmen. From this perspective it contributes a lot to our economy. The major thing is that it has digitized our local businesses and women's entrepreneurial activities. Contributing to socioeconomic growth and utilizing the full potential of all human resources is essential for sustainable development. One of the participants highlighted the very important aspect that smartphone applications also play a very important role for the artisans of Pakistan. These apps also provide skills of marketing and leadership attributes. One of the participants from group 1 stated: "Local businesses are the backbone of the country. We are promoting local business. I provide employment to more females so it's like women working together will improve our economy."

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Smartphone apps have brought about a revolution in the life of women, and have helped them to make themselves more productive, creative and skilled. They help them in managing their task in any casual emergency and difficulty of routine, they can easily find tutorials online from easy kitchen hacks to consulting experts. The results show that the majority of participants strongly approved this declaration. They acknowledged that in patriarchal societies, women have to face a lot of cultural, gender, financial and family barriers both in earning and learning but this picture is changing with the advancement of technology like mobile apps. The working is very accessible so women can earn and learn sitting at home. Smartphone apps are a beneficial tool for women empowerment. The best part of working through smartphone apps is that we don't need an army of twenty people and a huge investment for business. Social media apps also empower many females from different international groups, which can encourage other females to do everything. Because of patriarchal traditions and social stereotypes, women entrepreneurs in Pakistan face many challenges in starting their own businesses. However, through smartphone apps they are able to work within their boundaries. The results show that almost 90 percent were in favor of these apps lessening the barriers in women's progress. One of the participants said: "business is now a one-man show and you are just a tap away". Smartphone apps always encourage users, particularly women, to make themselves more valuable and productive, enhance their confidence, make them feel more autonomous and connected, able to access new opportunities and give a platform for earning. These apps actually encourage women to have a life outside of their house rather than just a homemaker. They are earning and

this helps them to become more confident, gain self-esteem and increase their status within their house; because of increased income they can provide a better quality of life to their family and thereby share the responsibilities of their partner. These apps encourage our youth and future generations to consider entrepreneurship as a valuable career. Most respondents strongly acknowledged that working through mobile apps is like a circle that never ends because everyone is motivating and inspiring others. The perception of the majority was in favor since apps help females in many ways. Women who could not go out, can take care of their children along with other household chores. It doesn't matter which lifestyle you may want to adopt in raising a family, or what values you abide by as a working woman, you have the authority to create a work environment that works best with personal needs and the needs of your family. But few females have the perception that women have to continue the struggle for balance in work and life because women are not considered the breadwinner of the family by default. However, a lot of apps have come up to manage their routine and help them in making their lifestyle even more productive. They definitely minimize the hurdles with an increasing number of opportunities and responsibilities. The majority of females acknowledged that smartphone applications promote female development by making them independent in contributing to the economy. Applications like Instagram and Facebook, help females to promote their home based businesses, empower and strengthen our economy and decrease the rate of unemployment for men, proving that women entrepreneurs can create jobs, innovation and new trends.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to explore the role of smartphone applications in women's skill development and entrepreneurship. It has been shown that there are lots of beneficial uses of smartphone applications. Smartphone application is the platform which gives a lot of opportunities to women to enhance their abilities and experiences. It is an inexpensive and user-friendly medium of learning and earning. The researcher investigated women's perceptions, opinions and personal experiences towards the use of mobile applications and revealed that smartphone apps allow women to polish their talents and learn skills, thereby making them more productive and organized and allow them to start their own business, make themselves independent and promote female entrepreneurship. Mobile apps are a game changer for females in patriarchal societies, and developing countries like Pakistan, not only breaking gender stereotypes for females but also contributing to our economy. The study proved that if women are provided opportunities, they can excel themselves. The study concluded that mobile phone application is a skill development tool and business platform that liberates women and allows them to motivate others by progressively employing others and contributing to the improvement of the economy.

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Beyond Gender Binary: Social Acceptance of the Third Gender in Pakistan

Abstract

This study is based on social acceptance issues of transgenders in Pakistan. Gender non binary groups gained more visibility after the Supreme Court decision to recognize them as the third gender to give them their due rights. Despite the Supreme Court verdict, the third gender group continues to face stigmatization and is unable to participate in normal social and economic lives available to the majority of people in Pakistan. Through in-depth interviews of 25 transgenders, this article analyzes the different social and institutional biases faced by khawaja siras after their identity disclosure. The labeling theory and symbolic interactionism are used as theoretical framework. The findings indicate that the khawaja sira community faces exclusion because society does not recognize them as a separate gender identity beyond gender binary (male-female dichotomy). For this reason, transgenders have to hide their true identity under the cover of either fake male or female.

Keywords: *Third gender, Khawaja sira, Transgender identity, Gender non-binary, Social Acceptance*

INTRODUCTION

The term transgender refers to individuals who express gender in different ways which deviate from the gender binary system. Because of gender variance, the transgender individual loses legitimacy as a social actor. This is due to the fact that in society, there is no place for individuals who are neither men nor women (Lorber, 1994). Individuals who seek to challenge the gender binary system by crossing gender boundaries are likely to be stigmatized, labeled and excluded. Gender non binary individuals meet with problems like stigmatization and discrimination because they challenge and disrupt the gender dichotomy (Lombardi, 2009). The Pakistani society is assumed to be patriarchal and heteronormative and masculinity is an expression of honour and pride that gives individuals a privileged position in society (Ali, 2018). Most transgenders as children grow up facing hatred from family, peers and other members of society. Transgender identity is also considered as a concealable identity because of the fear of being stigmatized. Most transgenders hide their gender identity in order to avoid discrimination and abuse. Despite its being clearly mentioned in Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan that all citizens are equal before law and entitled to equal

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protection of law (Pakistan, 1973) and that there will be no discrimination on the basis of sex, the law practically does not do any justice to the transgender.

To explore reasons why transgenders conceal their identity, this paper investigates the following research questions: How do gender non-binary individuals experience lack of acceptance in relation to identity disclosure? What are the different social and institutional biases faced by third gender category after their identity disclosure in society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study is based on the theories of symbolic interactionism and labeling theory. Symbolic interactionism sees individual interactions and focuses on how these interactions between people influence their behavior and impact society. Through this theoretical framework we will try to explore how transgenders fight throughout their life to create a social space for themselves and the ways in which their social identities are constructed through mutual interaction. This theory further connects the subjects' daily lives and the stated interactions with each other. Through Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, various supporters of labeling theory advance the theory by proposing that people re-form and build their identities through interaction within society (Joy Moncrieffe, 2007). In order to seek the reason of exclusion faced by the transgender community, this article applies the labeling theory to explore identity disclosure. This theoretical perspective is associated with self-fulfilling prediction and stereotyping.

The labeling theory (Becker, 1960s) focus on the role of social labeling in the development of deviance. Labels are often conferred upon minorities who are seen to be deviant and deviant labels are special because they are stigmatizing labels. Deviant labels in particular are associated with stigma which indicates stereotypes to deviant labels. Once an individual is identified as deviant, it is extremely difficult to take off that label. Transgender individuals are labeled as khusra, chakkas or hijra from a very early age. This type of labeling is done by different members of society including family in many different ways on different occasions. This type of negative label such as khusra, hijra intrigue the individual to the point where the individual is compelled to believe that they really fit in the label of khusra or hijra and later join the hijra community due to lack of social acceptance. People attach labels to transgenders which reflect how others think about their identities and how they think about them. These labels affect their identities as well and people use these labels to define the self-concept of transgender. Labels are often granted upon minorities as negative tags since they are seen as deviant from the standard culture norms. This theory is concerned

about the roles that society provides for deviant behavior which is called deviant role or social stigma. The stigmatization of labels can exclude individuals from mainstream opportunities like education and employment opportunities and exclusion from such type of opportunities become the reason of exclusion from mainstream society. Thus labeling has the ability to stigmatize community individuals in a way that may move them away from mainstream society (Lanier, 2015). Stigma is a powerful negative label which changes a person's self-concept and social identity. A stigmatized person usually has lower self-esteem and may behave as deviant as a result of the negative label. It occurs when an individual is identified as deviant which is linked with negative labels and disqualifies them from social acceptance.

The literature from Pakistani khawaja sira community falls broadly into two categories. One is the anthropological investigation of khawaja sira gender identity and their lives. Secondly, the impact of social exclusion on khawaja sira lives. With some exceptions, most researches have been done with a focus on HIV prevalence or their sexual practices (Bokhari, 2017). Transgender phenomena may be considered "postmodern" since the epistemological concern lies at the heart of transgender critique and motivates the transgender struggle for social justice (Whittle, 2006). Gender is a social institution and internalized sense of self that demands conformity to a binary system where females present themselves as feminine women and males present themselves as masculine men. But this internalized sense of gender does not apply to all individuals who fit within the binary system. Gender identity as a social phenomenon is subject to social norms and operates as an axis of inequality (Johnson, 2015).

Gender diversity was stigmatized, anthologized and often criminalized throughout the twentieth century in many countries across the globe. According to an estimate, 0.3 % of the adult population in Asia and the Pacific may be transgender (Winter, 2012). There are between 9.0 and 9.5 million transgender people in this region according to UN population data 2010 (Winter, 2012) and a number of indigenous terms exist to describe gender variant identities in the Asia-Pacific region. Terms used for transgender or third gender include hijra kinaar in India, khawaja sira in Pakistan, meti in Nepal, Waria in Indonesia, khthoey in Thailand, Mak nyah in Malaysia and *kwaasing-bit* in Hong Kong. These terms have their own unique histories in which some indigenous terms are used as insulting labels for transgenders (Paul Boyce, 2018). This article employs khawaja sira in writing as the term used in Pakistan. There is no discrimination in Articles 25, 26 and 27 of the Constitution of Pakistan on the basis of gender, religion, race, sex, cast, language and residence. According to article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, all citizens are equal before law but most khawaja sira face various forms of discrimination and suffer unequal treatment wherever they go. Anti-discrimination legislation often does little to improve the life of sexual minorities who are most vulnerable to oppression and at worst continue inequalities in the legal

system (Spade, 2009). The Supreme Court of Pakistan has granted a number of rights to the gender non-conforming persons who are usually known as khawaja sira between 2009 and 2012 in a series of historic landmark rulings with the judiciary pursuing the transgender policy bill through legal and policy development perspectives (Khan F. A., 2019). The Supreme Court ordered that the hijras be accorded the same rights and status as other Pakistanis, in matter of inheritance, employment and election registration (Walsh, 2010). The Supreme Court of Pakistan has therefore granted a separate legal identity to the khawaja sira. Before the Supreme Court ruling there was no third gender category available so the khawaja sira were not recognized as persons by the state. The Supreme Court amended this by issuing multiple directives regarding the legal identity of khawaja siras (Nisar, 2016). The Government of Pakistan has passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act to provide for protection of rights, relief and rehabilitation of transgender individuals and other relevant matters (Punjab Social Protection Authority, 2018). This Act prohibits discrimination in school, at work place, in public places and when receiving medical care. This Act guarantees citizens the right to express their gender as they want and regarding gender identity which is defined as, an individual's sense of self as male, female or a blend of both or neither of the sexes assigned at birth. This act allows transgenders to identify themselves as per their sense of identity without consideration of biological factors (Awan M. A., 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is based on qualitative data that was collected over a period of 8 months. The data was collected from three districts of Punjab province including Lahore, Jhelum and Bhawalnagar. The paper employs indepth, semi-structured, face to face, and telephonic in-depth interviews with 25 working and non-working transgender participants including 15 from Lahore, 8 from Jhelum and 2 from Bhawalnagar. The researcher visited the third gender hosting institutions and two khawaja sira deras (place generally owned or rented by guru where different members of the khawaja sira community live together). We started interviews in the first week of June, 2019 and completed it in the last week of December 2019. There were several challenges while gaining access to the research respondents. The researchers came to know of a khawaja sira support program by an NGO based in Lahore. Through this program we were able to get in touch with a khawaja sira group. This group of khawaja siras introduced us to the monthly meeting of khawaja siras at Fountainhouse Lahore. From there, through snowball sampling, we started meeting more khawaja siras.

An interview schedule was followed majorly but new questions were added according to the participant's responses to follow a unique line of thought. The researcher used convergent theme generation technique during data analysis process. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher started analysis coding and categorizing techniques used for doing this. This process involved a detailed reading of transcribed interviews time and again, after which the identified and broad themes were traced.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

During the field work, four major themes that emerged from the narratives of the research respondents (1) Discrimination based on gender (2) Stigmatization, humiliation and shame & honour (3) threat of Violence (4) Harassment and threat of Physical and Sexual assault. **Figure1** illustrates driving factors for non-acceptance of gender non binary group on the bases of discrimination and stigmatization that make reason to exclude them from mainstream society.

Discrimination based on gender

Mostly khawaja sira faced discrimination based on their gender. One of the biggest problems today faced by khawaja sira is discrimination despite fundamental guarantees under the Constitution of Pakistan. Article 25 of the constitution of Pakistan provides for the equality of all citizens before law and states the general prohibition on discrimination. It is clearly mentioned in the Transgender Persons (protection of rights) Act that no one shall discriminate against a transgender person in relation to gender.

Physical/appearance discrimination is where discrimination is treated because of personal characteristics. This discrimination includes bullying someone due to physical features such as height, shape or other characteristics including the way of talking and the feminine gait make reasons for discrimination.

Guria shared her experience regarding appearance:

It was difficult to get ID card as they were not accepting this thing that what they write male.....or female.

Balochan shared her experience in public transport

If we sit in bus, people don't like to sit with us. We get ticket in Daewoo but in local bus, they don't allow us to sit. They ask us to stand here and there. If the transport fare is 100 Rupees they take 150 rupees from us. How can we know that what is the fare because they tell us that took 200 rupees from other passengers and from you we are taking 150 rupees only. In fact they take 100 rupees from others.

Perveen stated that her feminine appearance will create problems for performing Umrah

I want to change the picture in the ID card because I want to go on the umrah. I want to paste a picture in male set up on ID card because the picture with dupatta will create a problem.

Rani shared her experience

I got this feeling of being different when people made me realized that you are she male (khusara), khawaja sira and hijra. Boys tease me, irritate me, they call me zanana/khusara. Teachers also annoy me. They asked to say

“oye Khusra come here, how you study, you are a zanana”. Sometime I feel that being khawaja sira is a crime.

The research participants shared that first they were discriminated from their family members and later from society. According to them, they have feminine soul inside but our family members insist us to wear male dress and close shaven hair. This type of discrimination limits the livelihood opportunities for khawaja sira community.

Rani spoke about discriminatory behavior by primary institutions and society

Yes at every place there is unequal treatment with khawaja sira. First people at home start discrimination. Then at school it happens and at work place too. No one likes to sit with us. Even for medicine taking, there is discrimination. This world is not made for us.

Analysis shows that khawaja sira usually face discrimination while searching for a job and because of discrimination they are compelled to a traditional source of income including begging, blessing and function. Furthermore, wage discrimination is a major problem in the workplace for transgenders.

Mahi Peyasi shared her experience at the workplace

They ask me to clean floor and washrooms. When I answer that my work/job is cooking and not this. They asked me straightforwardly to go from there ad that they don't want me to work there. Even my salary was delayed several times and no paid after which I had quit the job.

The participants shared how they become victim of low wages due to their gender identity. According to them, if they work in any house as domestic worker then people don't give us complete wages.

Fear of Stigmatization, Humiliation and Shame & honor

The respondents of this research study spoke about their intimate relationship and how they were separated by the primary institute of care. Their rejection/non acceptance from their family primarily create a sense of social exclusion. This rejection makes this stigmatized group more vulnerable and negatively stereotyped.

Laal shared her experience being an election candidate

I contested elections from PP 26 Jhelum. The candidates from major political parties were threatening me that why I am contesting election against them and asked that you don't know that who are you? No major political parties recognized us or give us tickets. So first time I contested election independently

Continuous humiliation is a disruptive influence on the behavior of the individual. The research respondents shared that they constantly experience some form of ridicule, scorn or other degrading treatment by the members of society. In case of transgenders,

a person who belongs to the gender non binary group humiliating by another individual from the gender binary group is often used as a way of asserting power over them.

