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Contents

S.	Title	Page
1	A Study of Social and Economic Activities of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan Dr. Nasreen Aslam Shah	01
2	Violence and Silence: Sufferings of A Female Subaltern in Qudsia's Anter Howat Udasi Mr. Hammad Mushtaq	15
3	Impact of Higher Education on The Economic Status of Women of Rural Areas Ms. Mahvish Naseem & Ms. Tehsin Ehsan	23
4	Effects of Handedness and Gender on Creativity of Students Ms. Sibgha Shakeel, Ms. Saba Ghayas & Mr. Adnan Adil	39
5	Modernizing Women Gender and Social Change Dr. Rukhsana Hassan	49

A STUDY OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN PAKISTAN

ABSTRACT

In Pakistan, majority of women entrepreneurs belong to low-income groups working on sub-contracts with multinationals, also known as home-based working women. Lower middle class woman entrepreneur is a new and revolutionary concept in the male dominating society of Pakistan. However, fight against poverty and gender discrimination is the root cause of women coming from the low-income classes. Home-based working women including women entrepreneurs are seen in a new perspective which is both feminist and economic. The present study has been conducted to evaluate the changing role of women in the context of present day social and economic system. A purposive sample for the present study was obtained from the records of two micro-credit giving organizations- the First women's Bank Ltd. and the Orangi Pilot Project (an NGO), Karachi. Data showed that the women entrepreneurs had gained self-confidence as a result of their experience as entrepreneurs, that they had won the respect of their families and their neighbors and that they were hopeful for a better future for themselves and their families. These women entrepreneurs came from marginally well-off households, owned their homes, or their husbands did; and, their homes had various types of basic requirements for a comfortable life, such as electricity, gas, refrigerators, washing machines, sewing machines, sofa sets, televisions, etc. The data acquired and analyzed suggested that the status and role of today's woman has undergone basic changes, not only in her role but also in her behaviour, attitude and her role performance.

Key Words: Women entrepreneurs, social, economic, micro-credit, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Research on women entrepreneurs is limited largely to developed countries (Hisrich and Brush 1983; Watkins and Watkins 1983; Cromie 1987; Sundin and Holmquist 1991; Carter and Cannon 1992; Brush 1992; Kaplan 1988; Holmquist and Sundin, 1988). Although studies on women entrepreneurs in developing countries are scarce (Allen and Truman 1993), interest in the economic contribution of women from the low and lower middle class is not new (Shaheed and Mumtaz, 1978; Brownlee and Brownlee, 1976).

In Pakistan, women entrepreneurs from low-income groups are a sub-group of the larger entity known as home-based working women. The term “home based working women” applies to those women who process or produce marketable goods on behalf of (men) entrepreneurs. There is no authentic data available on the home-based working women in Pakistan. However, according to World Bank in 1989 there were 1.5 million home-based working women in Pakistan and this estimate has reached to 12 million in 2007. According to estimate of 1989, about half of Pakistan’s home-based women are women entrepreneurs (Alavi, 1991; Weiss, 1992). In Pakistan’s peculiar male dominated society, the woman entrepreneur may get substantial help from the men of the family for her contacts with the marketplace. Yet, ideally it should be the woman entrepreneur herself who would be the decision-maker, investor, receiver of her income and finally, it should be she herself who will have complete control over her income.

The role of a lower middle class woman entrepreneur in the traditional Pakistani society is new and revolutionary, since according to Alavi (1991) the urban lower middle class women were among the most oppressed of women in Pakistan being confined to the four wall of their homes. However, recognition of the spirit of enterprise among the women coming from the low-income classes has its origins in the fight against poverty and gender discrimination (Khandker, 1993). Women entrepreneurs are also seen as the spear-headers of a new social order in which legitimate opportunities for economic betterment are not denied to any one on account of gender and poverty (Rani, 1996). Home-based working women including women entrepreneurs are seen in a new perspective which is both feminist and economic. Home-based working women and

women entrepreneurs (some do not make any distinction between the two) not only contribute substantially to the total household income but are also seen as more reliable and stable providers for their families leading to the proper physical and social development of children (Shah, 1999; Kazi and Raza, 1988).

The governments in developing countries have taken measures to aid the working women whether they are working in their own homes for the informal sector of the economy or in the factories for the formal sector. One of these measures is the institution of micro-credit or micro-finance services for the home-based working women, many of whom can be classified as women entrepreneurs (Khatoon, 1995; Bundell, 1997). The movement to arrange affordable soft loans for the poor actually began as an unconventional anti-poverty measure by an NGO in India. Soon, with the emergence of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh it became associated with the emancipation and empowerment of women.

The reason was that women were the main participants and beneficiaries of Grameen Bank's participatory small loans programme for the poor. Also, women's own traditional methods of participatory mutual financing to meet urgent family needs and arrange seed money for small enterprises fitted very well in the model developed by the Grameen Bank and followed by many countries of the region and other parts of the world (Yunus, 1998).

In Pakistan, microfinance is gaining importance as an effective tool of social mobilization and poverty alleviation. Currently in Pakistan, a variety of institutions ranging from NGOs to private and government sponsored rural support programmes are delivering microfinance services to the poor. Two Commercial banks i.e. First Women's Bank and Bank of Khyber are also providing lines of credit for the microfinance sector. (Anonymous, 2005). The last decade has seen a number of initiatives using micro-credit as a tool for poverty alleviation. Examples include the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), other Rural Support Programmes (RSPs), and more recently, the Khushali Bank. These programmes have tried to target women in their lending programmes. Some non-governmental organizations are also extending micro-credit along with their rural support programmes. Kashf, Sungi, Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) and Development Action for Mobilization and Emancipation (DAMEN) are a few of the known organizations working in this field. However, the microfinance service market in Pakistan remains underdeveloped and serves only 7 to 8 percent of these potential clients.

In the third world, women from the privileged classes have emerged as business and professional women no doubt. But, their activities even as politicians and heads of states are more a dynastic affair rather than an indicator of basic social change involving change in the traditional role of women in the society as a whole. Therefore, the study on which this work is based treats the emergence of women entrepreneurs as a large enough group from among the low and lower middle-income classes and groups as a significant catalyst in changing the role of women in traditional societies. It should be noted here that the women entrepreneurs are set apart from family labour such as in agricultural and traditional artisan families in the rural areas and small towns of Pakistan. Therefore, the women entrepreneurs as meant in this study are mostly found in the urban centres of Pakistan. The study on which this work is based was conducted to delineate the change in the status of women in Pakistani society. As indicated earlier, women in the Pakistani society have never been socialized to participate in the market economy independently. The emergence of women entrepreneurs from among the lower and lower middle income groups of urban Pakistan is a significant development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic question to which this study addressed itself was: Was micro credit instrumental in strengthening the role of woman as an entrepreneur? The objective of the study had to be broken into the following components

- a. Women entrepreneurs' own evaluation of the loans made available to them for business purposes.
- b. To find out if the loans obtained by the women entrepreneurs were really used for the purpose for which they were originally granted to them.
- c. Typologies of small scale, home based industries operated by the loan taking women entrepreneurs.
- d. To find out if the women entrepreneurs operated their enterprises according to business principles.
- e. To find out if successful enterprises with the help of loans made the women entrepreneurs more self assured, confident and forward-looking.
- f. The impact of the economic success of the women entrepreneurs on their social status and standard of living.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

In Karachi, the population of women entrepreneurs as defined for this study was not known. In the present research, in order to obtain a purposive sample of women entrepreneurs, the study was combined with micro-credit. The micro credit delivering institutions know who is an entrepreneur and who is not. It was with this understanding that the First Women's Bank Ltd. and the Orangi Pilot Project were approached for their lists of borrowers who in their judgment were women entrepreneurs. Thus for the study, a sample size of 200 was determined for useful statistical manipulations. It was also decided to divide the sample equally between the First Women's Bank and the Orangi Pilot Project, i.e., 100 addresses each.