Upon asking, why Guria would feel bad if people called her “Khusara or hijra” and what she knew or understand “being a khusara meant, she tried to explain

Better to call “Guria” either Guria or khawaja sira. It does not make any difference but when the word “khusara” comes, it generates very bad thoughts and it goes to bad topic. If you call me “khawaja sira” then there is no issue. Now this word “khusara” sounds really bad. Gays are also called “khusara”. That’s how our community (khawaja sira) get sully (Badnam).

Labels play a great role in the construction of identity of the labeled person. This labeling is affecting individual self-concepts and stigmatize the individuals which cause further exclusion from mainstream society. There are multiple situations due to which these transgenders feel compelled to join the khawaja sira community. The respondents highlighted that the main reason of leaving home, apart from those mentioned above included the shame that their identity brings on their family. Their deviance is considered to threaten the family honor. Guria spoke about an experience that disturbed her regarding her identity.

My father doesn’t allow me to meet others. He wants to hide me inside the house. Then I started veil (Burqa) but my gait used to show that I am a khawaja sira.

Sadiq perveen recalled how her feminine behavior was condemned by her brothers.

Upon visiting my home, my younger brother said, “bhai (brother) when you come here, please wear male cloths. Now whenever I go, I wear male dresses. He also said to me to wrap up your hair. I never go to my sister’s home in day light and always visit them late at night. If I don’t care then the neighbors will create problem for my sisters and her family.

Threat of Violence

Violence impacts people in various forms including self-directed violence, interpersonal violence which is within the family and collective violence by a large group of individuals. The respondent of this research became the victim of all types of violence possible. Findings from the interviews reveal that, despite gaining legal recognition, respondents experience both visible and invisible and much more violence at home, workplace and even in the medical and social institutions. The khawaja sira community still faces both verbal and physical violence despite the incremental progress regarding rights for the gender ambiguous people. Different forms of violence are reported by the interviewees.

Uzma got violence by her guru

I left home at the age of 13. Few shemales were living near my house. I straightaway went to them. But after sometime, I got a clash with them; they tortured and sold me in fifty thousand rupees to some other transgender who came from Faisalabad. She was my guru.

Rani shared her experience to become victim of verbal violence and bullying during school days.

Boys teased me a lot. They used to pull from aside, use bad language and threw to us “zanana khusara” dirty jokes. It was very difficult in school days. Teachers also annoyed me by asking “oye Khusara, how you are studying here, you are a zanana”. I discontinued my studies because of all this violence.

Narratives show that most members of the khawaja sira community are expelled from their homes after they become victims of verbal and physical abuse and they face sarcastic remarks, ironic comments and dirty jokes by the general public.

Uzma shared her experience of collective violence as,

I was attending a village fair where I was supposed to perform a dance party. There few people came and took me with them forcefully. They really tortured me, beat me up really badly and tore my clothes.

Mahi also shared her story of becoming a victim of collective violence by a group of individuals during the settlement of a matter of mortgage

The people whom I gave money for mortgage (girvi) later beat me and broken my face bone when I asked my money back. They even took my mortgage (girvi) papers and thrown me in bushes. When I came to senses after two hours someone took me to hospital. When I got little better then I went to liaqatabad police station. When they asked me the place of incident and responded that your police station is green town. The police made me visit different police stations and eventually made me to take my case back. We have to face double violence as even police consider us inferior and rejected.

Research respondents who are members of khawaja sira community spoke about various forms of police abuse where often they use dirty language and harassment in the form of sexual favours. It is clear through narratives that khawaja sira face a lot of violence. It occurs at home, school, and work places and even the law enforcement agencies. This is another main reason of social boycott.

Harassment and threat of Physical and Sexual assault

Harassment is a form of discrimination which includes an unwanted verbal or physical act that humiliates someone. According to the Human Rights Section 2(h), harassment includes physical, sexual and mental harassment including unwelcoming remarks or

jokes regarding gender identity or on the grounds of discrimination. Whereas the interviewees stated their general experiences loaded with open harassment on a daily basis.

Mahi shared her harassment and bullying experience at the workplace

I started my Biryani (spicy rice) on thela. I was making good income. Slowly when my business started getting regularized, people started calling me out as khusara, they used to eat Biryani and didn't give me any money. They used to call out loudly as "oye khusara is making Biryani, which would turn us into khusara as well".

Rani shared her experience of harassment by security/police

After returning from a function I was stopped by the police. They asked me to bring for them the cigarettes or juices from the grocery store which was quite far away. I used to serve them despite I used to be tired, as I knew no cooperation would bring lots of harassment from the police in terms of false allegations of theft or stealing etc.

These narratives show that research participants engage in verbal harassment on a daily basis by most people. It is observed from the interviewees' narratives that they are being harassed even at the holy shrines. Transgenders become more vulnerable because they are abandoned by their own family members and therefore become easy victims for physical and sexual harassment. Victims are first sexually and then socially harassed which becomes even more humiliating.

Disco shared her childhood experience to show how she was subjected to sexual abuse by cousins

When my cousins (boys) came to know that I am different gender wise, they started to touch me followed by sexual assault. I was not aware about sexual abuse but I became the victim of it at very early stage.

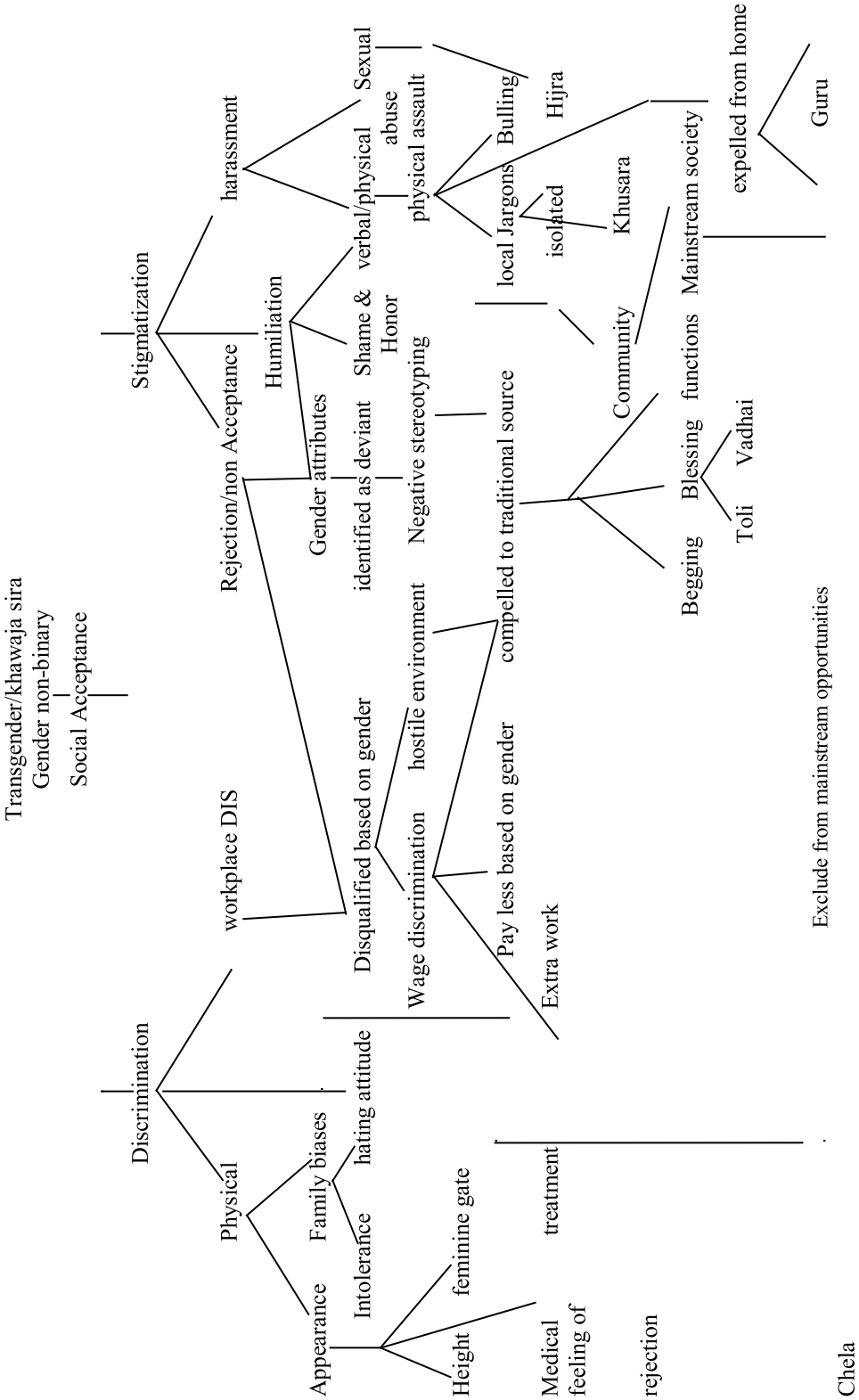
Narratives such as these show that transgenders have higher chances of sexual and physical harassment since early ages.

Disco further shared that how she became the victim of sexual abuse by police

The police are standing on every next naka (check post), if they find us there then they will start saying that they are extremely bored. They use us for their entertainment. We have to remain silent as they get nasty if we resist. We are not human for them; we are just "garbage" to them which they can use as they want.

This and other narratives show that the khawaja sira becomes an easy target of sexual abuse, physical assault and thus have feelings of rejection. Most transgenders become victims to sexual harassment because transgender rights are not properly implemented in society.

Fig 1: Social Acceptance Factors for Transgenders' Identity Disclosure



CONCLUSION

This article explores gender non binary individuals facing lack of acceptance based on the narratives of this study's participants. The findings of this study suggest that the issues of the transgender community have their roots in family disownership and their childhood neglect leads to the violation of their basic human rights. This culture of family disownership is the first step where denial to education, inheritance, health, dignity and other fundamental rights begin. Transgenders are not accepted by society unless they are accepted, respected and treated as normal individuals beyond gender binary within their family fabric. The analysis of social discourse in this case reveals that research participants face lack of acceptance in society due to stigma and discrimination. They fail to resist the social stigma and therefore encounter harassment, violence and discrimination. In that sense, a non-binary gender identity is still a stigmatized identity. They grow up with a lack of acceptance by informal social institutions which influences one's identity and is perceived as a deviant identity because the family shows intolerance and does not try to understand the gender identity of their khawaja sira children (Hershberger, 1995).

The Supreme Court of Pakistan proceeded to consult the khawaja siras' legal identity which had little relevance with their self-identity. Another important point that the social position envisaged by the court for the khawaja sira was that disabled individuals are not a gender queer group. According to Butler, sex and gender are distinct through socially constructed aspects of an individual's identity (Butler, 1999). The legal identity construction of the khawaja sira was only one part of the Supreme Court decision and the other part of the decision which was redistribution of justice for khawaja siras was ignored and not implemented. Still the social and economic marginalization of khawaja siras persist because of limited implementation of the Supreme Court decision. Thus the formal social recognition of khawaja sira resulted in minor changes in their daily lives because of the limited implementation and the power of informal social institutions that continues to exclude khawaja sira even after the Supreme Court directive.

Due to their feminine characteristics these individual become victims of harassment, ostracism, extreme discrimination and abuse which begin at home and extends to all spheres of their life. Literature reveals that verbal and sexual harassment are common at the hands of policemen despite the improvement in the status of khawaja sira after getting legal identity (Khan F. A., 2014). Zafar argues that most transgenders become victims to sexual harassment because transgender rights are not properly implemented in society (Zafar, 2019). They are assaulted in public places like parks, markets, buses and trains. They don't have any support against these incidents which take place frequently. Thus transgenders as individuals have been struggling with social acceptance due to the unbalance between gender and sex. There are individuals who

join the group because they want to tackle societal rejection and associating themselves with the khawaja sira community distances them further.

Some form of social exclusion faced by the research participants who were part of the khawaja sira community include exclusion from informal social institution family leading to exclusion from social participation, violence at home by parents, brothers, relatives which includes shame & honour , humiliation and harassment, labeling (local jargons), lack of protection from state authorities such as police, sexual favors and arrest on false allegations, restricted access to health services, education and public spaces as well as exclusion from economic and livelihood opportunities.

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Addressing the Feminine in Cosmetic Advertisements

Abstract

The linguistic and semiotic configurations used in Pakistani advertisements propose a significant dimension in exploring the ways in which a beauty narrative centering on femininity is created and represented. In this context, this research examines the linguistic and semiotic features used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising to study the beauty narrative created by the advertisers through addressing the feminine. The data consists of the advertisement texts shared on the official Facebook pages of three cosmetic brands. A socio-semiotic approach to discourse analysis is used to study the linguistic and semiotic representations in the advertisement texts to examine how the feminine is portrayed in these advertisements with respect to style, attitude, identity etc. The findings indicate that a certain woman image based on the respective perceptions of feminine beauty ideals of the producers is created and represented that focus mainly on the white skin, young age, and glamorous persona.

Keywords: Advertising discourse; Gender; Femininity; Beauty narrative; Discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

Gender representation in advertisements has long been the subject of research studies owing to the tendency of advertisements to create stereotypical images of both men and women. In the Pakistani advertising context, the advertising discourse persists in strengthening gender stereotypes by portraying a certain kind of image of both men and women. In recent times, however, a certain shift in the portrayal of women's image in advertisements has been observed. The advertising text producers now endeavor to create a more diverse and dynamic image of women who are shown to be more confident, bold, and strong than ever before. However, in spite of this shift in portrayal, it has been observed that through these advertisements a certain beauty narrative is created which focuses on age-old beauty ideals. Advertising images and the narratives

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created in the advertisements greatly affect our thought patterns, sentiments and behaviors. The present study in this context focuses on studying the image of women created in Pakistani cosmetic advertisements and also on examining the kind of beauty narrative created by the ways in which feminine is addressed in these advertisements. Pakistan is witnessing a rise in the branding process owing to the greatly increasing markets of both local and foreign brands in the country. Brand producers in this context rely heavily on advertisement campaigns to attract more and more customers. Not only does the advertising discourse reflect social realities, it also constructs certain narratives and discourses that come to be viewed as part of the society in which they are produced and viewed. Hence, the discourse of advertising needs to be examined from a sociolinguistic perspective in order to study the dominant narratives being created through it. In this context the present research focuses on the study of the kind of beauty narrative created in the advertising discourse of various cosmetic brands in Pakistan to examine how the feminine is perceived and represented in Pakistani advertising discourse.

The aim of the present research is to study the ways in which different cosmetic brands in Pakistan create a beauty narrative by addressing the feminine in their advertising discourse through language with both its linguistic and semiotic features. In line with this aim the following research questions are designed:

Q. What dominant images regarding femininity are prominent in the advertisements of cosmetic brands in Pakistan on their official Facebook pages?

Q. What kind of beauty narrative is created in the Pakistani advertisements of these cosmetic brands through the linguistic and semiotic configurations used in the advertisement texts?

Operational Definition of the term ‘Cosmetics’

Traditionally, the term 'cosmetics' referred to the idea of making for beauty, especially for the skin and complexion. It was considered a product applied to the body, especially the face, to improve its appearance. However, with the upsurge of products introduced in the world of cosmetics by various companies manufacturing in line with the idea of beauty and personal care, the term now includes any products used for beautifying and cleansing the body, improving appearances, and caring for the body. Augustine and Hasan (2020) define cosmetics as “articles intended to be applied to the human body by being rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed for cleansing, promoting attractiveness, beautifying, or altering the appearance” (p. 202).

Cosmetics Europe-The Personal Care Association has provided a comprehensive definition of the term by synonymizing the terms ‘cosmetics’ and ‘personal care products’, asserting,

“Cosmetics and personal care products are applied to the human body for the purposes of cleaning, beautifying, promoting attractiveness or changing its appearance. Ranging from antiperspirants, fragrances, make-up and shampoos, to soaps, sunscreens and toothpastes, cosmetics and personal care products play an essential role in all stages of our life. Specifically, there are seven categories of cosmetics and personal care products - oral care, skin care, sun care, hair care, decorative cosmetics, body care and perfumes” (n.d.).

Hence, the more updated definitions of the term ‘cosmetics’ include the products catering to the beautifying and cleansing needs of a person’s body. In the light of these updated notions about the scope of cosmetics in terms of products, the term cosmetics includes beauty creams, soaps, shampoos and conditioners, bleach creams, and perfumes in the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a brief review of the literature that is relevant to the current research.