For this study, the survey method was employed to obtain the data. Illiteracy is widespread in Pakistani society. Therefore, for the survey of women entrepreneurs, a detailed interviewing schedule was developed containing 60 close ended and 15 open ended questions.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the data from 11 respondents of the Orangi Pilot Project's list and 10 from the list provided by the First Women's Bank had to be discarded because they turned out to be cases of men using the names of the females of their households to obtain loans on easy terms. Thus the study contained 89 respondents of OPP and 90 respondents of the FWB.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data showed that there were a number of similarities in the personal characteristics of the respondents of OPP and FWB. The mean age of the women entrepreneurs was 37 years. The majority of the women were married being 92.1% in the OPP sample and 93.3% in that of the FWB. In our culture the trend prevails that usually women get into any profession or work after marriage. The majority of the respondents were either illiterate or less educated. On the whole there were 12.8% of the respondents who were

graduates. It is interesting to note that the respondents, with no or meager formal education could operate their businesses successfully.

The heads of the households of the respondents were found to be involved in different types of occupations. The income of nearly half (50.8%) of the respondents in the two samples was in the range of Rs 2001-3000 per month (This was before the onset of high inflation in Pakistan). This income was meager and indicated that the majority of the respondents were below the poverty line. Low income was one of the basic reasons for these respondents to take up some sort of work to earn money.

Traditionally, our social system is male dominant, and therefore, it is evident that majority of our households in our country has husbands as the head of the households. However, this trend, especially among the educated professional classes, is changing and more or less a democratic trend is setting in.

Most of the respondents had large family with 3-6 children. It was also found that 89.9% respondents in the OPP and 85.6% in the FWB had nuclear families. In both the samples mostly one male and one female, earning members were present. The above statistics, thus, indicated a nascent change in our family system: nuclearization, desire to have smaller families, and the presence of more than one earning members.

It was found that 91.0% and 91.1% respondents respectively in OPP and FWB samples owned their houses they lived in, either by themselves or owned by their husbands. Most of the respondents were found to possess various types of basic requirements in their homes for a comfortable life, such as, refrigerators, washing machines, sewing machines, sofa sets, televisions, etc.

Table 1

The various types of work in which the respondents were involved for business

Types of work	Orangi Pilot Project (Percent)	First Women's Bank (Percent)
Stitching	49.4%	33.4%
Making household items	14.6%	4.4%
Running shops (food items, general items, beauty parlours, boutiques, etc.)	32.6%	60.0%
Packing	3.4%	2.2%

Fixed time given to work	57.3%	62.2%
With business work, do the routine house work	87.6%	92.2%
Started work on self-motivation	70.8%	87.8%
Working for more than 5 years	60.7%	25.6%
Acquired training	44.9%	43.3%

The respondents were found to be involved in various types of work, such as stitching and various handicrafts, preparing food items, preparing decoration pieces or running their stores (Table 1). It was found that 87.6% respondents from OPP and 92.2% from FWB kept themselves busy in doing one or another type of work and produced articles of daily use to supplement or to contribute to household income. Besides doing this work, they also did the usual domestic chores

According to home based working women, traditionally the domestic activities were their expected responsibility and so they did it beside their economic activity, and also because financially they were not able to hire help for domestic work. However, their daughters, if they had any, helped them both in work and in their domestic responsibilities.

More than 50.0% of the respondents in both OPP and FWB had not acquired any formal professional training in the trades they were engaged in. However, the ones who had acquired training were either from their family members, or while working in shops or factories and/or from some training institutions or centers. However, the respondents felt that there was a need for acquiring some sort of professional training before starting their own businesses independently. It was felt that arrangements should be made for the training of un-skilled entrepreneurs and their workers.

As shown in Table 1, 53.7% of the respondents in OPP and 62.2% of the respondents in FWB had fixed timings for business work while the remaining respondents worked according to the availability of time. Table 1 also indicates that among the respondents, 70.8% in OPP and 87.8% in FWB samples, started working on self-motivation. This shows that women in the two samples were themselves aware that they should work to supplement their household incomes.

Table 2**Percentage of respondents who answered yes to the loan related questions**

Loan related questions	Orangi Pilot Project (Percent)	First Women's Bank (Percent)
Loans were taken in the last 4 years	93.3	100.0
Loans taken above Rs. 20,000	42.7	100.0
After taking loans the same businesses were continued (for which the loans were granted)	96.6	100.0
Took any loans prior to these loans	52.8	15.6
Faced no difficulties while taking loans	98.9	62.6
Prior to taking loans, awareness of loan policy	98.9	100.0
Businesses have promoted after taking loans	100.0	100.0
Following business principles by keeping separate business accounts	22.5	34.4
Returning the loans as per rules	100.0	84.4

The data in Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents in both samples took loans to develop their existing businesses and 100% from OPP and 100 % from FWB admit that their businesses have promoted. In fact the women entrepreneurs had no idea about the loans but when they came to know about it, they took the advantage of loans and utilized the money in expanding their businesses. They, however, seem confident that without taking loans their business could not be expanded as they lacked money to invest. There were women who took loans according to their specific needs which were less than Rs. 20,000 and there were those who took loans up to Rs. 25,000/= for their

businesses. But, the status of returning loans was encouraging. 100% from OPP and 84.4% from FWB usually returned their loans regularly and on time, none of them were found to be defaulters. It is interesting to observe that the women borrowers are not defaulters as the men borrowers are. Although Table 2 shows that 98.9 % respondents from OPP and 62.6% from FWB did not face any difficulty in taking loans, however this was the case with women who personally knew loan-giving authorities. While the other women had difficulty in finding guarantors and had to visit the Bank several times to receive loans. The respondents in both samples were aware of the loan policies and felt that the loan policies need to be made easier and through relevant sources should be publicized for the benefit of the entrepreneurs.

As shown in Table 2, the respondents have reported that their businesses have made progress after taking loans. However, the respondents strongly felt that the policies of loans are useful for small business people to start their business. When a small business had been established, there is a need that the bank should provide facility for a bigger amount of loan. As regards the future plans for businesses, 51.7% respondents wanted to improve their businesses in OPP sample, while in the FWB sample, 37.8% respondents desired to improve their businesses and suggested that the loan facility should be extended. The common suggestions to improve the loan policies included that the loan giving agencies and banks should simplify their loan procedure, which is cumbersome and complicated and that the duration of loan return should be extended.

Regarding the separate account of the business, it was found that 22.5% in OPP and 34.4% in FWB were keeping separate account of their business income. The remaining respondents, who do not keep separate account of their business, felt the necessity for it in order keep the track of profit and loss.

Regarding the knowledge where their products are sold, 68.5% respondents in OPP and 63.3% in FWB said that their products were sold in the domestic market. On the whole 3.4% were of the opinion that their products were exported. They were also aware that their products were purchased by the middlemen at cheaper rates and sold at much higher prices. They suggested that the system of middlemen should be eliminated and direct selling to the customers or even exporters should be encouraged. In both the samples, the women felt that the profit level in their business would be higher if marketing of their products was well organized. In that situation the loans may not be needed as the reinvestment of profits and savings may improve the financial position of the women in this business.

Table 3 indicates that 97.8% in OPP and 98.9 % in FWB respondents felt that their status improved in the neighborhood as well as in the family due to their financial position having become better after they started their business. In fact their better economic position ensured more stability to their business enterprises, and therefore, more respect. This earned them better command over their familial matters. Among the respondents, 77.5% in OPP and 53.3 % in FWB indicated that they got help from their families, in one way or the other in setting up their businesses. In fact, it is possible to suggest that the home-based work done by women becomes a kind of family-based activity. The women

entrepreneurs do not have to hire help from outside. Neither can they afford to do so because of an unfavourable margin of profit. They have to depend on their own family members as help in their enterprises. In some cases however, they do hire help from the neighbourhood when doing so becomes viable or profitable.

The respondents 86.5% in OPP and 87.8% in FWB expressed satisfaction over the success of their entrepreneurship. They are happy that they have been able to change their life style due to the extra income always at hand to meet the eventualities and extra expenditures which come unaware and which otherwise they would meet through loans.

Table 3

Percentage of respondents who answered “yes” to the questions about family, social and financial status

Questions about family, social and financial status	Orangi Pilot Project (Percent)	First Women Bank (Percent)
Improvement in social status	97.8	98.9
Financial position is better than before	100.0	100.0
Assisted in work by family members	77.5	53.3
Children should help in business work	95.5	90.0
Satisfied with profit in business	86.5	87.8
Work has affected health	20.2	10.0

Neighboring women visit to get guidance for business	76.4	68.9
Not interested in sharing business with other women	79.8	68.9
Savings from business income	49.4	50.0

Table 3 also shows that 76.4% and 68.9% of the respondents, respectively in OPP and FWB were being visited by their neighbours for technical assistance and guidance in order to start their business. However, majority of the respondents were not interested in sharing their business with other women and would prefer to work alone. They did not want to share with other women primarily due to lack of confidence and fair play in business.