Gender

Gender refers to the culturally and socially fashioned variances between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs, and practices associated with ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ (Lorber, 1994, p. 6). According to Nixon (1997) gender identities ‘are invented categories. They are the product of the cultural meanings attached to certain attributes, capacities, dispositions and forms of conduct at given historical moments’ (p. 301). Being a social and cultural construct, gender is actively promoted by the media and hence needs to be studied in order to examine the gendered narrative being created by the media in society.

Advertising Discourse and Gender Representation in the Media

Advertising ‘is the air we breathe as we live our daily lives’ (Jhally, 1995, p. 79). The advertising discourse needs to be researched because it has a great impact upon the way we perceive things. Together with promoting the brand and creating a certain desired image of the producers, advertising also promotes a notion and an ideology (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Worell (2002) believes that media encourages a strengthening of the notions prevalent in society about appropriate roles, conducts, proficiencies and abilities of men and women and also about the appropriateness of women’s place both in the domestic and work platforms. According to Kellner (1995), media contributes to the training of the people about how to be men and women; how to dress, look and consume; how to react to members of different social groups; how to be popular and successful and avoid failure; and how to conform to the dominant system of norms, values, practices and institutions. (p. 5). Advertising is persuasive. It

has become much more concerned with the manipulation of social ideals and outlooks and less concerned with the communication of information about the products and/or services being advertised (Woods, 2006).

Gender Representation in the Pakistani Advertising Contexts

Craig (1992) notes that women in particular have been specifically stereotyped in advertising and have been portrayed either as dependent housewives or as sensuous objects. Similarly, in the Pakistani advertisements women are constantly being stereotyped as either homemakers or as attractive physical beings depending on the type of products they are endorsing in the advertisements. In the advertisements of food and home appliances for instance, they are portrayed in nurturing roles such as housewives and mothers; whereas in the advertisements of accessories, cosmetics and clothing women are represented as sensuous objects obsessed with the ideals of beauty and physical appearance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides the details regarding collection of data, time frame for data collection and research methodology used in the present study.

Collection of Data

Data is collected from the official Facebook pages of three cosmetic brands in Pakistan to look into the ways in which these brands use both linguistic and semiotic features in their advertising discourse to address the feminine. The names of the selected three brands are as follows:

Brand 1: Lux

Brand 2: Sunsilk

Brand 3: Olivia

It is significant to note here that some of the selected brands are international brands used worldwide, and hence may not be called purely Pakistani brands, however, the focus of analysis is not on the discourse analysis of essentially Pakistani brands, rather it is on the exploration of dominant images of femininity in the Pakistani advertisements of these brands. So, only the Pakistani Facebook pages of these brands, being operated in Pakistan and targeted mainly at the Pakistani audience have been selected for the study. Appendix A contains the links to the official Pakistani websites of the selected brands, from where the links to their official Pakistani Facebook pages have been obtained in order to ensure the accurate selection of the official pages. It also contains the snapshot images of the Google search results for the official websites and official Facebook pages of these brands. Moreover, the snapshot images of the main/Home page of the official websites and Facebook pages with the number of

followers/likes are also included in this appendix for the purpose of establishing the popularity of the selected brands among the Pakistani audience on their respective Facebook pages.

Time Frame of Data Collection

The data includes the linguistic and semiotic features used in the advertisement texts on the official Facebook pages of these brands over a period of 6 months (i.e. 1st July, 2014 – 31st December, 2014).

Analytical Framework

The approach used in the present research is the socio-semiotic approach to discourse analysis. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002) are of the view that all sign systems can be explored using semiology. Halliday (1978) believes that semiotic resources are 'system[s] of meanings that constitute the 'reality' of the culture' (p. 123). The socio-semiotic linguistic analysis focuses on the analysis of linguistic and semiotic features in a text to examine discourse and its meanings in a social context.

System of Data Presentation

Due to the extensive amount of data collected and the limited scope of the research paper, in sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 which deal with data analysis of the three selected brands respectively, only representative data is included for analysis. The data presented in the paper includes pictures along with captions shared on the official Facebook pages of the selected brands.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The analysis in this section focuses on examining the linguistic and semiotic configurations used in the Pakistani discourse of advertising of cosmetic brands to study how the feminine is addressed in the advertising texts of the selected brands. The qualitative findings focusing on the qualitative aspects of the analysis are presented as under.

Brand 1- LUX

The way Lux represents gender in its advertising discourse tells a great deal about the way it perceives gender identity. The discourse creates an image of an emblematic *Lux girl* who is trendy, fashionable, stylish, flirtatious, alluring, confident and bold while still maintaining the feminine in her. A few instances where the text producers have created an example of a perfect *Lux girl* which shows how the brand perceives feminine identity, are being discussed here. Figure (1) taken from the Facebook page of the brand defines what the brand means by the phrase '*Lux girl*'.

Figure (1)

Brace yourself, world. Our Lux girls are all about confidence!



Figure (1) shows an image of a woman smiling at the camera. The text on the picture stating, '***CONFIDENCE- A slight, self-assured smile tells the world you believe in yourself***', gives a lesson on life and teaches women to be more confident and self-assured. The caption to the picture says, '***Brace yourself, world. Our Lux girls are all about confidence!***', defines the typical Lux girl as one who is full of confidence and self-assurance. This creates a strong image of women who are confident. '***Brace yourself, world***' is a word of caution to the world that it better beware of the women who believe in themselves and can make the mountains move due to the confidence they have. Hence, we see that a strong image of women has been created in the text. Projecting the glamorous, flirtatious and alluring image of a woman the text producers urges the women to be independent and classy. Figure (2) taken from the Facebook page of Lux is an example.

Figure (2)



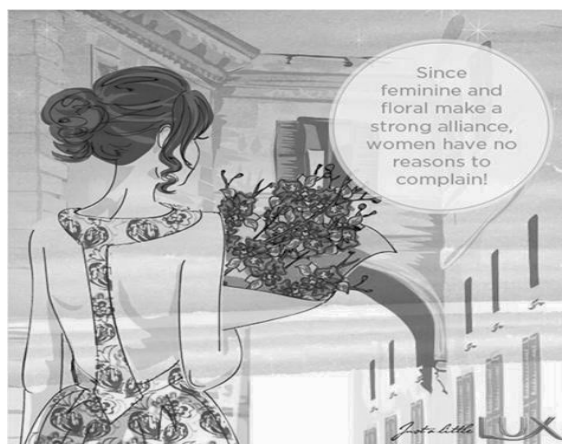
Figure (2) shows a woman's face painted in black and white whose lips are highlighted in a bright red color. The lips are parted and the gaze is directed away from the camera aiming to give a glamorized look to the woman. This image is meant to portray the look of a flirtatious woman as the text on the picture states, '***Just cause I flirt doesn't mean I'm interested***'. From this statement it can be inferred that the ideal woman for Lux is flirtatious and ruthless who is indifferent to her admirers. The statement here gives agency to women as it comes from a woman's perspective evident from the use of the first pronoun singular '***I***' in the text. Agency is further established when a woman is portrayed as one who has the choice of flirting while not meaning to have long term commitments. This is a somewhat revolutionary image of a woman in Pakistan as Pakistani society is mainly a patriarchal society where mostly the men are at the helm of making decisions about marriage, family and other domestically oriented matters. Hence, portraying women to be flirtatious shows the image of unconventional women Lux desires for its female audience. Lux takes pride in the femininity of women and relates feminine with floral. On one occasion the text producers write, '***Floral is feminine, flirty and perfect for every ... lady!***'. This declaration shows that the brand considers floral to be feminine, establishing that the floral aspect of Lux beauty bars is not only feminine, but also flirty which makes it perfect for every woman. Figure (3) is an illustration of the brand relating floral with feminine.

Figure (3)
What scent are you?



Figure (3) shows an image of various flowers, a perfume bottle, and the text, '*Floral-Sweet and romantic, these scents are the “good girls” of the fragrance aisle. Florals are sometimes single note, but generally combine the scents of various flowers to create a classic feminine appeal*'. The floral aspects of Lux beauty bars have very subtly been associated with femininity. The scents are called sweet and romantic, relating this sweetness and romance to the idea of '*good girls*'. The text also claims that the brand has combined various floral scents '*to create a classic feminine appeal*', thereby relating femininity with flowers and their fragrances. The advertising discourse of Lux endeavors to make women feel proud of their femininity urging them to flaunt it in style. Figure (4) shared by the brand teaches women to embrace their femininity and to feel proud of it.

Figure (4)



Corresponding to the producers' practice of establishing a correlation between floral and feminine, the image in the figure (4) shows a woman with her back towards the camera wearing a floral dress, and holding a bouquet in her hands. The inscription on the picture reads, '*Since feminine and floral make a strong alliance, women have no reasons to complain*'. This statement highlights a strong alliance of feminine with floral and further highlights this alliance as a strong point for women. The advertising discourse of Lux shows that it creates an unconventional image of women who are confident, bold, self-assured, and most of all stylish. It should however be noted that Lux's image of women does not shy away from femininity, rather the ideal woman image portrayed in the emblematic *Lux girl* focuses more on the combination of confidence with feminine pride. Unlike most of the modern women images advocating women empowerment as portrayed in the media today that focus more on negating the feminine in a woman while highlighting the bold in them, Lux creates an image of a modern woman who embraces audacity while still holding on to her feminine side.

Brand 2 - Sunsilk

Sunsilk presents its ideal woman as young, glamorous, independent, sociable and outgoing on the basis of how it presents women in its advertising discourse. The text producers have created an example of a perfect *Sunsilk woman* who is strong, charming, affable, and is a dreamer. Figure (5) taken from the Facebook page of the brand demonstrates its vision of an ideal woman.

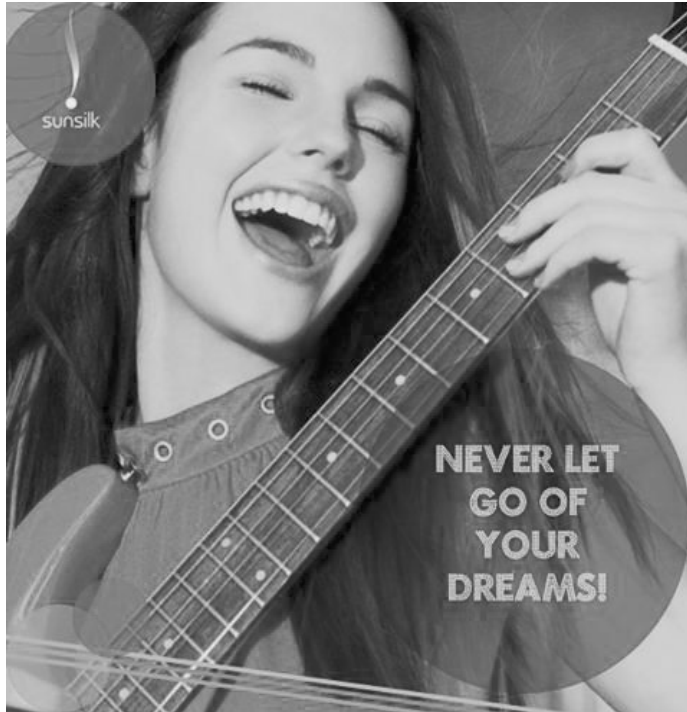
Figure (5)
Well said!



Figure (5) shows an image of a woman wearing sunglasses and an unconventional outfit. The inscription in the picture states, '*BE the kind of woman that makes other*

women want to be you', urging the women to be role models for other women. The caption states, '*Well said!*', thus establishing the expressive values in the text by straightaway agreeing with the quote written on the picture. An ideal woman, for the brand hence, is the one who pursues her dreams of self-accomplishment. Figure (6) which has been taken from the brand's Facebook page also reaffirms this.

Figure (6)



The message in the picture shown in figure (6) urges women to follow their dreams. The picture shows an image of a young girl singing and playing on the guitar. Her eyes are closed, showing the intensity of her excitement and passion for singing. The inscription on the picture states, '*NEVER LET GO OF YOUR DREAMS*', reiterating the message of following one's dreams. Pakistan has a patriarchal society where men enjoy all the privileges of free will, freedom and rights, while women have to let go of their dreams of career, liberty, and sometimes even education. The girl in the picture is shown happy as it is implied that singing is her dream and following that dream has made her truly happy. Hence, it reflects that Sunsilk uses its advertisements as a platform to motivate women to hold on to their dreams.

Emotional strength and women empowerment are the two themes that are recurrent and are interlinked in the advertising discourse of Sunsilk. Many of the texts shared on the Facebook page of the brand contain the message of women empowerment focusing

on emotional strengths of women. To be able to cope with unhappiness to which women usually succumb to, owing to the gap between their provisions and emotional needs, Sunsilk gives messages of feeling happy by making women realize their worth and value. Figure 7 is an example.

Figure 7

Girls! Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections!



Figure (7) shows an image of a young girl standing with her arms wide open in the fields of mustard with blooming flowers. The caption states, '***Girls! Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections!***'. The brand defines the concept of happiness as being able to look beyond the limitations in life. The blue color of the sky in the background and the yellow and green colors of the mustard crops lend a sense of life, happiness, and joy, which goes well with the message given by the image of the girl with her open arms which is symbolic of embracing the goodness of nature. The text confirms the brand's conception of perfect women who are strong enough to look beyond the imperfections and limitations in life. The advertising discourse of Sunsilk shows that the Sunsilk woman is young, enthusiastic, and fun-loving. However, an analysis of the secondary discourse of Sunsilk's advertisement texts shows that besides creating an ideal woman image focusing on style, emotional strength and self-assuredness, the stereotypical image of women's beauty is also reinforced. The beauty standards put forward by the

producers are those that exclude heavy or overweight women, women of dark complexion, and older women. The beauty image created by Sunsilk is the one that focuses upon fair complexion, straight and frizz free hair, youth, and glamor.

Figure (8)

Girls do you love the way your hair looks when it is Perfectly straight?



The inscription in Figure (8) states, '**ARE YOU THE SUNSILK GIRL?**' along with the writing in the caption stating, '*Girls do you love the way your hair looks when it is Perfectly straight?*', draws an implicit connection between straight hair and the term *Sunsilk girl* which shows that the *Sunsilk girl* is the one with straight hair. Although *Sunsilk* is a hair shampoo brand that caters to women of all hair types, the advertising discourse focuses on promoting straight hair as the only fashionable option in the milieu of the usual media texts that show straight hair to be the most glamorous and desirable. Hence, the ideal woman for *Sunsilk* is the woman who has straight hair. Not only is straight and sleek hair established as a beauty symbol in the advertising discourse of *Sunsilk*, but the aspects of fair complexion and youth also constitute the ideal beauty image of the brand. All the models in the advertisement texts of *Sunsilk* are females, who are fair complexioned, young, slim, and glamorous. The fact that only young women are seen as models for the brand in the advertising discourse of *Sunsilk* on its Facebook page shows that the brand associates itself more with the younger generation and specifically with women. In addressing women in its advertising

discourse it creates a certain woman image that portrays the ideal woman as young, glamorous, and fair complexioned. Hence, a somewhat stereotypical beauty image of women is created in the advertising discourse which focuses upon portraying beauty as being contained in the white skin tone, straight hair, and young age.

Brand 3 - Olivia

As the texts are created based on their socio-cultural perspectives, the narrative of beauty created in the advertising discourse of Olivia is reflective of the Pakistani ideals of beauty. The kind of beauty ideals or narrative created in the advertisement texts of Olivia show what is considered to be beautiful in Pakistan. The advertisement texts of Olivia show that there is great emphasis on increasing the beauty of women which is exclusively dependent on a fair complexion. The slogan '*Fairness within your reach*' raised by the brand, presents fairness to be a desirable attribute and a goal to be achieved. In informing the audience that through a fairness product made by Olivia, they can find fairness within their reach, the slogan presupposes that fairness is something that is the most desirable quality in a woman and it should be achieved at any cost. Figure 9 shows the focus of the brand's advertising discourse on the promotion of fair skin.