Table 3 indicates that there were very few respondents (20.2% in OPP and 10.0% in FWB) who said that their health has been affected by their work. The reason for those whose health has been affected was either overwork or improper sleep.

As indicated in Table 3 the respondents have developed the habit of savings. The respondents (49.4% OPP and 50.00% FWB) felt that their enterprises help them to save money because otherwise in the husband's income alone there can be no savings. They consider their earnings as a sort of compulsory savings. The purpose of saving was for the daughter's wedding or for future use. However, among those who could not save was due to the expenses on the education of their children.

In general, the impression by the interviewers was that the respondents were found to be clam and at ease while interviewing. They were found to be well-dressed and during interview were in pleasant mood. Their houses were clean and the environment in the house was peaceful. This indicates that the increase in the earnings had improved not only their homes but also the attitudes of women. Although these women entrepreneurs were making money from their businesses the biggest constraint to growth remained the availability of credit. The lack of management skills and marketing did not allow these women to expand beyond a certain point. Therefore, special services were needed to promote the cause of women entrepreneurs, such as easy flow of credit, technical assistance, upgrading of their managerial and marketing skills, networking and regular exhibitions of products prepared by women entrepreneurs.

The data acquired and analyzed herein indicate that the traditional role of women has now changed and the process of change is continuing. The status and role of today's woman has undergone basic changes, not only in her role but also in her behaviour, attitude and her role performance. However, there are some suggestions for future implementations in order to motivate more women to enter into business in order to improve their economic and social conditions. The arrangements for the training of women entrepreneurs should be made and better educational facilities should be provided for their children, particularly professional training may be arranged for them to take up their parents trade. The loan facilities should be made within the easy approach and the Banks may be motivated to provide loans on easy terms and in due time. Better facilities should be provided to help the women entrepreneurs for marketing of raw materials and sale of products. The Government should arrange an exhibition for the items made by these women. This will be an encouragement for the working women.

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VIOLENCE AND SILENCE: SUFFERINGS OF A FEMALE SUBALTERN IN QUDSIA'S *ANTER HOWAT UDASI*

ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates the causes and effects of the sufferings of a female subaltern character in Bano Qudsia's short story *Anter Howat Udasi*. Gayatri Spivak's concept of the silencing of the female subaltern in the Indian society is used as theoretical framework to uncover the psychological and physical violence and the ensuing silence of a female fictional character. The study sheds light on the treatment of women and their delicate and weak social standing in Pakistani society and the patriarchal structure of the society where women cannot express their thoughts and feelings even if they are given a chance to speak. An in-depth study of Hajra's, the protagonist of the story, plight reveals that women of the South Asian societies are both physically and psychologically oppressed and are subject to an domineering patriarchal system and a "systematic silencing" by the society which has deprived them of raising a noticeable voice against the violence.

INTRODUCTION

Bano Qudsia's *Anter Howat Udasi* is the story of a subaltern woman who suffers both physically and spiritually due to her subaltern status and obligations as a woman in a patriarchal society where males are much more privileged than females. The story provides a site for examining the violence against a female subaltern living in Pakistani society and the causes of her silence against the psychological and physical violence she faces quite frequently.

The protagonist of the story is a female named Hajra who lives in a society where women have a subaltern position in the household, their freedom is restricted to the boundary of their homes and they do not have a voice of their own; this state of affairs compels them to take a position of silence. Subaltern literally refers to someone 'of inferior rank' and is frequently used in post-colonial studies as a term denoting women's subordinate role in a male-dominating patriarchal societies. The term was "adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in a society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes[...] they have less access to the means by which they may control their own representation, and less access to cultural and social institutions." (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 314-315). Thus in Gramsci's terms subaltern stands for the proletariat or lower class people (Hawley 425). Hajra is the protagonist of the story under discussion and she is a female subaltern of her society, a voiceless proletariat. Her plight, however, can

better be defined through the concept of “the subaltern” brought forward by post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak, in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak concludes in this essay that the subaltern, especially, the female subalterns cannot speak about or resist the violence levelled against them by the society. Giving the example of a Hindu cultural tradition called *Sati*, she argues that the widow willingly embraces her death after the death of her husband. She is so deeply influenced by religious and cultural values that she cannot represent herself even if she is given a chance and has to surrender herself to the prevalent cultural belief system which is responsible for the “systematic silencing” of the women subalterns (Spivak, 1988).

Spivak claims that the subaltern cannot speak because “between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-construction and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shutting which is the displaced figuration of the ‘third world woman’ caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development” (Spivak, 1999: 304). Thus the shutting up and silencing of women means making them believe that the status and the behavioral guideline assigned to them by the socio-cultural and religious environment they live in, has to be followed; they are made to believe that it is not any sort of imposition but something right and beneficial for them both in this world and the world hereafter.

METHOD

The study strives to analyse the psychological state of mind of female fictional characters in Bano Qudsiya’s short story *Anter Howat Udasi*. Keeping in view the depth of the psychological analysis, the researcher has delimited the analysis to only a single story. The analysis is based on post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak’s theory concerning silencing of the subaltern women. The theory posits that women in South Asian societies have systematically been made silent and they will not raise voice against their plight even if they are given a chance. This phenomenon refers to a deep level of unfaltering internalization among women regarding the rights and superiority of men. The researcher will endeavour to unveil the psychosocial complications of the protagonist Hajra in Qudsiya’s short story *Anter Howat Udasi*. The study focuses on the questions: How the male members of society violate rights of the females? And, why the female characters remain silent at the wake of violence even when they are given a chance to speak? Since the story is written in Urdu language, the researcher has translated all the quotable lines into English language.

Analysis

Hajra’s dilemma is that she lives in a society where women are considered to be the symbols of honour and their slightest moral imbalance can annoy men or other members of society and lead to some catastrophic tragedy, yet she thinks and acts differently. Hajra has been silenced quite systematically by the male patriarchal order of her society. In today’s societies, especially, in the third world societies, “women have been denied words in men’s world” and “silence belongs to those who are not allowed to speak and to

those who deliberately withhold their words [...] Every silence contains both oppression and rebellion” (Luis 223-24). Hajra’s silence is painful, oppressive yet it is not rebellious; being poor and helpless, she probably cannot afford rebellion. Thus, Hajra prefers a deep, most complex, and tragic *chup* (silence) over revelation of bitter truths of life. In a men’s world, moral perversion of a man can be tolerable but a woman’s moral perversion can be disastrous both for the woman and her family honour. Asian Development Bank’s paper *Situational Analysis of Women in Pakistan – an Overview* sheds light on the plight of Pakistani women in this regard:

Since the notion of male honor and *izzat* (honor) is linked with women's sexual behavior, their sexuality is considered a potential threat to the honor of the family. Therefore, women’s mobility is strictly restricted and controlled through the system of *purdah*, sex segregation, and violence against them [...] The nature and degree of women’s oppression/subordination vary across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Patriarchal structures are relatively stronger in the rural and tribal setting where local customs establish male authority and power over women’s lives. Women are exchanged, sold, and bought in marriages. They are given limited opportunities to create choices for themselves in order to change the realities of their lives. (2).

Silence of the Subaltern Women

Hajra lives in a society where her subaltern position does not allow her to represent herself she is rather represented by others. These others, quite ironically, are not just the male members of the society – most often it is the female opinion or judgment that creates, breaks, and remakes Hajra’s image in a society that is patriarchal in general. The role of Hajra’s mother and her mother-in-law, in this regard, is of an active social instrument. When Hajra’s illicit relationship with Qadeer unveils in the beginning of the story, it is her mother who abuses her, beats her, and reminds her of how she toiled to raise her when she was an infant. Her father, on the other hand, remains silent. Silence of a man, however, seems quite unusual in a patriarchal society like that. Later, her mother-in-law behaves in the same manner when Hajra is caught in a suspicious condition at night. Men, on the other hand, are equally responsible for her ruin and ultimate silencing. Three men – Qadeer *khokhy wala*, Hajra’s father-in-law, and her landlord Sheikh *sahib* – take advantage of her position and seduce her, only to leave her on her own once their desire is fulfilled.

The story can be divided into four parts. Three among these are structurally similar since at the end of each one of these parts, Hajra faces a critical moment wherein she is asked a question that she cannot answer and prefers to remain silent. The question is always about what she was doing on the roof of the house, or who else was with her. The answer is always there in her mind but she prefers to remain silent since she is very well aware of the norms of the society; she has a very good idea that her truthful reply can seriously

offend, annoy, and even harm the people around her. This apparently self-silencing is not because of some guilty feelings. It is rather part of the 'systematic silencing' caused by the oppressive socio-cultural norms.

Violence and Silence: Phase-I

When the first incident occurred, her mother catches her while silently coming down from the roof, through a ladder, after being seduced by Qadeer. Her mother grabs her hair and abuses her while asking about what she was doing on the roof. Fearing the outcome of the revelation of truth she deliberately remains silent: "*Main chup rahi*"¹ and "*Main aur bhi gungi ho gai*"² (150-51)³. Hajra seems to be caught between tradition and modernism, her heart bends towards the libidinal desires but being trained as a subaltern, she is well aware that nobody will understand her feelings; no one around her seems to have the ability to comprehend her words, so she decides to remain silent like a "lock". Hajra compares silence with the silence of a lock: "*Meri chup havaili kay sadar darvazy kay kadmon main giray us kufl ki manind hay jisay pichli raat chor kunday say utar kar phaink gay hun. Aisa tala bohat kuch kehta hay laiken kuch tafseel byan kernay say kaser rehta hay*"⁴ (151-52). Her defencelessness, her vulnerability and her subaltern standing in the society, like huge hurdles, stand in her way. She cannot understand why she let herself to be seduced by Qadeer. She cannot figure out what dragged her to Qadeer's seductive snare; whether it was "*Abba ka dar*"⁵, "*Jawani main tanhai ka samp*"⁶, or simply "*Kuch kar guzarney ki khahish*"⁷ (151-52). It's natural for a young and poor woman – who had to leave school because her mother could not afford the expenses, who had no means of pleasure in her life – to indulge into moral perversion. She didn't have a strong desire to see Qadeer (157), her depravity, her sense of inferiority could be one reason. She was attracted by Qadeer's beautiful house, having curtains on the windows, and later by the little gifts he brought for her (155). She couldn't explain all these things to her mother because she was sure that her mother would not understand: "*Bachpan say mughay yun lagta tha k agar main nay kisi say kuch kaha to wo samghay ga naheen, ulta na samagh kar mera dushman ho ja'ye ga*"⁸ (152). Hajra's depravity was two-fold; she

¹ Translation: I remained silent.

² Translation: I became even deafer.

³ All the textual quotes and page numbers of *Anter Howat Udasi* in this study refer to Qudsiya's collection of short stories *Kuch aur Naheen* published by Sang-e-Meel, Lahore in 2004.

⁴ Translation: My silence is like a lock lying near the main gate of the house which has been thrown there by some thieves, last night. A kind of lock that expresses a lot but is unable to relate any details. It is aware of the whole larceny but cannot say anything in its defense.

⁵ Translation: Fear of her father's [ghost].

⁶ Translation: The snake of solitude in youth.

⁷ Translation: Or [just] a desire to do something.

⁸ Translation: I Had a feeling from my childhood that if I expressed myself, nobody would understand me; Instead, by not understanding me, they would become my enemy.

had to live in a society but she cannot accept all its norms because she thought differently, even after knowing that nobody would understand or accept her thoughts.

Violence and Silence: Phase-II

The violence faced by Hajra accompanies silence again in the second phase of her life. She is seduced by three different men in each phase of her life, yet she likes none of them. Her unwillingly-willing surrender to three seductive men and later the verbal or physical violence by her mother, her mother-in-law, and her son is followed by a deep and deliberate silence. Her marriage with a deranged man was another act of violence against her. Her mother simply tells her that she has confirmed her marriage with a man called Guddu, without even seeing him, or letting Hajra see him. Her mother told her a lot about the great property her would-be in-laws have, their huge house, and all the luxuries of life Hajra would be enjoying after her marriage but she didn't say a word about the man Hajra was to marry. Hajra once again kept the silence. Her mother's last advice to Hajra, before her death and Hajra's marriage, is a very good evidence of the "systematic silencing" of women in a rural society:

*Dekh Hajra! Naseeb say jhagra na kerna. Aurat ki sari zindagi naseeb say chalti hay. Mughay dekh! Taira baras ki byahi aai thi. Aik din shohar ki kamai ka khota paisa tak naheen mila. Aik din is ghar kay malik nay mujhay seepi-bhar pyar bhi naheen dia. Par raniye! Main nay naseeb say jhagra naheen kia.*⁹(160)

The advice for such painful compromise is deeply held in Hajra's heart. That is why she recons women to be worthless and later in the story compares a woman's marital life with life in a main-hole (161). Spending life with someone who instead of working himself, depends on his wife's earnings, or living with a deranged husband, or a husband whom the wife has not even seen before marriage, is not considered to be violation of human rights in some strata of Pakistani society. These forced marriages are acts of violence against women which are never reported because the women keep silence considering it part of their culture or religious obligation. Many researchers believe that most of the violations of human rights against women take place within the privacy of home environment (Okin 33-36, Peters and Wolper 2, Friedman 20, and Charlesworth 72). Okin's critique of modern human rights concepts points to this problem: "discrimination on the grounds of sex is frequently justified as being in accordance with many of the cultures—including religious aspects of these cultures—practiced in the world today" (33). She considers home to be "a woman's most dangerous environment" because the international human rights legislations do not interfere into the private life of a family. She believes that:

⁹ *Translation:* Look Hajra! Never fight with destiny. Woman's whole life depends on [her] fate. Look at me! I was thirteen when I came [here] after marriage. [I] haven't received a single penny of my husband's earning even for a single day. The owner of this house has not given me the slightest amount of love even for a single day. But, [my] princess! I never ever complained about my fate.

If a husband pays a bride price for his wife or marries her without her adult consent; if he confines her to their home, forbids her to work for pay, or appropriates her wages; if he beats her for disobedience or mishap; these manifestations of slavery would not be recognized as violations of human rights in many parts of the world. (35)

In the second part of the story Hajra suffers from a heart-breaking shock when she comes to know that she has been married to a mad man who only occasionally comes to his senses; but Hajra says nothing, her silence grows even deeper and graver than ever. Recalling the words of her mother, she thinks: “Yay aaghaz tha Main-hole main girnay ka aaghaz Aik neem-dewanay shohar kay saath azdawaji zindagi ka aaghaz.”¹⁰(164)

Violence and Silence: Phase-III

A fulfilling physical relationship with Guddu was out of question. This situation provided a chance to her father-in-law to seduce her. The third part of the story contains the details of this seduction. He wept so bitterly in front of Hajra in order to beg her for a grandson that Hajra gave in and let him have her for that purpose, since he had told her that Guddu would never be able to impregnate her. When in the end of this part her mother-in-law sees her coming down from the roof in the middle of the night, she poses the same questions that were posed by her mother. She had nothing but silence with her. She could not tell her mother-in-law how her father-in-law took advantage of her by exploiting her emotionally. After hearing the abusive and threatening words of her mother-in-law she simply left the place and came back to her old house: *main apnay ghar chali aai—chup chaap.*¹¹

Violence and Silence: Phase-IV

This was, however, not the end of her sufferings. In the fourth part of the story, she arrives at her old home while she was pregnant, penniless and helpless. Here again a man came forward to help her in order to seduce her and to take advantage of her vulnerability. Her landlord, Sheikh *sahib* seduced her into his embrace and she spent twenty-two years under his seductive protection. This time she was caught by her own son while she was coming down from the first floor at night. Facing her son’s questions was most humiliating for her, yet, for the third time, she decides to remain silent. She could not tell her son that “*Beton ko palney main maaon ko kya kuch kar guzarna parta hay.*”¹²(171). Seeing the tears in her son’s eyes, she decides to break her silence for the first time and tells him: “*Maira kisi say kabhi koi nata naheen raha beta—mera kisi say*

¹⁰ *Translation:* This was the beginning, of falling down into a mail-hole. Beginning of living life with a semi-deranged husband.