Figure 9

Advertisement for Olivia whitening creme. The ad features a woman's face on the right, looking directly at the camera with her hand near her cheek. On the left, there is a box and a jar of the product. The text reads:

NOW INTRODUCING
Olivia
 whitening creme
 FLAWLESS FAIRNESS
 IN JUST 15 DAYS

- Makes your complexion fair and radiant
- Its proactive formula effectively reduces the melanin in your skin
- Its non greasy formula absorbs quickly into the skin, removing blemishes, freckles, and dark spots caused by pigmentation
- Contains moisturizers which eliminate signs of dullness and fatigue
- With sunscreen and vitamin E
- Hypo-Allergenic & suitable for all skin types
- For best results, apply daily for 2-3 weeks

بے داغ گورا پن صرف 15 دنوں میں
 www.olivia.com.pk

Gently apply a small amount of Olivia whitening creme at night before bedtime

Olivia Whitening Creme
 11/20
 Tweet Like

Figure 9 shows the image of a female model who is apparently applying whitening cream being advertised on her face. The inscription on the picture states, '**NOW INTRODUCING Olivia Whitening Cream- FLAWLESS FAIRNESS IN JUST 15 DAYS**'. The brand claims to deliver a *flawless fairness* to the consumers who use the product in a time as short as fifteen days. Alliteration is used in the phrase *flawless fairness* to focus the audience's attention on the text. The fact that the brand manufactures whitening creams is in itself a reflection of the beauty narrative prevalent in Pakistani society in which the fair complexion of skin is hailed as a sign of beauty. Advertising about these whitening products further strengthens these beauty ideals predominant in the society. Another desirable aspect of beauty as presented in the advertising discourse of Olivia is glowing skin. In a picture shared on the Facebook page the text producers define beauty in terms of glow. Consider figure 10 in this regard.

Figure (10)



Figure 10 shows the picture of a female celebrity looking straight into the camera with a confident gaze. The model is young and has a fair skin tone which further becomes prominent by her white dress, in contrast with her black hair. The inscription on the picture states, '**Olivia - Beauty is an experience, nothing else. It is something felt, a glow**'. The text here relates beauty with glow and defines beauty as an attitude, something that can be felt and experienced. When the text is viewed in relation to the image of the model included in the picture an implicit link is established between beauty, youth, fair complexion and glowing skin. Hence, a certain beauty narrative is constructed in the advertising discourse of Olivia which presents beauty to be existing

in white complexion, youthful appearance and a glowing skin. Numerous instances in the data have been found in which a glowing skin is considered to be the beauty standard. Figure 11 taken from the Facebook page of the brand is an example.

Figure 11



Figure 11 shows the image of a young female celebrity wearing a pink dress gazing straight into the camera. The advertisement is basically of a body lotion that claims to give glowing skin. The title on the picture reads, *'Acquire the Natural Glow!'*, and the inscription below the title states, *'Make your presence felt and enhance the natural glow within you. Enriched with Aloe Vera, Olive Oil and Vitamin E, it gives the perfect embrace to your skin'*. Though the text talks about enhancing the *'glow within'*, it actually refers to the outer skin glow which essentially makes one's presence felt in a social circle according to the beauty narrative created by Olivia. The text here establishes a connection between a strong presence of noticeable effect and a glowing skin by relating an impressive personality of influence to glowing skin. The caption reads, *'Olivia... your skin's desire'*. In persuading the audience into believing that Olivia is their skin's desire, the text producers hint at the need of using whitening products by Olivia. According to the beauty standards set in the brand's advertisements, it is all about the desire to be white, glowing, youthful, and appealing.

The advertising discourse creates a narrative that makes women believe that real beauty lies in the images portrayed in the advertisements and that is what they start desiring for themselves. According to Olivia's beauty narrative, looking beautiful is essential in order to appear appealing to others, especially to men. In Figure 12, the producers highlight the benefits of being beautiful.

Figure 12

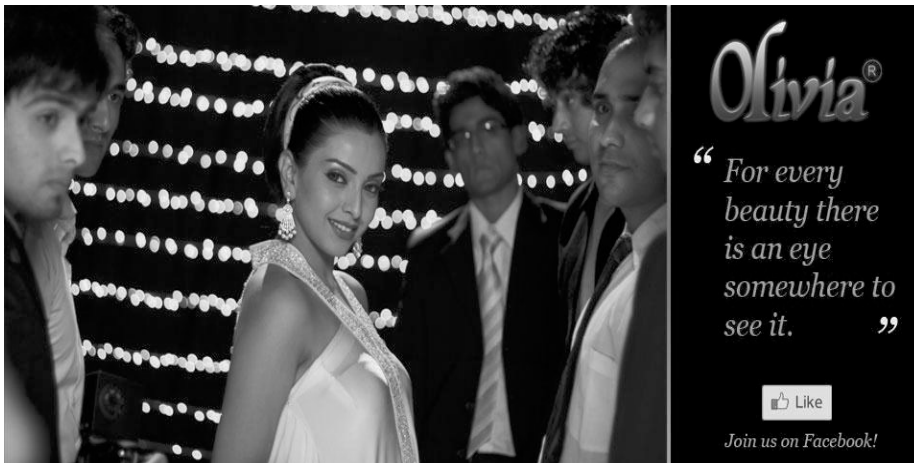


Figure 12 shows an image of a young female model dressed in white standing among a group of men at a party. The men in the picture seem to be in awe of the woman's beauty. The model is gazing into the camera confidently and is comfortable in the position she is currently in. The caption states, '*Olivia - For every beauty there is an eye somewhere to see it*'. The word *beauty* has been personified in the image of the female model who is enjoying the admiration and attention of men. Beauty as defined in the text in both its linguistic and semiotic considerations is something that is white or fair complexioned, has glowing skin and a youthful appearance, and is feminine. The text also suggests that the need to seek beauty and to look beautiful never goes to waste as beauty is always admired by those who have an eye for it. The advertisement hence presents the social benefits of using the products of the brand, the most important of which is male approval and success in romantic endeavors all owing to a whiter skin.

The findings of the study indicate that the desire to look beautiful and attractive has been made the only priority of women in the advertising discourse of the brand. Numerous references have been made in the data, to fair skin as a much sought after attribute among women in Pakistan. The beauty narrative created by the brand places the fair skin tone well above any other attribute in a woman that makes her beautiful, confident and desirable.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the analysis show that varying degrees of perceptions regarding beauty and femininity are portrayed in the advertising discourse of cosmetic brands in Pakistan. Ranging from the concept of ideal women as being bold, glamorous and proud of their femininity, to the views about ideal beauty as being fair complexioned, slim, and young, the advertising discourse of Pakistani cosmetic brands shows how the

feminine is perceived by the major beauty brands in Pakistan. Where Lux focuses more on presenting women as stylish, flirtatious and proud of their femininity, Sunsilk portrays its ideal woman as being a dreamer who is strong, confident and charming while Olivia portrays feminine beauty to be present in fair and glowing skin. A probable reason for the presentation of women as glamorous and bold by Lux is that it is basically an international brand and is used worldwide. Its advertising discourse, though created and viewed in Pakistan in this case, cannot be far away from the narrative it creates about feminine beauty all over the world. The beauty narrative of Lux creates a strong image of women throughout the world. The image embodies women as being feminine, delicate but bold, and glamorous, but never weak and timid. Similarly, Sunsilk is also an international brand which tends to create a more confident image of women focusing on their outspokenness, fashion sense, and modern outlook. As regards Olivia, it is originally an Indian brand which has several marketing centers in Pakistan. However, due to its manufacturing and marketing being mostly in South Asia, the beauty narrative usually associated with it focuses greatly on the beauty ideals prevalent in Pakistan and India, which presents lighter skin tones, youth, and blemish free skins as ideals of feminine beauty. The findings show that the focus of the advertising discourse of the brand is on the beautifying aspects of women and ignore any other aspects that create a more contemporary image of women in general. Though the primary discourse of advertisement texts of the selected brands mainly advocates a more modern and confident image of women, the secondary discourse of the advertisement texts of the brands indicates that the beauty narrative created in the Pakistani advertising discourse of these brands excludes women with darker skin tones and over-sized and average looking women. The models selected in the advertisements are all young and slim having lighter skin tones. This shows that the secondary discourse points to the general conceptions of beauty ideals prevalent in Pakistan which focus greatly on the aspects of youth, fair skin tone and slenderness.

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APPENDIX A

Links to the Brands Selected for the Current Research

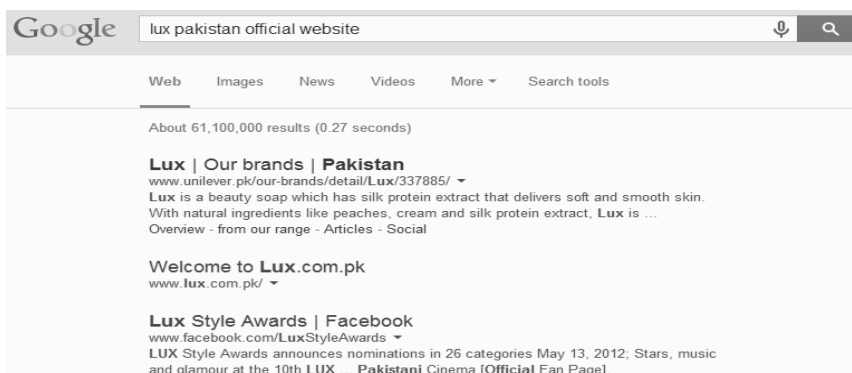
- i. Links to the Official Websites and Facebook Pages
- ii. Snapshots of the Google Search for the Official Websites and Facebook Pages
- iii. Snapshots of the Official Websites and Facebook Pages with the Number of Followers/Likes

Brand 1: Lux

Website link: <http://www.lux.com.pk/>

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/LuxPakistan/timeline>

Google Search for the Official Websites and Facebook Page:



Snapshot of the Official Website of the Brand:



Snapshot of the Facebook Page with the No. of Followers/Likes:



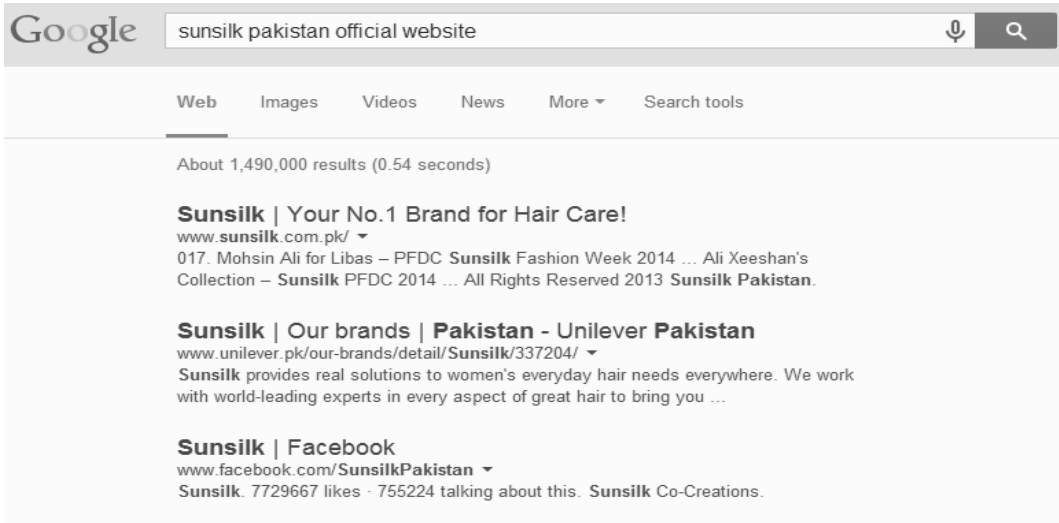
1.4 Operational Definition of Cosmetics:

Brand 2: Sunsilk

Website link: <http://www.sunsilk.com.pk/>

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/SunsilkPakistan>

Google Search for the Official Websites and Facebook Page:



Snapshot of the Official Website of the Brand:



Snapshot of the Facebook Page with the No. of Followers/Likes:

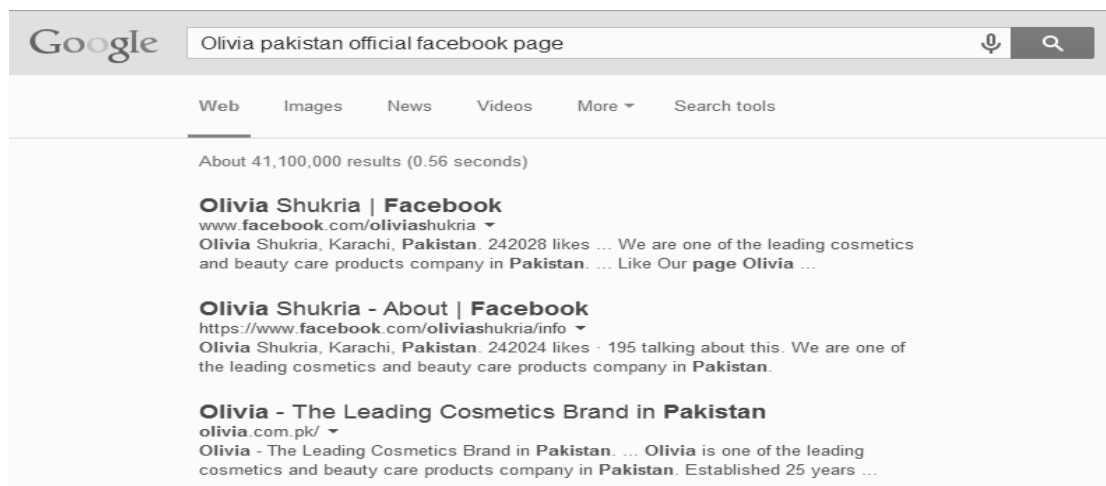


Brand 3: Olivia

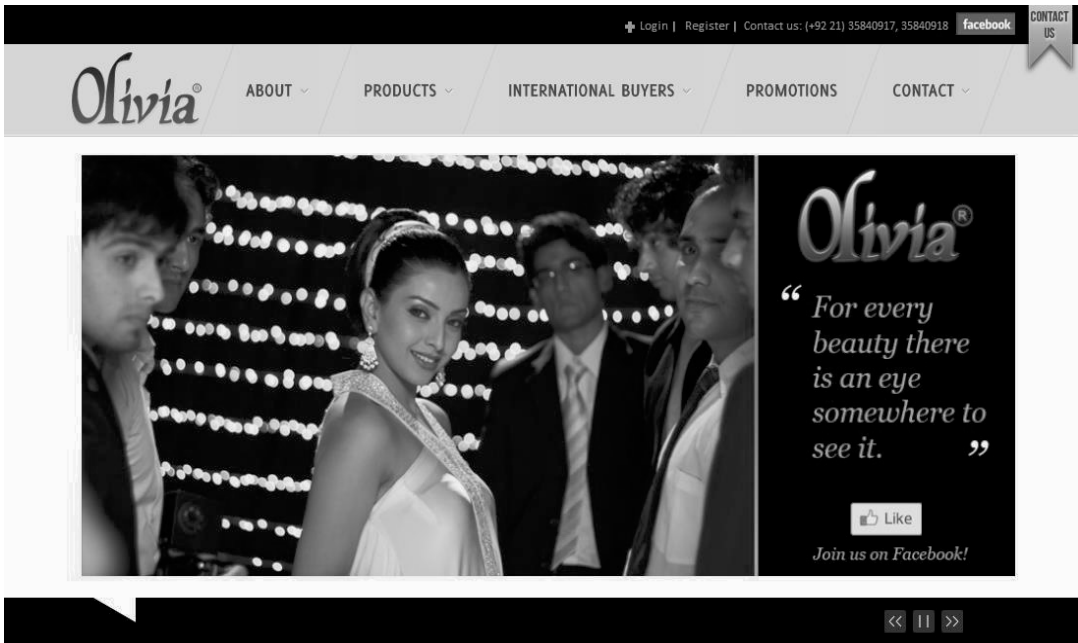
Website link: <http://olivia.com.pk/>

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/oliviashukria>

Google Search for the Official Websites and Facebook Page:



Snapshot of the Official Website of the Brand:



Snapshot of the Facebook Page with the No. of Followers/Likes:



Digital Appropriation of Children's Literature: A Postmodernist Critique of *Red Riding Hood*

Abstract

The twenty-first century is considered the age of digital revolution. Digital literature is considered the product of the postmodern era. Exposure to digital technologies and access to various cultures has changed the way themes and stories are presented in digital or electronic literature for children. These changes are not only the result of development in technology but also the influence of postmodernism. This paper studies digital literature created for children to explore the influence of postmodernism. The digital text chosen for analysis is Red Riding Hood (2001) by Dona Leishman. The study aims to determine how digital literature appropriates a classical text and offers perspectives on gender and social roles through various elements that it employs. Postmodernism comprises a large number of issues. In this study postmodernism is taken to mean challenging of metanarratives, existence of chaos in the world and blurring of boundaries.