¹¹ *Translation:* I came back to my [old] home—silently

¹² *Translation:* What price mothers have to pay to raise their sons

*kabhi bhi koi nata naheen raha—kisi say bhi naheen—kisi say bhi naheen—main is kabil na thee k koi mujh say rishta jorta—*¹³ (172).

These words further intensify the nature of depravity Hajra went through, all her life. She established relationship with three different men, yet none of these relationships was truly deep relation. Qadeer, husband of a beautiful wife and father of many children, seduced her, gave gifts to her for this service, and left her; Guddu's relationship with her was also humiliating and greatly disturbing for her; and in the end, Sheikh sahib, whose personality is not revealed by the author in detail, was once again a seducer, he took advantage of a helpless pregnant woman in order to satisfy his lust.

Conclusion

Anter Howat Udasi portrays the realistic character of a helpless subaltern rural-woman. The most tragic part of her story is that whatever sufferings, humiliations, and violence Hajra faced in her life remained in dark and silence. The violence she faces in her life always follows silence because, on one hand, she is made to accept the patriarchal order of the society; while on the other hand, she is well aware that even if she expresses her thoughts, considering her a subaltern outcast, nobody will bother to understand her. Thus, her inability to speak and freely express her feelings and ideas at the wake of the verbal, physical or spiritual violence is caused by the "systematic silencing" of the culture and society she lives in. Hajra's plight throws considerable light on the plight of women in the South Asian societies where women generally live under similar conditions and have not say in the society and the male dominating social norms are so deeply internalized by these women that even when they are given a chance to speak they cannot do so and consider it moral to remain silent.

¹³ *Translation:* I never ever had any relationship with anyone, my son—I never ever had any relationship with anybody—not with anybody—not with anybody—I was not worth it.

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IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN OF RURAL AREAS

ABSTRACT

Women from rural areas are coming out of their homes after attaining higher education with an intention to get their rights and status in society and in family as well as to achieve economic independence. The research conducted in two villages of Tehsil Gujar Khan was aimed at finding the impact of higher education on the economic status of the women of rural areas. The objectives were to find out the importance of women's education, to identify the role of education in improving the economic status of women in rural areas and to explore the present condition of rural women regarding higher education and employment. The population of the study consisted of the highly educated women of all the villages of Tehsil Gujar Khan. Hundred working women having bachelors degree or above were taken as the sample. Instrument used for data collection was self constructed questionnaire having thirty six closed ended and two open ended questions. The result indicated that higher education has positive effects on the economic status of highly educated rural women. They have become confident, economically independent and have become more competent. Now they are socially recognized and are enjoying more respect and honor from their families and society. In order to boost the educational level of women in rural areas girls colleges should be opened in the near by areas so that parents can send their daughters to attain higher education without any hesitation and after the completion of higher education women should be provided with levelheaded employment opportunities according to their qualification and capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

The development of a nation is deeply related to the education. In fact, they both are related to each other. It is realized everywhere that education is important for the development of country. Education provides knowledge, skills, and competencies to an individual. It is a tool for the development of human beings. All over the world education is considered as an agent of change and as an indicator of the socio-economic status. Isani and Virk, (2003) argued that the basic aim of higher education is to meet the educational and socio-cultural needs of a country.

Education serves as a change agent role in the field of life whereas higher education takes up leadership role in every sphere of life. Women consist of half of the population of Pakistan; they need equal opportunities of higher education. In spite of the fact that girls'

enrollment is increasing in higher education but for those who belongs to the rural areas equal chances are not available. But, like women of other developing countries, Pakistani women are now becoming aware of their rights and are coming towards education as it is their fundamental right and through education they can get better jobs which raises their economic status and make them more respectable in their family and society Pakistani women are also becoming strong both socially and economically as today's woman has the power of education in her hand and she is serving the society her family and herself in a better way. Now they are getting reasonable jobs on the basis of their education, especially the higher education, and are becoming more respectful in the society.

Women especially of the rural areas are considered as the oppressed part of the society. Education opens the door to opportunity and choice for women. It is the main source to overcome oppressive customs and traditions that have made girls and women second class citizens in their families and societies. Education is a key towards the women empowerment. It is a principle mean to empower women and to them realize their potentials and capabilities. Higher education enhances a woman's self-worth, confidence and sense of power. It also increases her income- earning potential and contributes to overall national development.

Education increases manpower for different levels of economy. It empowers the poor people to become independent to take part in national development process. According to Pathak (2003) it works as an instrument for ensuring equity and social justice and in the development of an economically prosperous society. Gould, (1993) illustrates that education has a role to play. It is seen by governments and individuals as a key vehicle to increase national and individual income and bring economic growth.

Women Education

The role of education has been emphasized in the movements to improve the status women all over the world. These movements were started to empower women and to make them realize their importance in male dominant society. Women were being suppressed by men. Education was the best way to give them empowerment so that they could be aware of their rights and through education only they could get jobs as well Kumar (2006). Educating women is the key to reducing poverty. Mohaptra, (1998) stated that poverty and illiteracy go together everywhere in the world, both are closely linked and are part of the complex system of inequity and deprivation.

Schech & Alwy, (2004) stated that

“Lack of education frequently relegates women to lower poverty levels and contributes to their economic dependence on men”

A World Bank study of 200 countries showed that nations that had invested heavily in female education benefited through higher economic productivity. As Kumar, (2006) stated educated women plays a more productive role both at home and at workplace.

Higher Education and Economic Growth

Higher education can lead to economic growth through both private and public channels. The private benefits for individuals are well established, and include better employment prospects, higher salaries, and a greater ability to save and invest. These benefits may result in better health and improved quality of life, thus setting off a virtuous spiral in which life expectancy improvements enable individuals to work more productively over a longer time further boosting lifetime earnings (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2005)

A study in Taiwan showed that higher education played a strong role in the country's economic growth.¹¹ It found that a 1 per cent rise in higher education stock (as defined by those who had completed higher education, including junior college, college, university, or graduate school) led to a 0.35 per cent rise in industrial output, and that a 1 per cent increase in the number of graduates from engineering or natural sciences led to a 0.15 per cent increase in agricultural output. (Lin T.C, 2004)

Wolff and Gittleman (1995) showed that higher education enrollment rates are correlated with labor productivity growth. The number of scientists and engineers per capita is also associated with economic growth.

Higher Education and Women

Higher education of individuals offers an opportunity to empower them. It is responsible for high level manpower that is the need of a country. The objectives of higher are closely related to spiritual and material needs of society (UNDP, 2004). Licuanan (2004) in the article *The Challenge of Women's Higher Education in Asia* stated:

“Higher education for women leads to substantial economic returns achieved by raising productivity and the income levels of families.”

Women Status and Education

Since the beginning of mankind women were not advantaged socially, politically, and economically they were not given priority for getting higher education and earning goods. They were deprived of basic economic and social rights. Education has raised the status of women both socially and economically. To enhance equal opportunity and status for women, illiteracy has created great hurdle. Women were fixed in a fierce circle imposed by the patriarchic society. The education of women largely hindered by their low status, and in turn, the lack of education constricted their position and status. Over the years, the female literacy rate has improved noticeably, the level in the early 1990s fell far short of the male level (Lewis, 1991). As Qasmi, (2001) states that, it is proved and accepted worldwide that education, especially among women play an important role. In all ages to come, education will always remain a symbol of status it helps women raise their productivity and bring more income in to the family.

Rahim, (1999) argued that the process of women empowerment deals with how to increase capacity of women and what they need to become empowered. Women are the main caretaker in the families and also contribute to the household, their works are

related to the food preparation, financial management, health care of family members, social participation in decision making and greater access to resources etc. Empowerment also means having choices and women's ability to make choices. Equal participation of women in the decision-making leads to their empowerment. Education is the biggest indicator of women empowerment which boosts women's ability.