Keywords: *Digital fiction, Postmodernism, children's literature, gender roles*

INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the digital text *Red Riding Hood* (2001) which is based on the famous fairy tale for children by the same title: *Red Riding Hood*. *Little Red Riding Hood* is part of children's literature in many countries where English language is spoken (Leveroto, 2003). The story has been adapted for print and electronic media in the postmodern age as well. It has also been translated into other languages and films and other media also use its intertextual references. This version of *Red Riding Hood* is a fine example of digital literature that makes use of text, visuals, graphics, animation and computer programming to build an interactive digital text that allows readers to choose different paths to make sense of the narrative. The main reason for analyzing this particular children's story in the form of digital text is to consider how the traditional narrative is recreated in the postmodern age and how it can be interpreted in the light of postmodern theory. The study of digital appropriation of a traditional text will enable us to understand how the writers of digital literature approach traditional narratives in the postmodern age. Juxtaposing the postmodern point of view with the

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old will help create a general framework in which the analysis of the characters, events, symbols and setting will offer new perspectives related to contemporary debates on gender and social roles “These works and their authors say something important about literature as an art form, about the media ecology of our time, and about our society and cultural practices” (Bell, 2016, p. 3).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jessica Pressman states that electronic literature as a subgenre of literature emerged as a result of “technologies, subjectivities”, poetics and aesthetics of postmodernism in the middle of the twentieth century. “Electronic literature is born digital. It is computational and processural, dependent upon the operations of the machine for its aesthetic effect” (Pressman, 2008, p.1). Pressman examined electronic literature published from the year 2000 through 2012 that were adaptations of classical or canonical texts such as *Ulysses* by Joyce and *Cantos* by Ezra Pound, and is of the view that the digital adaptations of the modernist and classical literature reveal how digital literature seeks “inspiration and validation in a literary past” (2). She calls it “... exemplary of a larger contemporary movement—digital modernism—in which twenty-first century writers purchase cultural capital from the literary canon in order to validate new aesthetics, promote traditional reading practices and demand that their work be taken seriously” (2008, p. 2). Her research establishes that digital adaptations of the classical texts on one hand lend authenticity to the new medium (i.e., electronic/compute-based literature) and also serve to promote reading among the tech-savvy generation.

Alice Bell defines digital literature as: “fiction written for and read on a computer screen that pursues its verbal, discursive and/or conceptual complexity function if it were removed from that medium” (2016, p. 8). Bell et al. advocate for methodical and critical literary analysis of digital literature: “Digital literature is a form of *literature*, and digital fiction is a form of *fiction*. Research in digital fiction thus needs to return to, to hold on to and to expand the core practice of literary studies and that, to our mind, is the methodical *analysis* of texts” (1). Rowberry adds another feature to the definition given by Bell et al., which is that digital literature is not just to be read passively, arguing that the “reader must have the choice to be a non-passive consumer through either physical or mental simulation” (2018, p. 3). In “Analyzing Digital Fiction” Bell et al. discuss how *Inanimate Alice* by Chris Joseph and *afternoon, a story* by Michael Joyce incorporate navigational tools to offer multiple ways of reading the stories. Deena Larsen's flash fiction *The Princess Murderer* (2003), and Kate Pullinger's and Chris Joseph's *Flight Paths* (2010) take readers' interaction to another level, “digital fiction in participatory web culture” (2), and merge the reading experience with that of interactive game.

Bell et al. conclude that writers of digital fiction are experimenting with different modes and forms; hence, more replicable approaches are required to analyze them. George Landow is of the view that “textuality, narrative and roles and functions of reader and writer have been studied with regard to digital texts and fiction” (2). He also discusses hypertextuality, a key feature of digital literature, in the light of Barthes and Foucault's poststructuralist theorizing emphasizing upon the need of critical literary analysis informed by different theoretical perspectives for analysis of digital literature. Levorato, in her study of twelve versions of the classical story of *Red Riding Hood*, in different languages focuses on how each version with specific language codes presents gender roles and power relationships. However, her data does not include the e-version of the story and her focus is on linguistic tools that are used to create gender roles and power relations. Dona Leishman discusses adaptation and decoding of folk tales. She posits out that they may be renewed and mediated through digital means. Furthermore, folk narration has been given a new meaning, according to the context in today's Internet culture (Leishman, p.110). In sum, the existing research on the digital version of classical fairy tales highlights the exploration of digital aesthetics, intertextuality, the role of language in representing gender roles and power relations, and the role of navigation in e-literature. This essay adds to these considerations by using a theoretical concept of postmodernism to investigate a digital version of *Red Riding Hood*.

Research Objectives

- To analyze the selected digital text in the light of the theory of postmodernism
- To highlight different literary elements that are used to construct the particular meanings of the narrative.

Research Questions

- How does the digital version of *Red Riding Hood* challenge metanarratives and exhibit blurring of boundaries?
- How are different visual elements employed to present gender and social identities/roles in the postmodern world?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the present study is adapted from the theory of postmodernism. Since postmodernism comprises concepts proposed by many theorists, this study will take into account only three concepts from postmodernism for the analysis of the chosen text, i.e. challenging metanarratives, blurring of boundaries and existence of chaos in the world. The theory of postmodernism refers to a broad range of concepts that introduce new ideas in literature as well. Commenting upon the shift from modernism to postmodernism, Best and Kneller are of the view that postmodernism offers a new perspective on contemporary human existence that enables a reinterpretation of texts and narrative: “...There was a turn away from

modern discourse of truth, universality, essence and rejection of grand historical references of liberation and revolution” (1997, p.6). Some distinct characteristics of postmodernist texts thus include challenging of grand narratives, blurring the distinctions between truth and falsehood, reality and fantasy, right and wrong. Social and cultural ideologies have been influenced by postmodernism. For instance, a number of themes present in postmodern literature and literary theory such as denunciation of grand narratives, merging or erasure of boundaries between high and low forms of art, and distrust of language are now manifest in various social and cultural institutions. Christopher Butler opines that the postmodern condition is influencing everyone due to the massive growth in electronic media communication: “The postmodernist attitude therefore, is one of a suspicion which can border on paranoia”. Butler cites Don DeLillo’s and Thomas Pynchon’s conspiracy theory novels as examples (2002, p. 3).

Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard are the most influential French postmodern theorists. Lyotard argues that totality, stability and order are maintained in modern societies through "grand narratives" or "master narratives". Grand narratives are stories that exist in a culture and become part of its people’s beliefs and practices. In *The Postmodern Condition* he argues that the condition of postmodernity is one of “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv). The narratives practiced in modernism are seen in the postmodern age as “stories that we tell ourselves to convince ourselves of their truth” (Ingram, 2006, p.217). They no longer hold the value of truth and are incapable of holding things together. Universality and all-encompassing ideologies are seen as accounts that lack credibility and Butler opines that much of postmodernist criticism is “attack on authority and reliability” (2002, p. 110).

Hoffmann discusses the features of postmodern fiction with a view toward establishing how it distinguishes itself from the tradition of modernism. He states that postmodern fiction is distinguishable "by an exuberant creation of new work, a playful and ironic attitude, and a decomposition of its own traditional logic of cohesion and integration" (2005, p. 33). Postmodern fiction deconstructs the totalizing structures of narrative, plot, characters and themes and defamiliarizes the rules that writers establish to construct stories. Hence, postmodern writers emphasize the extent to which time, space, character, and action are cultural constructs, subject to interpretation, no longer having any fixed identity; and are involved in multiple “roles in the mobile interrelation with other people and the environment, with power-systems, institutions, religious and cultural traditions, and language-patterns" (Hoffman, 2005, p.423). Hoffman’s views are useful in interpreting characters’ behavior and appearance in order to make inferences about their social roles and they will be employed to analyze the digital version of *Red Riding Hood*. Ultimately, using postmodern theory to interrogate the

postmodern adaptation of this classic fairy tale will yield an informed understanding of how the characters behave in the contemporary world and what this means.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs textual analysis for discussion on the selected text. The selected digital text, Leishman's *Red Riding Hood*, makes use of a number of elements such as text, images, music and animation. Textual analysis will be employed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the use of these elements in interpreting the tale's themes and characters. Catherine Belsey states that meaning "... subsists in the relations between people, inscribed in signifiers, sounds or images ... meaning intervenes in the world, defining our understanding of values" (2005, p.167). Belsey's explanation supports the use of textual analysis as a method of interpretation of literary texts and visuals as meaning is derived through the effect of text on the reader and there is never a single or fixed meaning of a text. The aspects of postmodern theory that the study examines include metanarratives, erasure of boundaries and existence of chaos. Textual analysis will help in identifying and commenting upon the implications of the postmodern elements and allow the researcher to observe language and images simultaneously in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the selected digital text.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of the electronic version of *Red Riding Hood* focuses on the text (typography and language) and visuals (colors, animation, images, place, character) in the story. The postmodern theoretical concepts of metanarratives, erasure of boundaries, and existence of chaos will be analyzed in these aspects of the story. The analysis of the digital version will be informed by the original story to understand how the nature and meaning of existence has changed in the postmodern world in general for humans and for children in particular. Since the main character in the story *Red Riding Hood* is a girl who is followed by a boy rather than the wolf character in the original, the analysis will also look at the formation of identity and women's place in the postmodern world. Additionally, the essay will analyze the roles children have assumed in the postmodern society.

Text

The use of text in the form of words and written language is reduced to a minimal level in the digital version of the story. The reader/viewer finds a few occurrences of text in the work. Similarly, there is no use of dialogues or speech; even when the characters seem to talk to each other they are just shown to be involved in a conversation without words and the reader has to make inferences through visuals and scenes. The very title of the digital version that is chosen for analysis is 'Red Riding Hood' which is an appropriation of the old title, i.e. *Little Red Riding Hood* reflects the postmodern shift towards minimalism and multiplicity of meaning. For instance, postmodern theorists

contend that the idea of permanent meaning or stable reality has disappeared in the postmodern age. There are only signifiers or surfaces lacking depth, with no signifieds (Derrida, Caputo, 1994, p. 32). The omission of the word “little” from the title also hints at the girl’s innocence or lack thereof. Refraining from calling the girl “little” implies a loss of innocence or a dawning of maturity at the cost of innocence. It also points to the fact that girls are assumed to be “little” or that a child is not as guiltless and naïve in the postmodern age as in the previous eras. The beginning of the story also twists the traditional fairy-tale opening phrase, “Once upon a time in a faraway land” into “Once upon a not so Far away” (Leishman, 2001). This is one of the few occurrences of language in the digital story since the digital version is predominantly visual. The visuals with the caption of “Once Upon a not so Far Away”, show the cityscape of the postmodern residential area covered with concrete buildings and parking spaces. In this way the “not so far away” shows immediacy not only in terms of time that is the story is about the recent past i.e., the postmodern age and contemporary society. This twisting shows challenges of the metanarratives that have been established as set rules for centuries.

Another significant feature in the digital version of the story is absence or lack of language. There is no sound/audio when Red Riding Hood is talking to her mother as the viewers only see their lips moving. The same happens when the boy who follows Red Riding Hood on a scooter is talking to her. This absence of speech or language shows distrust and challenging metanarratives. Traditionally language is seen as a reliable or a dominant means of communication. This traditional view about the transparency and reliability of language is looked at with suspicion in postmodernism (Best, Kneller, 2006, p.247). Digital literature is mainly visual; hence, the creators of digital literature reduce the language to the minimum and depend on graphics, symbols and other elements to narrate a story. Putting language in a secondary position is evidence of challenging metanarratives. The authority of speech as the only form of language is challenged here. In digital texts the story is told not only through the medium of language but visuals as well; we live in a predominantly visual culture and need to make sense of the messages contained in images and visuals.

A few instances of language use that occur in the digital version of *Red Riding Hood* can be examined further. The door through which Red Riding Hood enters is named “Meat Market” (Leishman, 2001). This is a very striking inscription as the genre of the story is ‘children’s literature’ and the children in the digital story are involved in visiting places named to create sexual connotations. Traditionally, children’s stories emphasize innocence, love and purity but in *Red Riding Hood*, the idea of youthful love has been replaced with representations of love as trade and a commodity that can be bought or sold. The boy on a scooter comes over to the “Meat Market” (Leishman, 2001) to get Red Riding Hood for the gratification of his desire and the idea of innocence has been shown as tainted in the society. The phrase “Meat Market”

connotes the activity of consumerism. They meet in the market instead of in a pastoral or romantic setting which shows that the idea of love is devoid of feelings and is a mere exchange in a consumer culture.

Visuals: Use of Colors and Images

Colors play a crucial role in conveying meaning. The frame that opens the digital story shows red as a dominant color. Through this red color appears the face of Red Riding Hood. She peeps through the letter 'R' that appears on the screen. When the reader moves the cursor on this, the red color starts turning darker until it looks blackish red and black letters appear on the red background, thus hinting at the sinister undertones. In the original story Red Riding Hood is named so due to her red dress (red robe and red bonnet) that is the mark of her recognition in the town she lives in. Historically, red color is the symbol of the girl's innocence and childhood gaiety. On the contrary, in the e-version of the story, red color has sinister connotations which are associated with lust, desire, passion, danger, crime and evil. That Red Riding Hood's eyes are also red enhances this effect. The scenes that follow feature Red Riding Hood venturing out into the world corrupted by passion and carnal desire. Entering the "Meat Market" (Leishman, 2001) she mingles with boys and girls who are hanging out casually chatting and smoking in a dark smoke-filled room.



Figure 1

Screenshot from Donna Leishman's Red Riding Hood (2001).

Numerous graphics contribute to presenting a depraved view of life, society and children's worlds in the postmodern era. Red Riding Hood and the boy on the scooter are not innocent looking characters. When the narrative starts, red color expands into Red Riding Hood and floats around in the shape of a specter reinforcing the sinister tone of the story. In front of Red Riding Hood who is presented in the red color, with

red eyes, spreads the black color. The specter is accompanied by long black strokes and streaks of black color spreading in different directions. Finally, the red color changes into a darker tone through which the viewer/reader can see Red Riding Hood's face. This animation enhances the eeriness of the story hinting at the distressing side of human life. These images are very striking as we do not associate them with children's stories or fairy tales but the genre of horror tales or films. The fonts and images in children's tales are usually pleasant to attract them and they are also simple and easy for children's comprehension. The black gothic font, reminiscent of Hitler's fascist aesthetic and that is still employed by white supremacist groups in the U.S. and Europe, is used in *Red Riding Hood*. This idea of associating an innocent girl with evil also challenges the metanarrative of childhood innocence that has long been celebrated through children's texts.

Setting

Trees

The setting in the digital *Red Riding Hood* also stands in stark contrast to the traditional story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. In the digital version a cityscape is predominantly enclosed in concrete buildings, apartments and parking spaces. The path through which Red Riding Hood makes her journey is lined by trees in black and gray colors. The use of black and gray instead of green aligns with the overtones of the story since black is usually associated with vice and evil. Similarly, the presence of gray shows the blurring of boundaries in the postmodern world. It is difficult to decide whether the children are indulging in the innocent pursuits of friendship and games or are transgressing into the world of vice associated with adults. In this way we can say that the use of blurred borders between black and white, i.e., gray, in the story signifies a form of existence between borders

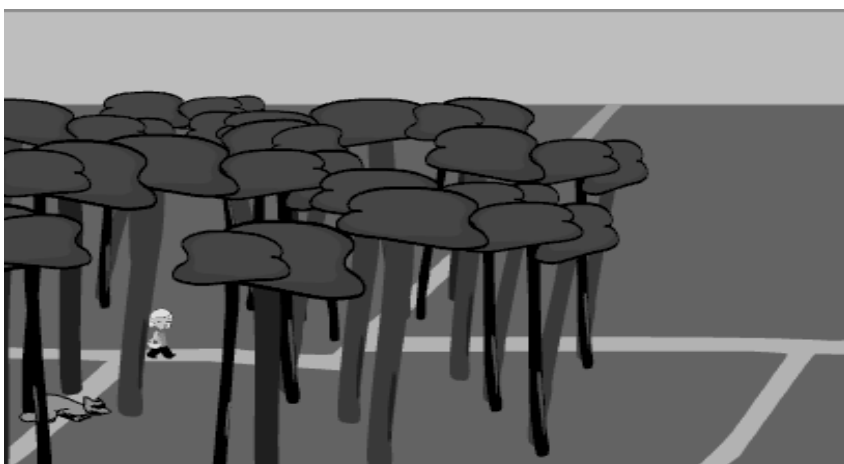


Figure 2

Screenshot from Donna Leishman's Red Riding Hood (2001).