Impact of Education on Rural Women

In education the participation of rural women is inadequate in most of the developing countries. They are denied of their right to get education. They are not provided with the opportunities and facilities of education As Kalam, & Rajan, (1998) viewed that "Access to higher education, especially for women, is extremely limited in rural India. Cultural, economic and social factors, as well as lack of educational facilities, have kept women behind men literally and figuratively"

When a rural woman is educated she becomes able to recognize what her rights are and how to protect these rights. Education enables her to contribute in the development of her family in a much better way than other women who are not educated. When an educated woman works with in the home or outside home she is able to show her potentials and capabilities in an excellent way. With in her home she can show better managerial skills she can take decisions according to the circumstances, she can manage her home well. When she works outside her home she is better aware of her dues and can perform her duties as required by her job. Where as an uneducated women is always suppressed towards other. So education can empower the rural women and make them able to stand for their rights.

Economic Development of Women through Education

The economic development of any nation depends on the effective and proper utilization of all her resources, both human and material. Material resources are useless without men and women able to employ themselves therefore the first priority should be the adequate development of human resources. Education is said to be the key stone to development, as it provides the knowledge and training in various skills that development requires. This education is given at various level: primary, secondary, or higher education. The production of high-level manpower through higher education should ensure trained and trained and responsible leadership for development efforts. Higher education therefore can be said to provide the main thrust in development. (Thompson, Foger and Dannel, 1994).

Education increases the productivity of labor market and enhances income for all. However, educating women has valuable benefits on social welfare which cannot always measured by the market. Rising level of women's education makes them more productive in their homes which in result bring improvement in family's health and upbringing of the children. Women's education offers a variety of social benefits; which start from the fostering economic growth to extending the average life expectancy in the population and continues towards improving the

functioning of political processes (King & Hill, 1995). Increase in their education not only leads toward the increased labor force participation but also in their earnings. Educated women's greater participation in labor market work and their higher earnings are thought to be good for their own status within the household, and are good for their children because it appears that a greater proportion of women's income than men's is spent on child goods (Kingdon, 1997).

Statement of the problem

The study was aimed to examine the impact of higher education on the economic status of women of rural areas.

Objectives

In particular the objectives of the study were to explore:

- the importance of the women's education in social and economic perspective.
- the role of education in improving the economic status of women in rural areas.
- the present condition of rural women regarding higher education and employment.

Higher Education

Higher education defined as the women having bachelors, Masters or other professional degrees which are equivalent to bachelors and above.

Economic Status

The economic status is defined as status determined by what percentile a person fall into with regard to personal income or wealth. The economic status of the person is based on his income, education level, occupation, and the community's perception of the person.

Significance of the Study

The study highlights the importance of the higher education of women. It also highlights the role of higher education in raising the economic status of the women of the rural areas. Higher education has brought changes in the lives of women specially those of the women of the rural areas. The educational level of women is significant because it has direct influence upon the chances of employment. The number of employed women in a country's labour force directly affects the national income and the total income of a family. It is important to know how higher education has brought economic changes in the lives of these women in order to persuade other women from rural background to get higher education.

Population and Sample

All the working women having Bachelors or Masters degree or any other professional degree equivalent to these, of all the villages of Tehsil Gujar Khan were the population of the study. The sample of the study was hundred educated women belonging to the rural areas and who were working at any grade level. Purposive convenient sampling technique was used and the help was taken from the persons belonging to those villages and who were known to the researcher. Another factor for selecting convenient sampling was the availability and willingness of the sample. The majority of the sample was related to the teaching profession some were working in different offices and banks.

Study Design

The descriptive study was designed to assess the economic status of highly educated rural women. The study was conducted to explore the impact of higher education on the economic status of women of rural areas. The study was aimed to identify the indicators of economic status like job satisfaction, social recognition, confidence and decision making, competencies and professional autonomy, income benefits and way of living style and women empowerment. Research was quantitative and qualitative in nature because the result was interpreted by taking percentages and through discussion.

Instrument and Data Collection

The instrument of the study consisted of a self constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of thirty six close ended and two open ended questions for data collection from women regarding the economic changes brought by the education in their lives.

The questionnaire was divided in to three parts. The first part had seven categories related to the indicators of economic status (Job Satisfaction, social recognition, confidence and decision making power, independency and responsibility competencies and professional autonomy, income benefits & living styles, and women empowerment). The categories contained five point scales having the options of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The second part of the questionnaire contained two open ended question in which the respondents had to provide their own point of views regarding the economic changes that higher education has brought in their lives, and the role of the higher education in the attainment of a reasonable job. The third and the last part of the questionnaire consisted of three close ended questions having different options and the respondents had to mark the option of their choice.

RESULTS

Table 1: Job Satisfaction

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
My designation is according to my qualification	16%	52%	7%	20%	5%
I am satisfied with my present job status.	15%	48%	9%	23%	5%
Highly educated women have equal chance of promotion in their jobs.	17%	39%	5%	34%	5%
Educated women have opportunities to show their abilities and potentials.	34%	29%	11%	25%	1%
Average%	20.5	42	8	25.5	4

Through the responses of the above mentioned table it is analyzed that the majority of the working women are satisfied with their present job status. This section contained four statements. The table2 shows that out of 100 respondents 20.5% strongly agreed with the statement given in the section, 42% agreed, 8% were undecided, 25.5 % disagreed where as 4% strongly disagreed with the statements given in the section. When the women from rural areas get higher education they tend to get reasonable jobs according to their qualifications. Through the responses of the above mentioned table it is analyzed that the majority of the working women are satisfied with their present job status.

Table 2: Social Recognition

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
My family gives importance to my suggestions and opinions.	34%	53%	3%	9%	1%
Higher education empowered women to have freedom of choice and expression of their recognition in society.	36%	49%	6%	8%	1%
Educated women are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas on national issues.	23%	47%	10%	18%	2%
Parents spent equal money on the education of their daughters and sons.	19%	40%	7%	29%	5%
Investment in women education has many positive effects on the well being of the family and economic development.	60%	32%	4%	4%	0%
Highly educated women have enough	6%	31%	5%	4	18%

opportunities for employment.	0 %
Average%	29.6 42 5.8 18 4.6

The table 2 shows that out of 100 respondents 29.6% strongly agreed with the statements and 42% agreed , 5.8 were undecided where as the percentage of disagree is 18% and 4.6% strongly disagreed with the statements given in the category. So the overall results given in the table 3 shows that women with higher education are socially recognized not only within their families but in society also.

Table 3: Confidence and Decision Making

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SD A
My education has given me confidence and satisfaction.	63 %	36 %	1%	0%	0%
Women have authority to decide about their education.	35 %	39 %	8%	14%	4%
Women are free to choose their profession according to their interest.	13 %	35 %	9%	36%	7%
Education enables women to hold any public office including the highest office, on merit and without discrimination.	30 %	41 %	2%	20%	7%
I feel myself confident to make economic decisions independently.	33 %	53 %	4%	9%	1%
Average%	34.8	40.8	4.8	15.8	3.8

Table 3 shows that women had gained confidence and decision making power as the overall percentage of strongly agree is 34.8, agree is 40.8, undecided is 4.8 and disagree and strongly disagree is 15.8 and 3.8 respectively. So most of the women had gained confidence through their education and they could take decisions according to their interests.

Table 4: Independency and Responsibility

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
Girls should get higher education.	82%	17%	0%	0%	1%
Higher education enables the women to lead independent economic life	52%	34%	3%	9%	2%
Highly educated women can do positive and constructive contribution outside home, if needed.	63%	35%	2%	0%	0%
Women do have full control on their earnings.	18%	57%	0%	16%	9%
Highly educated women enjoy the right of independent ownership in property after marriage.	13%	21%	21%	34%	11%
Average%	45.6	32.8	5.2	11.8	4.6

Table 4 shows that out of 100 respondents 45.6% strongly agree with the statements, 32.8% agreed, 5.2% were undecided 11.8% disagreed with the statements and the percentage of strongly disagree was 4.6%. The overall results showed that education had given sense of responsibility and had made women independent

Table 5: Competencies and Professional Autonomy

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
There is quota for highly educated girls in the organization.	17%	32%	15%	35%	2%
I would like to enhance my qualification to improve my present status.	54%	38%	2%	5%	1%
My education has enhanced my managerial skills.	41%	57%	2%	0%	0%
I can manage my financial resources according to the circumstances.	38%	51%	7%	4%	0%
My family supported me in getting higher education	70%	23%	0%	7%	0%
Average%	44	40.2	5.2	10	0.6

Table 5 shows that out of 100 respondents 44% strongly agreed, 40.2% agreed, 5.2% were undecided, 10% disagree and 0.6% strongly disagreed with the statements given in this category.