Skyscrapers

The setting in the beginning of the story shows skyscrapers and a congested locality in a busy city that is significant for the meaning and message of the story; in conventional children's stories or fairy tales the setting is usually the countryside, green, pure and untouched by the artificial life of the city. This was a fixed convention in traditional children's stories as they would begin with reference to "a faraway land" or "a faraway time" (Warner, 2018, p.1). Setting the digital story in the contemporary cityscape challenges the metanarrative of the canon. Notably, the scooter that the boy rides is emitting exhaust. The gray trees and concrete buildings in the background and the scooter spewing pollution characterize the contemporary city life that the boy and girl are a part of. There is no comforting nature in the form of green trees or red flowers; rather, there is pollution and the gray color of smoke also links to the moral haziness suggested by the blurring of boundaries between black and white, signifying an imprecise distinction between good and bad.

Characters

The characters in *Red Riding Hood* also challenge metanarratives and boundaries not only through their actions but through their appearances as well. Hoffman states that in postmodernism "there have been attempts to establish categories that separate full-fledged, comprehensive, mature or outstanding characters from less developed, conventional and stereotyped ones" (2005, p.427). In the scene where the readers first witness Red Riding Hood in conversation with her mother, the mother's physical appearance makes an impression on the reader. Contrary to traditional children's stories, here the mother has a perfect figure. She is wearing striking red lipstick and has red blushed cheeks. This is significant as the homely mother that readers encounter in children's stories, wearing a rough gown, sporting unkempt hair and an ordinary appearance are used to signify a specific gender role, i.e. a mother as a house-wife whose sole responsibility is to take care of the house and children and who is unconcerned about her own self and appearance. The image of a mother with an hour-glass figure and makeup in *Red Riding Hood* is used to challenge the traditional metanarrative about women's 'proper' gender roles. It shows that a mother in the postmodern world can be a working woman or one performing other roles along with that of the 'housekeeper', for in the postmodern era women juggle a number of duties and roles inside and outside the home and are not just seen in the traditional role of a housewife. The depiction of Red Riding Hood's mother as a made-up woman with a perfect figure also shows that she takes time not only to maintain her physical self but for her own recreation. She socializes with her friends, signifying that she is in a social class that affords leisure and entertainment. All of these symbols demonstrate that *Red Riding Hood* challenges the mundane and homely image of a mother/woman and replaces it with depiction of a working mother or a socialite.

Red Riding Hood in the digital version is not an innocent little girl. Unlike the traditional story that presents her as beautiful and angelic, the digital text shows Red Riding Hood as a punk teen and emphasizes her sexuality. Her independence is her primary characteristic in this story and hints she is a young adult. The pinkish innocent face and doe eyes of Little Red Riding Hood are replaced with a sinister expression and narrow eyes that hint at mischief or recklessness. She is aware of her sexual appeal and is shown as coquettish as when she is walking through the woods she constantly looks towards the boy who is following her. She meets him in a nightclub called “Meat Market” and is shown venturing out into the world of adults; hence, the typical innocence of childhood is replaced with viciousness that bespeaks pursuits that are not suitable for children. This is consistent with Hutcheon’s claim that postmodern works in literature challenge metanarratives: “They all challenge not only what we consider to be literature ... or what was once assumed to be a seamless, unified narrative of representation of subjectivity...” (2006, P.209-110). The digital and postmodern version of the fairy tale shows incredulity towards the metanarratives of ‘innocence of childhood’ which according to Hutcheon’s claim is representation of a subjective view of the world. There is no fixed meaning or reality but only personal versions. .



Figure 3

Screenshot from Donna Leishman's Red Riding Hood (2001).

The antagonist in the traditional story is a wolf who follows Little Red Riding Hood to her grandmother’s house. In the digital version Red Riding Hood is followed by a boy on a scooter. The boy is not an innocent looking child but a teenager who suggests both innocence and wickedness. He is riding a scooter which shows his playfulness and youth, yet is also an intrusion of machines into the peace of nature as his scooter emits toxic exhaust. That the boy is a teenager also shows a blurring of boundaries as he is

neither a child nor an adult, and his age gives him a license to be reckless or even wicked. The boy's hairstyle also serves to build this impression. The prominent spikes signify that the boy follows punk rock culture which is considered a negative influence on youth in the West: "Punk may be seen less as a culture of aspiration and more as a culture of revolt" and in line with postmodern philosophy because "it's defining characteristic was its explicit challenge to prevailing cultural and social mores" (Worley, n.d.). The boy's muscular and hairy arms and thick black eyebrows show he is bordering on manhood. They also connote evil or brutality that the boy will perpetuate as he is no more an innocent child. The boy's strong and muscular arms and hairiness also constitute a display of masculinity and machismo. T. The concept of machismo and manliness is also evident in the last scene of the digital story where the boy is standing beside Red Riding Hood holding a gun in his hand and stroking her head with the other. It shows that his appearance and the weapon, a prominent symbol of masculine virility and dominance, are important signifiers of his gender and distinguishing him from innocent children establishes his 'masculine' abusiveness and brutality. Significantly, at one point in the story, Red Riding Hood is shown carrying a baby in her belly, supposedly that of the boy on the scooter. The boy is a dangerous hybrid of boy and man and the digital version of the story hints at his character being dangerous and sinister.



Figure 4

Screenshot from Donna Leishman's Red Riding Hood (2001).

Fox

An important postmodern element of the narrative is that Red Riding Hood is followed by an animal that looks like a combination of fox and squirrel but is smaller than a fox.

It mischievously jumps on trees and follows Red Riding Hood. The mysterious identity of the animal that is neither a squirrel nor a fox further shows the blurring of boundaries and develops the theme that things and reality are uncertain. Not only is the identity of this tiny and insignificant looking animal kept blurred or unclear but throughout the digital story the readers are not given any clear or definite description of it. This is consistent with the characteristic uncertainty that postmodernism infuses in the narrative. As Woods suggests, it is difficult to say anything definite about postmodern characters because “Growing zones of uncertainty appear ...” in what Borges called “the fundamental vagueness” (Woods, 2006, p.234). The readers are given choices to develop their own interpretations to understand the story. For instance, readers are invited to be the final arbiters of questions whether the boy on scooter is the lover or the exploiter of Red Riding Hood, whether he is an innocent child or a not so innocent teenager, whether Red Riding Hood is innocent or is involved in some vicious activity. In the same vein, readers must determine if the squirrel is an innocent looking animal or a cunning fox. More importantly, the boy enters the frame after the squirrel/fox-like animal. This is significant symbolically because, just as it is difficult to say with certainty if the animal is a squirrel or a fox, it is not clear whether the boy is a child or a man. There are similarities between the boy and the fox and squirrel: the fox connoting deception, savagery, evil and the squirrel connoting innocence and playfulness. The boy’s gray hair reinforces the resemblance between him and the two animals. Hoffman’s postmodern critique on character offers a valuable perspective on the way the characters operate in *Red Riding Hood*: “Being enveloped in human ideas, concepts and values, that are seen by postmodernists to be fictions of the mind ... the world disappears in vagueness and obscurity and no longer offers an identity-promoting contact with a measurable, outer instance” (2006, p.434-435)

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the digital *Red Riding Hood* in the light of the theory of postmodernism shows how the traditional fairy tale has been inverted to reveal the concerns of the postmodern age. Readers can easily find similarities in the digital version with the traditional one and it is also very evident how the digital version appropriates and challenges the notions held by the traditional version. Although there is minimal use of language in the digital version, the reader/viewer can easily understand that the basic patterns of the plot are the same, such as Red Riding Hood’s mother sending her to her grandmother with a basket, Red Riding Hood journeying alone in the forest and being followed by a boy (instead of a fox), her meeting with the boy, the boy speeding up to her grandmother’s house and taking her place in bed. These events are taken from the original fairy tale, but Leishman alters the plotline by inserting some portions in it that highlight its contemporary, postmodern setting, which shows us how Red Riding Hood and the antagonist would have behaved had they been living in the contemporary world. This demonstrates how digital fiction can use a traditional text to challenge the metanarratives of children’s literature and question cultural and social practices and

gender roles. The traditional story of *Little Red Riding Hood* upholds the ideals of childhood innocence and purity and the notions of good and evil, right and wrong as distinctly separate. In contrast, the analysis of the digital version in the light of postmodernism shows that it is not easy to distinguish good and evil, right and wrong, childhood and adulthood, innocence and evil, so on and so forth. As Woods states, postmodernism shows a “decentering of the traditional notion of subjectivity” (2007, p. 58). By appropriating the traditional narrative, the digital version of the story shows how time and society have changed and the older version of the tale is no longer relevant to an audience with digital and postmodern sensibilities. The replacement of the wolf in the original by the boy in the digital adaptation shows the contemporaneity of the story and so does the fact that Red Riding Hood is not so innocent as she appears in the fairy tale. These alterations in the original story reveal the behavior and roles of children in the postmodern society and the associated challenges.

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Towards a New Paradigm for Future Development Pathway FATIMA JINNAH LECTURE¹

Since the late 1940s when the developing countries started gaining independence, development literature was dominated by pessimists who believed that these countries were condemned to live in poverty, hunger and illiteracy. Prebisch-Singer hypothesis advanced the proposition that the developing countries produce agricultural commodities whose demand by advanced countries would be limited while they have to rely upon the advanced countries for imports of industrial products. Therefore, the primary commodity exporters would continue to face a secular decline in terms of trade due to a combination of low income and price elasticities of demand. This decline would transfer income from poor to rich countries and thus contact with the international economy was detrimental to the welfare of the developing countries and would retard growth keeping these countries entrapped in poverty. They proposed that the only way to avert this tendency was to protect domestic manufacturing industries by pursuing import substitution strategy. India under Nehru, a Fabian Socialist took the lead and adopted a centrally planned, Command and Control economy dominated by the public sector and an inward looking industrialization behind high tariff walls. Other countries followed the Indian example. The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the US also brought to fore the two alternative economic models i.e. centrally planned allocations and market based allocations of resources. AS the Soviet economy was growing relatively rapidly, newly independent countries wanted to shun the capitalist model which they associated with colonialism and neocolonialism, the theoretical insights provided by Nurske, Singer and Prebisch guided the leaders of the newly independent countries. Unfortunately, the evidence over the next quarter of century proved that the protectionist strategy failed in achieving the objectives of accelerated growth and poverty reduction. Academic research based on country case studies and the successful experience of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore followed by Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil and then China demonstrated that access to the markets of advanced countries resulted in higher export earnings that augmented their foreign exchange

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and increased both the quantum as well as utilization of domestic human and capital resources. The spectacular growth rates recorded by these countries would not have been possible if they had relied upon the domestic market alone. The most populous country in the world with a domestic market twice the size of the US and Europe also relied upon the world markets to grow at an accelerated pace and lift 700 million out of poverty by pursuing outward oriented strategies. The hollowing out of the Soviet economy followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself gave impetus to the trend of Deregulation, Privatization and Liberalization. Once again it was India, the second most populated country faced with a severe balance of payments crisis in 1991 dismantled its License Raj and integrated its economy into the global economy and invited foreign capital to invest. China by now had accumulated a solid record of doubling its per capita income in seven years' time. With East Asian countries already making sustained progress, the proponents of Globalization got an upper hand.

The impact of globalisation transmitted through trade in goods and services, capital flows, working ideas and people and Technology have been by and large beneficial for the developing countries on aggregate basis in fostering growth, alleviation poverty, reducing unemployment and improving social indicators. Most emerging and developing countries made great strides in the period between 1990-2010 until the Global financial crisis unraveled. As chronicled by Steve Radelet in his recent book "The Great Surge", while Pakistan has fallen behind, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam etc. have made significant progress in the same period. Since 1995, real GDP of Emerging and Developing countries (EDCs) has grown by 4.7 percent on average annually and per capita incomes have increased by more than 70 percent between 1995-2013. On population weighted basis, excluding China, the increase is about 90 percent. Consequently, the relative share of EDCs in the global GDP (measured at purchasing power parity) has increased to 57 percent in 2014. The number of poor living at \$1.90 per day has halved from 2 billion in 1990 to 897 million by 2012, bringing down the share of poor people in the total population from 37 to 13 percent in 2012. The number of people living in low human development fell from 3 billion in 1990 to slightly more than 1 billion in 2014. The share of EDCs in the world exports rose from 24 to 41 percent in this period. International capital flows jumped from \$91 billion to \$1145 billion. All social indicators such as life expectancy, maternal mortality, infant mortality, adult literacy, net enrolment ratios, and average years of schooling have shown significant improvements. In Pakistan there is a group of economists and commentators who felt that Pakistan has suffered because of globalization. Evidence points that this hypothesis has no empirical validity as other countries in the neighborhood who were lagging behind Pakistan have taken advantage of the dynamic global economy in the same period to bring improvements in the living standards of the majority of their masses.

The last decade, since Global economic crisis of 2009/10 has been marked by the weakening of the drivers of globalisation that had helped EDCs in increasing their participation in the world economy since 1990 and benefitting from it. The main factors responsible for this weakening are:

(a) Demographic transition: aging population in the advanced countries and younger population in the developing countries should lead to pick up in migration from the latter to the former. This trend is no longer as strong as it was because political resistance in the western countries to migration is becoming quite formidable.

(b) Shift in economic power from the US to China which is projected to become world's largest single economy by 2025 or near about. The forces propelling protectionism are likely to retard the trade flows which had helped China, East Asian countries and other EDCs to improve the living standards of their population

(c) Speed of Technology dissemination and absorption - the internet, software application, rising connectivity and networks, the high speed mobile phones, E-Commerce, cloud computing and data analysis have spread throughout the developing countries. However, the Digital Divide is widening as many countries lag in critical areas such as use of electronic payments, mobile money. Mobile government transfers and Fintech

(d), Information explosion - human knowledge gets obsolescent every few years. New knowledge and ideas that are expanding exponentially have to be sorted, screened and selected for their relevance and efficacy. The movement in the EDCs (except few large countries) towards generation and dissemination of knowledge, Lifelong learning and upgradation of knowledge continuously needs to be accelerated.

(e) Climate change risk- global warming and associated greenhouse emission are affecting the food, energy and water resources of developing countries. How do we tackle these risks would be 'make or break' for humanity at large.

(f) Financial integration- the consequences of 2009/10 global financial crisis, the tapering of quantitative easing by the Western Central banks, the synchronous monetary tightening and hike in policy rates by the Fed and ECB, the strengthening of the US dollar and the domination of the Fed Reserve in international payment system have created difficulties for developing countries in managing their external accounts. The detractors of globalisation flag this issue to dissuade the developing countries from relying on international capital flows. Geopolitical competition may possibly end up in the fragmentation of the international payment system.

Within the whole group of emerging and developing countries the impact of globalisation have been uneven. Well-endowed nations with Strong economies, large

population and better governance have pre-empted most of the benefits of globalisation of themselves while these have by passed weak and fragile states. Within the EDCs income inequalities have become stark as the top 1 percent of the population has accumulated wealth at the expense of the bottom 50 percent.

This growing dissatisfaction with globalisation has been further accentuated by the US policy under President Trump that has been more or less continued by the Biden administration. Make American great again (MAGA) is in fact plea for retreat from international trade. Strict immigration controls against the entry of potential Mexican and Central American migrants have slowed down the movement of workers which are badly needed by the US farms, service industry, construction and other menial jobs shirked by the American citizens. The directives given to the Global banks not to carry out transactions with the sanctioned States, the denial of access to SWIFT and the freezing of Central Bank reserves have created question mark about the future of international capital flows to developing countries. Disallowing HUAWEI from doing business in the US and several other countries, the recent stance of the Chinese government against their own hi-tech companies, discouraging the Chinese scientists from working in the US Academia and research labs, weakening of global supply chains have serious repercussions for the transfer of technology to EDEs in the future. A new variant of cold war in which the developing countries may be forced to make choices to align themselves with the US or China for accessing emerging technologies cannot be ruled out.

Global warming is no longer something that we anticipate at some distant date in future. It has already made a strong foothold and is damaging lives and property of millions of people through extreme weather events.