Table 6: Income benefits and way of living styles

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
My earning is sufficient to maintain me at acceptable level.	32%	43%	8%	8%	9%
Higher education has brought changes in my life	55%	44%	0%	0%	1%
My job has brought positive changes in my living conditions.	36%	56%	3%	5%	0%
Women status is improving with the passage of time.	52%	43%	0%	1%	4%
Most of the earnings of women are spent n household need and requirements.	44%	31%	11%	11%	3%
Average%	43.8	43.4	4.4	5	3.4

The results shown in the table 6 represent that women of rural areas took benefits from their income that had changed their living styles. Out of 100 respondents 43.8% strongly agreed with the statements, 43.4% agreed 4.4% were undecided, 5% and 3.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statements respectively.

Table 7: Higher education and women empowerment

STATEMENTS	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
Low education level of women is the primary hurdle to attain empowerment.	48%	44%	0%	8%	0%
Economic empowerment of women is a key towards their emancipation in the country.	41%	51%	0%	8%	0%
Higher education awakens the pros and corns of the empowerment in women.	47%	50%	2%	1%	0%
Average%	45.3	48.3	0.7	5.7	0

This category was related to the higher education and women empowerment. The results show that 45.3% respondents strongly agreed with the statements, 48.3% agreed 0.7% were undecided and 5.7% disagreed with the statements given in the category. This shows higher education is the key towards women empowerment, and women from rural areas can be empowered on the basis of higher education.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Following are the findings of the study:

1. The first objective of the study was to find out the importance of the higher education in the lives of the rural women. The results shown in the table 2, 3 & 7 of the questionnaire revealed the importance of higher education in the life of rural women.
2. Another objective of the study was to explore the role of higher education in improving the economic status of women in rural areas. The table 4& 6 meet with this objective, as, through this the researcher came to know that the high percentages of agree and strongly agree showed that higher education had made women economically independent as women become able to perform economic contributions effectively outside home if needed which helped in raising the status of rural women and their families. Higher education provides women sense of independency and they have full control on their earnings.
3. The third objective of the study was to explore the employment conditions of highly educated rural women. The results shown in Table 1 & 5 of the questionnaire revealed that majority of rural working women have jobs according to their qualification and that they had opportunities to show their abilities and chances of promotion. The same idea is supported by Assaad and El-Hamidi, (2001) that education enables the women to get jobs according to their qualification and higher education helps women in the attainment of good jobs and enables them to fulfill the requirements of the job.

In respond to the questions in which women were asked to share their ideas about the economic changes that higher education had brought in their lives, majority of them argued that their education has enabled them to get a job through which they could fulfill their necessities independently and to manage their financial resources in a better way. Higher education helped them to perform their duties within the home and outside the home in an effective way. This is supported by the argument of Kumar, (2006) who stated that today's women are highly independent persons who have the sense of performing their domestic and public work more efficiently. Women responded that their education had enabled them to help their children in their studies. Some of them responded that they were helping their husbands in the construction of their new houses. Some of them were supporting their families and they said that it had raised their worth within the family, now they were recognized as the worthy members of the family. Almost all the respondents presented their view that education is the main instrument in the attainment of the reasonable job. They said that when a woman gets education she became aware of the opportunities available to her and became able to choose the best for her. The same idea is supported by Shireen (1998) that only educated women are aware of the services available to them and they can make decisions regarding the use of these services and they are more likely to use these services in an appropriate way. Some of the

respondents argued that though education is also important but in our country one should have strong reference in order to get a reasonable job.

Overall by analyzing the whole responses it has become clear that now the rural inhabitants have also recognized the importance of higher education of their women. Women from rural areas are attaining higher education in spite of the fact that for that they have to travel the whole day. Those women who have obtained higher education are working outside their houses to support their families. Gone are the days when the people of rural areas considered it to be insulting to send their women to work in offices. Now the women of rural areas are working with men and are competing with urban women and men confidently.

Conclusion

Women from rural areas are working in every walk of life. Their education has given them self-belief and has made them able to interact with outside world more confidently and boldly. Higher education has empowered women now they are no more subjugated part of the society. The main purpose of the working women is to run house economy and to support their families in order to get more respect and better position in the family. The study concludes that now in the rural areas the attitude of parents towards female higher education is changing with the passage of time but still enrollment of girls in higher education from rural areas of Pakistan is not pleasurable. Economic development of a family, society and country is not possible without the participation of women whether they are from rural or urban areas.

The study underlined the fact how higher education improves the status of the women in the society. Women after obtaining education get reasonable jobs which give them confidence, decision making power, better awareness of their rights & responsibility and above all income benefits through which they can win regarded social status.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study following recommendations are made:

- At government level steps should be taken to provide quality higher education to these women in nearby areas so that parents can send their daughter to get higher education without any hesitation.
- Mass media campaigns should be further strengthened to create awareness about the significance of women education and importance of their role in the economic development of a country. In order to create awareness among the people of far flung` areas who do not have access to electronic media, teams should be send to create awareness about the benefits of the women education.
- In order to get maximum economic benefits from women of rural areas, who are highly educated, employment opportunities should be provided in their vicinity so

that they can easily access these jobs and play their role in the economic development of their family, society and country.

- Favorable social environment should be created to encourage the women to obtain higher education and participate in the economic activities.
- The progress of any country is accompanied by the full participation of women folk in the development process. Participation of the women, whether rural or urban, is necessary for the economic development of any country. Women should play their role in the development of the family, society and country and their contributions should be recognized and appreciated.
- Further research is needed to explore the difference in the socio-economic status of rural and urban women.

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EFFECTS OF HANDEDNESS AND GENDER ON CREATIVITY OF STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at exploring the effect of handedness on creativity level of students. Furthermore, this study also intended to find out gender differences in creativity level of students. The sample of this study comprised of 160 students with equal number of left and right handers ($n = 80$). Each category of handedness included 40 girls and 40 boys. The participants of the study were students of 8th to 10th grades who were purposively selected from various English Medium Schools of Sargodha city. Edinburgh Handedness Questionnaire (Oldfield, 1971) was used to determine the handedness of students. The Abbreviated Version of Wallach Kogan Creativity Test (Riaz, 1978) was administered to measure the creativity level of left and right handed students. Results of this study indicated that left handed students were significantly more creative than their right handed counterparts. Moreover, girls were also found to be significantly more creative than the boys. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future studies have also been discussed.

Key Words: Creativity, handedness, gender

INTRODUCTION

Handedness is the hand preference patterns that are regarded as an index of individual differences in the cognitive performance (Raj, 2003). Handedness is an attribute defined by unequal distribution of fine motor skills between the left and right hands. According to Hardyck and Petrinovich (1977), an individual who is more dexterous with the right hand is called right handed, and one who is more skilled with the left is said to be left-handed. A minority of people is equally skilled with both hands, this is termed as ambidextrous. Children who are ambidextrous use either hand with the same ease (Bryner, 2010).

Creativity is the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others (Franken, 1998). Cropley (1999) listed the universal factor for creativity to be novelty. Novelty requires originality and newness.

Handedness has been assumed to have some relationship with the creativity (Stewart & Clayson, 1980) as left handers tend to be higher on intellectual (Ghayas & Adil, 2007) and creative abilities. According to Stewart and Clayson (1980), left-handed individuals

may have a slight advantage with spatial-holistic tasks and it makes them more creative individual especially in nonlinguistic pursuits.

Recent research also supports a relationship between creativity and handedness. Norton (2000), for instance, has gathered new evidence on the link between left handedness and intellectual creativity. He suggested that true left handers tend to be more intelligent and eloquent than right handers, and better at solving problems. The recent and perhaps the most sophisticated evidence for the relationship between creativity and handedness stems from neurological research which reveals that creativity is linked with the brain activity. Evidence from brain images, drug studies and lesion analysis has revealed that creativity is a result of interaction between frontal lobe, the temporal lobes, and dopamine in the limbic system (Flaherty, 2005). The right hemisphere has been found to be more involved in creativity as it appears to be more active in novel problem solving and generating new ideas as compared to the left hemisphere (Atherton & Zhuang, 2003). In the same vein, Gailcalled (2003) found that brain of left-handers can be more flexible in its distribution of functions, allowing one function to be proximal to different functions than they would be in a right hander's brain. Keeping in view the brain lateralization, the present study is legitimate in hypothesizing that the left handers would be more creative than the right handers.