One of the main assumptions of globalization was that dismantling of barriers and disappearance of borders would spread its benefits to the majority of the people in all parts of the world but this has not happened. On the contrary, nationalism and protectionist tendencies have gained ascendancy in the Western countries. The tables have turned as President Xi Jinping of China came to the defence of globalization at his speech in the World Economic Forum where the traditional champion of trade and financial liberalization i.e. the US was absent from the scene. President Trump was going around the country pleading for buying American goods and placing high tariffs on the Chinese imported goods. Although this protectionist policy hurt the consumers and farmers in the US but continues to be followed by his successor.

In designing the future course of development the EDCs have to recognize that the Mega Trends that characterized the global economy between 1982-2010 are no longer valid. The relatively open trade regime is gradually giving rise to protectionism. Rising flows of FDI to developing countries would no longer be available at the same level or patterns as in the earlier three decades. World's major markets are on the steady low

growth path and therefore exports from developing countries may not show the same shine or buoyancy. Sharply declining transport costs have reversed as supply chain bottlenecks arising from exogenous shocks have upped the ante. Consequently, the intra-industry or global value chain (GVCs) are no longer in ascendancy as they were before. Migration would be selective-- restricted mainly for skilled and semi- skilled workers who can fill in gaps in the labour force spectrum

In light of the recent experience of weakening of drivers of globalization and considering these future risks there are among others at least three major issues that should make us rethink the efficacy and usefulness of the present development paradigm. These three challenges are growing income inequalities, technological disruption and climate risks.

A biting indictment against globalization is rising income inequality within countries. Both China and India-the two fastest growing economy have shown this tendency quite visibly. In India, for example in 2000 the richest 10% derived 40% of the national income but by 2018 their share had jumped to 52% while that of the bottom 50 percent of the population had declined from 20 percent to 18 percent in the same period. The middle 40% of the population suffered even a bigger loss down to 30% from 40%.

In China the richest 10% of population own nearly 70% of total household wealth. Top one percent of the population owns 31% of wealth up from 21% in 2000. Gini coefficient that was mild at 0.29 in 1978 rose to 0.37 in 2000 and 0.47 in 2020 very close to 0.48 in the US. The average Coefficient across OECD countries (advanced economies) is 0.31 and that of EU 27 countries is 0.30. The above data clearly shows that most of the benefits of globalisation have been distributed unequally with disproportionate share accruing to those with assets or possessing upper skills. The recent drive by President XI towards 'common prosperity' is underpinned by his concern 'to prevent polarization, advanced common prosperity and realize social harmony and stability'.

In Pakistan, the goal of reducing income inequality can be addressed by (a) Progressive Taxation and pro poor public expenditures (b) Greater participation of females in the Labour force (c) Special attention to less advanced regions (d) Expansion of Vocational and Technical training and (e) Robust Social Safety nets

The only factor from the past that is likely to be more intensive as well as extensive is the spread of emerging technology and their applications to industry, agriculture, education, health, finance and other sectors in EDCs. US, China and India are in the lead in this effort. Other developing countries have either not realized the importance of this all-encompassing powerful trend or even if the realisation is there they have not actually begun to do something about it. Smartphones with 4G and expected 5G already

penetrating almost all developing countries are being increasingly used for messaging, texting, streaming, v-logging, social media, gaming etc. but their applications to the productive sectors of the economy, social sector and financial sector have not spread widely. Young men and women are getting attracted by freelancing, new startups and e-commerce but to make an impact the talent has to be trained and nurtured in large numbers. Digital technologies can act as a catalyst for financial inclusion and cross border payments.

In Pakistan, this field is still in its infancy as it is faced by problems of internet stability, optic fibre network, fiberization of towers, excessive taxation on telecom sector and Spectrum pricing, free inter flow of foreign exchange earnings between the holding companies and their Pakistani subsidiaries. The other constraint is that of scarcity of talent in ICT field. Pakistan only produces 25000 IT graduates every year of which only 5000-10000 are employable for relevant jobs in the industry, others lack knowledge and skills of the requisite standards and the companies are reluctant to invest in their training and development as they may quit for better prospect elsewhere. In this bargain a public good is created by a private sector company but the dividends are reaped by their competitors or other companies located abroad. Therefore institutions such as FAST, NUST, COMSAT, UET, PIAS etc, should start short term courses for these unemployed and under-employed graduates to upskill them to bring at par with the standard professional requirements. These institutions should hold bootcamps and prepare them for certification awarded by the leading Global Tech Company such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon etc.

Career counsellors in Higher Secondary School should encourage their students to opt for college education in this field. These short term measures would not have desired affects unless the emphasis is shifted in our school system towards Science, Technology, Engineer, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) subjects. The teaching of these subjects along with the content, hardware, network, software application, choices of pedagogical tools have to be entrusted to private service providers (PSP) under performance-linked contractual agreements. The setting up of computer labs, Local area network, data centres etc. would require a massive jump in allocation of budgetary resources towards education. But this would be worthwhile use of our scares resources which are at present being squandered on paying higher than market salaries in Government schools to indifferent, non- committed, incompetent, work shirking teachers (they are many exceptions to this observation as many teachers show a great deal of passion in teaching their students). The future would be secured by increased use of the internet, Cloud Computing, big Data and Data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning in the government as well as the private sector to drive economic growth through deep integration of the next generation of ICT Technologies with the real economy.

China has already demonstrated that the digital economy through a network of combined, advanced machine learning with internet connected sensors and big data analytics has bolstered productivity, efficiency and reliability of industrial production. As much as \$16 to 20 trillion payments are made in China through mobile phones.

Looking ahead the five goals of Digital Pakistan should be

- (I) increased access and connectivity
- (ii) Digital infrastructure
- (iii) Digital skills, talent and literacy
- (iv) E-Government
- (v) Innovation and entrepreneurship.

India's software-as- service (SAAS) Industry is projected to be worth 1 trillion dollar in value by 2030. There are already thousand such companies and more than hundreds of them are UNICORNS. We may never reach that goal but we must drive to attain IT, ITES exports target of at least 10 billion dollars by 2025 and improve our ranking in global innovation index.

According to a McKinsey study, over a decade, data flows collectively have raised world's GDP by approximately 10% and contributed 2.8 trillion dollars to annual trade- -a large share of the increase in global GDP compared to the worldwide trend of physical goods. Data is leverage these days for efficiency, productivity, supply chain and innovation. Digital technology would no longer be a driver of marginal efficiency but an enabler of fundamental innovation.

The risks of Climate change are already raising their hydra head and their sweep is projected to be ferocious in altering the way we live. The recent floods in Pakistan that have devastated and displaced almost 33 million of population, submerged their houses, destroyed their livestock and cultivated crops, killing more than 1100 people, causing a loss of 30 billion dollars or 10% of GDP is ample testimony that global warming has already begun to make its pernicious impact. The evidence from other parts of the world - unprecedented rain and heat in Australia, record rainfall in Brazil, severe droughts in Brazil, Argentina, Africa, record temperature in Europe and heat wave in China is overwhelming. Most of these episodes can be attributed to the climate change and climate variability. The accelerated melting of glaciers overloading rivers is likely to affect food, water and energy security and pose a grave threat to the living Standards to which we have become accustomed. South Asian countries are among the most vulnerable. Rising sea levels would displace millions of people in Maldives and Bangladesh. At least one third of Himalayan glaciers would melt by the end of the century. Pakistan would have a population of 350 million people by 2050 who have to

be fed clothed, sheltered and gainfully employed in an environment where production of the staple food crops, generation of electricity and availability of water are likely to be declining. Increased population's overall food demand would expand by 50% and this implies that 56% more crops calories have to be grown compared to what was being produced in 2010. The challenge is how to meet the future land requirements without deforestation and bringing more area under reforestation while stabilizing the climate, providing the livelihoods and reducing poverty. Water availability is likely to recede to extremely stressful level while the demand for meat, milk and poultry by 50% because of rising incomes and increase in population. Urbanisation is already pushing people out of agriculture and land is being used for housing, commercial and industrial purpose.

For Pakistan the agenda to tackle climate change should involve (a) Research and Development of Drought and pest resistant varieties (b) Conserving and maximizing efficiency in the use of surface and ground water resources (c) Switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy (d) Sustained efforts on Forestation and Water shed management (e) Access Green Climate Fund for developing climate resilient ecologically sustainable infrastructure

From the above discussion it emerges that in designing our development policies, programs and projects these three cross cutting themes—inequality, technology and climate change-- have to be mainstreamed and not taken as separate, stand alone sectoral issue. All sectors—Agriculture, Water, Education, Health etc and all policies—Fiscal, Monetary, Trade would need to incorporate measures that would maximize the benefits and minimize the risks arising from these themes. This is by no means a straight forward or easy exercise as difficult tradeoffs are involved with huge political costs. Forcing slowdown in growth rate in immediate term for transition towards sustained growth in the future is by no means an attractive proposition for the incumbent governments. The capacity of the Government would be challenged as the institutional arrangements are rehashed requiring the Federal, Provincial, Local Governments, the donor agencies, the researchers and academics, NGOs and the private sector to work in concert and in a collaborative framework. Having a separate Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Protection agencies at the provincial levels are outdated concepts. In appraising programs, projects and allocating resources the likely impact on these three themes have to be a dominant determining factor. The Business as usual, turf protection and fighting and silo mindset have to be abandoned. These are highly knotty issues to be resolved and require innovative thinking, resolute determination, expeditious execution capability, and strong political foresight. The journey has to begin now and not later.

Race, Gender and Class Diversity in Media: A Study of Rejection of Stereotypes in *The Help*, *The Great Debaters* and *A Raisin in the Sun*

ABSTRACT

Media plays a significant role in the representation of social and cultural scenarios, highlighting discrimination based on ethnicity, social status, and sex. These media representations play an influential role in maintaining social constructs of binary identities, such as black or white, male or female, and middle or lower class. This study tends to explore the diversification of social and racial hierarchies portrayed in films with a focus on people categorized as 'other'. In contrast to the set pattern, the films examined in this study display multiple perspectives about images of the black people and white women and do not put them in stereotypical categories. The selected films have subverted the so-called established ideas about African-Americans being uncivilized, uneducated, and unworthy and show that all individuals regardless of the established stereotypes can achieve their dreams. Moreover, media has a link with social realities and the rampant racist scenario.

Keywords: *Race, Gender, class, hierarchies, multiplicity, subverted, established ideas, diverse portrayals.*

INTRODUCTION

Media demonstrates diverse views about race, gender, and class to its audiences through images, symbols, and stories. According to Brooks and Hébert (2006), individuals' identities and their positions are affected by representations and the "racial categories we use to differentiate human differences have been created and changed to meet the dynamic, social, political and economic needs of our society" (p. 297). They argue that there are two responses; acceptance, and rejection, to the gendered and racial social constructions, which are outcomes of media representations. They further claim that audiences understand social roles through such constructions and that hierarchies

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of ethnicity, class and gender in US society affect the daily experiences of black and white Americans. Therefore, the media's role is complex and critical in developing a racialized culture. The individual's relation to society and culture defines their identity and some may adapt their gender, race and class identities which are socially constructed and represent a person's current state and context. An individual, in the struggle of her/his self, undergoes conflict with social systems that define and ascribe her/him a self. Cultural categories and values significantly influence the way individuals and society interpret racial and gendered identity. The fluidity of identity is detectable in different contexts from home to school (Frable, 1997).

Analytical Framework

This study looks at race, gender and class diversity in films by black and white directors as they have represented African-Americans and women declining the prevailing stereotypes. It also explores the social constructs portrayed in the films to consider if they represent black men and women differently than the norm. As dismantling stereotypical binaries that shape social values and institutions expose various biases prevalent in media content and demonstrate how diverse productions that subvert existing viewpoints create space for new ideas. To this end, the tenets of Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) (Martin, 2004) have been employed. Martin claims that people's understanding of how amelioration happens across a range of sites is defective without Positive PDA. It "describes what texts 'do well' and 'get right in our eyes' (Macgilchrist, 2007, p. 74). It approves a discourse rather than criticizing it. As the present study aims at analyzing successful counter-discourse to the established stereotypes, PDA's five discursive strategies logical inversion, parody, complexification, partial reframing and radical reframing have been employed:

1. Logical inversion tends to counter the established discourse.
2. Parody is a sophisticated strategy used to subvert the prevalent views or ideals.
3. Complexification establishes consensus over the issue and circulates it in the mainstream.
4. Partial reframing is a process of "shifting an issue away from its conventional location" (Macgilchrist, 2007, p. 81), i.e. a different interpretation or meaning is assigned to an issue in a new setting.
5. Radical reframing is used to develop a consensus and turn around the reporting. This involves dialogue with other frames as well as an inversion of the conventional view of the issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In media research, social inequity is an important area of study. Gray (2016) claims that the media portrays inequalities based on race, gender, and class identification. Gray has also explored how diversity works, how it is exhibited and what purposes it

determines. While addressing the issues, the media highlights “practical life and effects” (p. 242). Gray, further, claims that the myth of the American dream suggests prosperity to all but media research exhibits disbelief when it reveals discrimination in the US.

Black feminist perspectives bring to the forefront, especially, the images of black females and their portrayal, and tend to expose gender inequality. Their stereotypical portrayal as matriarchal, fat, ugly and ill-mannered are criticized by critics and theorists like bell hooks (1994) who states that black females’ images determine their blackness and the way other people behave with them. Such representations influence black women’s viewpoints about themselves as well. Under white supremacist thinking, even black men cannot challenge stereotypical portrayals. Burks avers that the white male heterosexual hegemony dominates black independent cinema and “... has succeeded at one point or another in colonizing us all” (1996, p. 26). It has led white filmmakers to construct images of the black people in whatever way they liked. While discussing males, Burks challenges many stereotypes but in the case of females, he conforms to the same representations. In terms of beauty, the white color, straight hair, slim figure and high status are prominent features. Hooks (1994) states:

“light skin and long, straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable” (p. 179).

Dines (2003) argues that black men are considered deviants and a threat to the white community. They are excluded from the category of 'Men' being incapable of protecting their women. Dines (2003) focuses on black man’s image of a threat to white women's sexuality. Dominant racist depictions exhibit them with sturdy bodies without intelligence. Dines argues that masculinity, femininity, race, class, personal and collective personalities are not biologically decided; rather, they are the product of power discourse. Media narratives “are seen as intimately connected with a broader social relation of domination and subordination” (p. 309). Gramsci (1996) contends that power and hegemony are the outcomes of the ideological control that the subclasses grant to the elite. Different categories are created through various representations and images. The received and reflected messages, sometimes, impinge upon the minds of the people, and the people from the lower classes and races, consequently, choose a lower existence.

Scholars focusing on the audience have noticed that black people try to drive positive out of negative portrayals. Bobo (1995) discovers that black females navigate meaning to achieve power through negotiated readings. This indicates that they are not much affected and do not consider themselves subordinate. The audiences receive images and awareness about social inequity through films exploring racism, injustice and the harsh attitude of whites. She also examines the idea of identity formation and explores

the link between racism and media, specifically how women perceive their images in terms of beauty and identity.

Richardson-Stovall found diverse points of resistance and acceptance in her interviews with women. She also found that black women's voices about media images are not heard and argues that "defining certain women as beautiful and others as not is a form of socio-political control that empowers some and disempowers others" (p. 74). Richardson-Stovall also notes that the stereotypical rendering of a particular picture of beauty indicates the oppression women have to face. They "experience extreme psychological and sociological pain in response to media images of white beauty" (p. 77). The women she interviewed talked about different phases of their lives, connections to race, history and social experiences which forced them to reconstruct themselves positively. Some people accepted the propaganda behind the stereotyping as it was internalized through different means. Most of the participants had the view that their images of beauty presented in the media were harmful.

Racial and gender discrimination prevail because "minority" women occupy less space and fewer opportunities for leadership positions. The methods of production, exhibition and distribution are unfair and under the control of the dominant society (Grindstaff, 2008). Several studies find Hollywood as a chiefly male and white sphere where representations of women and minorities are below their population ratio. The roles of women and Black people are restricted. Even directors and producers have limited chances as "Industry decision-makers may only circumscribe them to limited scales of production or provide them with sparingly few resources for the execution of a project" (Erigha, 2017, p. 79). Maryann Erigha also states that, in the areas of direction and acting, women and black men have limited space and minorities generally are offered supporting roles instead of main roles.

William T. Bielby and Denise Bielby state that minority groups work with smaller companions (Bielby & Bielby, 1999). Talent agencies are the source of reputation, authentication and income unavailable to minor production sources. Thus the directors and producers working with these agencies are more successful as compared to those working independently. This clearly exposes the inequality the marginalized have to face in Hollywood. White audiences and critics judge everything according to their mindset. Leblanc has discussed the issue of production through the responses of audiences and claims that film reviewers and critics use the prevailing social ideals to make comparisons which reflect "... their narrowness and to some extent racist attitude" (2017, pp. 309-310). Moreover, every ethnic group has its own perception because if a person is black; whatever they do has to be a black version. "It makes one wonder about the strength-of-the-blood held for many years in the south. One drop of the black blood makes you black" (p. 314) According to Leblanc, black writers, producers and directors are usually more concerned about aspects of racism and are

more interested in its demonstration than whites. In other words, white people explore black history with discriminatory images while black people have a professional approach.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

Although in the US film industry, prejudices continue to prevail, African-American directors are striving to challenge the stereotypes, and subvert the overgeneralized facts. They present a varied picture with multiple perspectives and give females and African-Americans central positions. The selected films: Leon's *A Raisin in the Sun* (2008), Taylor's *The Help* (2011) and Washington's *The Great Debaters* (2007) constituting the sample for data analysis, have been directed by both white and African-American directors who represent social reality with multiple perspectives, and give black females central positions.

Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), was received in many theaters since she raised her voice and brought the diversity of race, gender and class from off-screen to the forefront (Wilkerson, 1986). Kenny Leon adapted the play into a classic Telefilm in 2008 retaining all the original ideas. The setting of the movie reflects racial discrimination and legal upheavals at a time when social movements were trying to turn the tables. The story is the realistic portrayal of an African-American family, the Youngers, living in a racist society. They are laborers, fighting for survival and hoping for a better future. Their hopes are set on a check of \$10,000 which Lena, the mother, is going to receive and which is thought to be the fulfillment of their dreams. Lee, Lena's son, is frustrated, sick of his job as a chauffeur and wants to invest money in a private business. It creates a disturbance in the family but Mama buys a house in Clybourne Park, a white neighborhood, and this disappoints Lee. His sister Beneatha wants to be a doctor and the mother is saving money for her education as well. Lee, loses the money in a dubious deal and completely disillusioned, faces his family in an emotional crisis. He gets a chance to recover the money when the white neighborhood association offers to buy the family's new house at a profit to stop them from moving to a white neighborhood. Later Lee realizes that his family's pride is more important and dismisses the proposal.

The film shows the effort of the family as it fights for progress. Upward economic mobility seems insignificant to them. Their struggle "for a spiritual and economic future poses fundamental questions about the American dream of success" (p. 445). For a minority group, achieving material success is very difficult. On one hand, there is Lee's desire for acquisition, status and money and on the other is Mama's struggle for integrity, freedom and pride. Leon in rendering racial segregation and class differences in showing the attitude of Linder, a representative of the white community, exhibits the racist thinking of Linder, since he wants to block African-Americans' admission to the white locality. He poses to be a part of a betterment association but

his mind is full of prejudice. He says, “he is the chairman of welcome committee who welcomes the new neighbors and we sort of giving lowdown on how we do things in Clybourne Park” (Leon, *A Raisin in the Sun*). On behalf of the committee, he deals with special community problems and, by special, he means African-Americans. He warns them about violent incidents to make them aware of the danger of moving to a new place; “I feel, what we have, is a unique organization in American life where we are trying to do something about it”. He tries to hide his racist thinking and states that he is there to work things out in a friendly way and that his motive is to make them dismiss the idea of the new house. White people, he says, feel that “for the happiness of all concerned, our Negro families are better off, they’re happier, living in their own communities”. This exposes how the white community never allows African-Americans to mingle with them.

White people's gazes are totally unwelcoming when the Younger family visits the house. The Younger family is portrayed as caring and well-mannered although Lee is angry and frustrated. There is no negative description of African-Americans and the Youngers are shown as one unit, connected to values and roots. Female characters are strong and can keep the family united. For example, Lena never gives up and does all that she can for the Youngers. Ruth, Lena’s daughter-in-law, wishes for the betterment of her family and is equally worried about her husband. Lena’s daughter, Beneatha loves to be connected to African roots; wears traditional dress and likes Yoruba dance. She also wants to be a doctor and to progress in a society where there are few opportunities for African-American females. Being bold, she asks Mr. Linder direct questions when he beats about the bush. The portrayal of women here, occupies more space and is more positive than that for males. They are shown as reasonable and wise rather than emotional and the stereotypical image of women as weak and sexual objects, is challenged. Lee, despite being aggressive, is shown as a committed man who saves his family's pride.

Mr. Asagai, who is in love with Beneatha, is a young man from Nigeria who is struggling to achieve a better place in American culture and is never ashamed of his heritage and background. He gives moral support to Beneatha when she is depressed at learning that the money for her education has been lost. Beneatha loses faith in humankind and finds human beings foul and selfish. Asagai wants Beneatha to have faith and never give up. She questions Asagai about his commitment to his people and their freedom. He shouts, “I live the answer”. His very existence is proof of his commitment and belief in the power of his people which cannot be taken away by money or material things. His faith is his power and he will continue fighting for liberation.

Confrontation with racism is seen in the family’s rejection of the proposal to sell the new house and stay out of the white community and an affirmation of the family’s

values. While they sacrifice the profit they could make from selling the home, the Youngers are committed to upward mobility and economic success. Racial segregation is resisted and a united family is able to overcome it. Beneatha's decision to become a doctor is the point of resistance in a society where African-American females get fewer chances for professional-oriented education. Thus, the family accepts the challenge of being in a white community and is ready to resist the discrimination. Lena's decision is a challenge to the restrictions put on African-Americans. Asagai represents the rise of Africans and their awareness of freedom. Beneatha's acceptance of African traditions and dress code is the renewal of faith and pride of Africans and African-Americans in their heritage.

The movie was received well by both African-Americans and whites with the African-Americans feeling proud of the characters and the whites identifying with the characters at the same time that they see the harm that racism and segregation causes. Lena is a strong character with whom many can relate since she is shown as a determined and caring mother who keeps the family together. The sacrificing nature of Ruth and the strong belief of Beneatha keeps the audience captivated. Wilkerson (1986, p. 444) argues that

“For blacks, Walter was a welcome affirmation of the urgency and potency of the black struggle, while his sister represented its intellectual potential. Each character was molded with skill and humor. The human qualities of Hansberry's characters came through without negating their racial integrity” (1986, p. 444).

In the film, Leon reveals the mindset of the racist white people whereas the African-Americans found a voice and a way to move forward through non-stereotypical representation.

Female characters are the real power in the play, and that is one of the reasons that the play and, later, the first film adaptation made history. Leon's version premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. The good reception it garnered there is due to its representation of the family factor and because the things they have to deal with are so relevant. It highlights the fallacies embedded in the myth of the American dream and enables the audience to identify with the ways that racism excludes some people from achieving the dream while also pointing out the problems with defining success as attaining wealth. Leon's version of the play reclaimed the national spotlight “making the story and its critique of the US dominant culture accessible to a new generation of viewers” (Colbert, 2011, p. 20). The goal is to bring the dominant culture of America to the forefront. Leon in an interview with the Washington informer states that (“... his performance attracts a new generation of theatre-goers translating a deficit into a gain”) (p. 22). The success it achieved is very complicated and difficult for black directors;

the movie, irrespective of reception and production, “depicted as dreams, the careers, identities and relationships, the Youngers’ desire reflect a physic battlefield made visible through theatrical production” (p. 23). This can go on and the voices come from an authentic place.

Taylor’s *The Help* (2011) was adapted from Stockett’s novel *The Help* (2009), set in the 1960s. Awareness about racial segregation is portrayed through Skeeter, a young female journalist, who realizes how harmful this cultural institution is, and tries to provide a voice for those made voiceless by racism. It is set in Mississippi at the time of the civil rights movement when African-Americans, in particular, were increasingly demanding their rights as citizens and human beings.

The story covers a relationship between Skeeter and two maids, Aibileen and Minny. She chooses to work on a book from the perspective of the African-American maids known as ‘the help’ in white Southern dialects since she wishes to reveal the racist mentality and unjust treatment African-Americans had to face while working for whites.

The film starts with Aibileen, an African-American maid in a white family’s house. African-Americans were, in the main, employed as house slaves for many generations, and Aibileen remarks, "My mama was a maid. My grandmama was a house slave". The maids leave their own children at home and take care of white children. Aibileen’s friend Minny, straightforward and fair-spoken, is famous for her cooking skills. The film opens when Skeeter returns home after her university graduation. She struggles to be a writer and pursue a career and feels disgusted by her white friends' attitude towards their maids. The situation of 'the help' is terrible due to racial discrimination and segregation. Even during working hours, they are ordered to use separate bathrooms because of the fear the whites have of catching diseases from African-Americans.

Different incidents make African-American servants open up to Skeeter and offer their perspectives and narratives. While the book proves to be a great success, Hilly, Skeeter’s racist, socialite friend, is deeply angered by it because it reveals her mistreatment of Minny, whom she has fired. Hilly avenges herself by forcing Aibileen’s employer to fire the maid. . After saying good-bye to Mae, the child to whom Aibileen is a surrogate mother, Aibileen leaves with the hope of becoming a writer. She says: “Mae Mobley was my last baby. . . . God says we need to love our enemies. It’s hard to do. But it can start by telling the truth. No one had ever asked me what it felt like to be me. Once I told the truth about that... I felt free. And I got to thinking about all the people I knew.” All the characters, in the film, especially Aibileen, have given powerful performances, leading to the success of the movie. Long (2011) remarks that the film is appealing, entertaining, touching and perhaps even healing.

The film is based on the affiliation between a white female, Skeeter, and African-American maids. She is the only one who behaves well toward them and considers their existence important. Though the white perception is taken negatively and the movie is considered to be overpowered by white perspectives, all the white viewpoints are subordinate to the African-Americans' narratives. For instance, Minny changes the life of her new employer for the better and provides her moral support while Aibileen proves to be the leading character.

The questions raised in the film and the multiple outlooks it offers bear witness to Taylor's attempt to expose the racist, white conservative mentality. In *The Help*, Taylor, who is white, uncovers the economic injustice that forces African-American maids to leave their children and work to raise white children and be insulted and mistreated in the process. He criticizes Hilly's behavior and that of other employers toward the maids. The stereotypical images of African-Americans being violent and ill-mannered are subverted in the contrast between Aibileen, who is exceedingly kind, and Hilly, who causes so much harm to the African-American maids and their families. Significantly, the African-American maids' resistance is shown as the outcome of whites' rash behavior. Aibileen is a calm and contained woman and her subversion of racism is apparent in her decision to make her story public. Throughout the entire film, women are presented in leading roles and few males are seen. Laws (2017) notices Minny's husband, one male character, Minny's husband, who remains off-screen while white men have a few minor roles. Gender inequality is challenged through Skeeter's decision of not marrying but to become a writer. The former was a strong expectation of women in the 1960s. This is a subversion of the typical housewife image and she speaks for African-Americans, fights for their voice and is not ready to follow the restrictive social norms surrounding race and gender.

In this film, the maids are committed to the families they serve. They have "warm, supportive and loving communities that sustain them even as they deal with exploitation and endure separation from their children and spouses" (Nelson, 2011, p. 75). The maids face severe treatment, but their community is, for one another, a source of comfort. Mutual support is their strength, but they need guidance to raise their voices against oppression which they get in the form of a Skeeter who publishes their stories. According to Romero (2012), the mainstream media often represents domestic workers as low class and do not care for them. Tate brings this to light by advocating for the rights, needs and status of African-American domestic workers. Thus, *The Help* is a story of black women who empower themselves through a book about their lives that is written by a young white woman.

Denzel Washington's *The Great Debaters* (2007) revolves around the struggle of an African-American professor, Tolson, teaching at Wiley College during the 1930s when racial discrimination was virulent and lynching of African-Americans was common.

Historically, it is an African-American college in rural Marshall, Texas, founded by the United Methodist Church in 1873. The movie highlights the social conditions and the insults the African-Americans have to face. Denzel Washington, the famous African-American actor and director, challenges negative stereotypes and subverts gender stratification. Tolson is the coach of the university's debate team, and is involved in anti-racist activism and the African-American labor union movement. He is committed to improving the status of African-Americans and ending oppression against them. He realizes the strength that African Americans need to possess to challenge stereotypes. Denzel Washington, as Tolson, is a powerful character who makes every effort to improve African-Americans' lives, giving coverage and support to his students.

The Great Debaters brings to light racist thinking and social differences. Whites are portrayed in a realistic way highlighting their attitude even when they are in minority. The white Sheriff attacks the union meeting, beats people and arrests them, showing that he is totally against their rights and does not want them to speak for themselves. He behaves badly when he is arresting Mr. Tolson before his students without any evidence and does not let the students meet him despite the law permitting it. This indicates that he considers the black community as criminals and breaks all laws towards black people. Another incident is when Tolson returns with his team from a debating competition and sees the lynching of an African-American which indicates the mob's reckless attitude and racial hatred. The white mob is angry and tries to attack Tolson and his team but somehow they manage to escape. This highlights the harsh oppression against the black community. Their standard of living is low because their educational institutes are separate. The leading students, Samantha Brooke and Lowe try to prove that the admission policy of banning African-Americans from universities is wrong and absurd and argue that it is an unfair system that blocks African-Americans' progress. Tolson urges the debate team to resist African-Americans' oppression, which he describes as ongoing enslavement; "Keep the slaves physically strong but psychologically weak and dependent on the slave master. Keep the body, take the mind."

The plot focuses on a debate between the debating teams of Wiley College and Harvard University (in reality this famous debate was between Wiley and the team at the University of Southern California, which was the national champion at the time). Tolson prepares his team, inspires them to retain their pride in their heritage and refuses to believe that being African-American does not mean that the students cannot succeed. When the team reaches Harvard, they are looked at as if they can't win against the white team. With confidence, pride, and superior knowledge, Wiley College is victorious and Tolson's hopes are realized, making this a huge accomplishment for African-Americans.

Gender inequality is also rejected in the film through the figure of Brooke, the only girl on the debating team, who is studying to become a lawyer. She is courageous enough to fight against patriarchy because through her decision of being part of the debating team, she rejects the tradition that only males can be debaters. She is given prominence in the film as well as at Wiley College, and she proves herself worthy of the opportunity given to her. Another strong female figure is Tolson's wife, who is a housewife. She supports her husband's educational and social activism and stands with him every step of the way.

The movie highlights the idea of unjust law as stated by Farmer Sr.: "an unjust law is no law at all". The unjust attitude of the Sheriff reflects the absence of law for the Black people. His efforts to stop the union show his dislike of the awareness of the black masses about their legal rights. The present law and its rules do not support the minority or provide them with protection. This is the point where the black community needs to stand up and recognize the significance of its position and. Farmer Sr.'s statement "I believe we are the most privileged people in America because we have the most important jobs: the education of our young people" indicates the basic line African-Americans need to work on. The movie teaches lessons through its humanity, literacy, faith, history and steady belief in education (Holden, 2007).

The movie exhibits the power of speech and words which Tolson uses to turn his students into good debaters. He challenges all the restrictions and stereotypes and inculcates awareness in the students, provides them full support and makes them ready for the competition. The team wins and retains pride in its college and race.

CONCLUSION

In the US, whites, being in the center, have privilege and oppress African-Americans and other racial minorities, stigmatized as other and inferior. The media has perpetuated such discrimination as well as shown resistance. The analysis reflects the racial oppression and segregation of African-Americans. Some daring directors have countered racist trends in the media by representing new images of the black people and their resistance. The characters are shown to be fighting against racial stereotypes. Lee refuses the offer of leaving the white neighborhood and, finally, moves there with his family in *Raisin in the Sun*, thus revealing the resistance against racial discrimination. In *The Help*, Aibileen is portrayed as a strong character who, in the end, quits her job, and becomes a writer. The African-Americans struggle against racism and refuse to bear racial hatred by seeking self-empowerment. *The Great Debaters* attacks negative stereotypes of African-Americans as being less intelligent than whites. In short, these films bring to light the stereotypes, racial hatred, social segregation and gender discrimination in all institutes of the society as well as questioning them by presenting positive images and stories of the black community's presence within the larger white community.

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