As far as the role of gender in creativity is concerned, pertinent literature offers empirical evidence for the gender differences in creativity but the results have been contradictory. Kershner and Ledger (1985), for example, reported that girls have more creative abilities as compared to boys. Raina (1970) observed that girls scored higher than boys on all the dimensions of creativity except originality, but these differences were not significant. Contrary to that, Kelly (1965) conducted a study on high school students and revealed that boy scored higher than girls on non-verbal creativity measures. Straus and Straus (1968) reported that boys perform better than girls on measures of creativity in both Indian and American culture, while sex differences were more prominent in India.

According to Vernon (1989) social-environmental influences couldn't be the only causes of different patterns of creative achievement by men and women and that genetic factor may also play a role. Simonton (1994) countered that active discrimination against women had often made it difficult or impossible for women to have access to the resources necessary for achievement in some fields. Thus, a woman might more easily succeed in a field like writing, where the necessary resources are few, than in musical composition or science, where lack of access to an orchestra or a well equipped laboratory might make it far less likely that a woman could participate. Such differences in access to resources, together with societal views toward success by women and men in a given place at a given time, might account for the unequal ratios of men and women who have had creative success in different fields. This line of reasoning has empirically been supported as Kaufman and Bear (2005) studied more than 2,400 men and women, each of whom rated their own creativity in 56 different areas. Men self-reported higher levels of creativity in such areas as mechanical abilities, physics, and sports strategy (and many other stereotypically boys activities), and women self-reported higher levels of

creativity in such domains as interacting/communicating with children, teaching, and interior design/decorating (and many other stereotypically girls interests). In lieu with the inconclusive results pertaining to gender differences in creativity, as evident in the aforementioned literature, the present study hypothesized that girls would be more creative as compared to the boys.

METHOD

Objectives and Hypotheses

The primary objective of the present study was to find out the relationship between handedness and creativity among students. In this regard, the study hypothesized that left-handed students would be more creative as compared to their right-handed counterparts. The second objective of this study was to discern gender differences in creativity of students. This study tested the hypothesis that girls would be more creative as compared to boys to achieve the second objective.

Sample

A convenient sample of 160 students ($N = 160$) with an equal number of left handed and right handed students ($n = 80$) was drawn from various private sector English medium schools of Sargodha city. The age range of the sample was 13 to 16 years ($M = 14.5$, $SD = 16.1$) and it included both the genders in equal proportion (40 students of each gender in each category of handedness). The educational level of the sample ranged from middle to matriculation. The detailed breakdown of the sample in terms of demographics is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants (N = 160)

Gender	Education	Handedness	
		Left-handed	Right-handed
Boys	8 th Grade	15	13
	9 th Grade	14	18
	10 th Grade	11	9
Girls	8 th Grade	14	12
	9 th Grade	19	17
	10 th Grade	7	11

Instruments

Edinburgh Handedness Inventory (Oldfield, 1971) was administered to identify the left and right handers. It consists of 10 items and the answers are given in the 2 columns with reference to the preference of the hand and the use of the other hand. The score below -40 indicates left handedness. The score between -40 and +40 indicates the ambidextrous. The score above +40 present the right handedness. The internal consistency (coefficient

alpha) of Edinburgh Handedness Inventory alpha was .93 and the test-retest reliability of the questionnaires is .80 (Stephen, 1991).

The Abbreviated Version of Wallach-Kogan (1965) test of creativity (AVWKCT) (Riaz, 1978) was used to measure creativity. The test consists of twelve items, having three categories, instances, alternative uses and line and pattern meaning. First two categories were verbal and last four items were having drawing on the cards. There are two measures of creativity in this test (Riaz, 1978). The scale has been scored on two dimensions including fluency and uniqueness. All the items were verbal. The items are open ended and respondents are at liberty to express their imagination without any restriction. The inter scorer reliability of test of creativity is calculated and a standardized scoring system is adapted. All the responses on item were calculated as fluency of the participant and unique answers at each question was analyzed as uniqueness of that participant. The total creativity score of the participant was obtained by summing his/her fluency and uniqueness scores.

Procedure

The participants of the study were personally contacted in their respective schools after getting official permission from the principals. The principals were assured of the confidentiality of the information that their students were going to provide as these information were only used for the research purpose. All the students were briefed about the instructions and objectives of the study and their informed consent was ensured. The booklets containing the aforementioned instruments were handed over to the students along with oral as well as written instructions in individual settings. The average time for the scales administration was 34 minutes with a standard deviation of 6.87 minutes. All the responses were recorded on the sheets of paper. At the end, the participants were apprized for their cooperation and support in the study.

Results and Discussion

The present study was intended to find out the effect of handedness and gender on the creativity level of the students. In order to determine the differences in the creativity level of the participants, t-test was applied on the scores of left and right-handed students.

The value of t indicates significant differences in the creativity level of left and right handers $\{t(158) = 4.45, p < .01\}$ providing an empirical support for the hypothesis of the present study that left handers would be significantly more creative than the right handers (see Table 2).

Table 2*Effect of Handedness on Creativity in Students (N = 160)*

Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Left Handers	80	83.00	41.813	4.45	.00
Right Handers	80	51.50	27.610		

df = 158

These results are supported by the previous research which compared left and right handed participants on four subtests of the Torrance Creativity Test. At each age level, left handed students showed higher creativity scores than right handed students. The greatest differences were found on the Elaboration subtest (Stewart & Clayson, 1980).

An indirect support for the hypothesized relationship between creativity and handedness can be presented in terms of the positive relationship between intelligence and creativity. Sternberg (2001) argued that intelligence is directly related to creativity as intelligence helps to create and generate new ideas. Rawat and Agarwal (1977) found a significant relationship between creativity and intelligence. They found high achievers on the tests of intelligence scored high on test of creativity also. Handedness appeared to be an important factor in intelligence as well. Ghayas and Adil (2007), for instance, found that left handers were significantly more intelligent as compared to right handers. In the same vein, Searleman (1998) conducted a study on memory, vocabulary and problem solving. Results of his study revealed that people who were true left-handers (who did everything on their left side) scored one-third more highly on vocabulary tests and twice as well on problem-solving tasks. The research also found that left handed people are intellectually more gifted with IQs over 140. The right handed students made more errors than did the left handed students (Peterson & Lansky, 1977). Thus it can be deduced that intelligence might have mediated the relationship between creativity and handedness.

Scores of the students on the Abbreviated Version of Wallach-Kogan creativity test was analyzed in terms of gender. t-test was used to analyze the difference of creativity level between boys and girls. Value of t indicates that there is significant difference in creativity level of the boys and girls { $t(158) = 2.191$, * $p < .05$ }. Hence, the second hypothesis of the present study was also supported as girls were significantly more creative as compared to the boys (see Table 3).

Table 3*Gender Differences in Creativity of Students (N = 160)*

Groups	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Girls	80	75.56	46.18	2.19	.03
Boys	80	58.94	27.25		

df = 158

This finding is in tune with the previous research as Kershner and Ledger (1985) reported that girls have more creative abilities than boys. They suggested that girls

scored higher than boys consistently across the 7 creativity subscales. Similarly, Stephen, Karnes and Whorton (2001) found that girls obtained higher scores than boys across all subtests with significant differences in Originality and Creative Index scores.

The finding can be explained in terms of neurological differences across the two genders. The number of brain cells which connect the right and left side of brain is four times higher in women as compared to men. Men rely easily and more heavily on their left brain to solve one problem one step at a time. Women, on the other hand, have more efficient access to both sides of their brain and therefore they can focus on more than one problem at one time and frequently prefer to solve problems through multiple activities at a time (Conner, 1999). Since the present research is in consonance with the pertinent literature has found that right hemisphere is more involved in creativity, men's lower score on creativity was the expected outcome given their more reliance on left hemisphere and sequential approach to problem solving.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study has revealed a significant positive relationship between left handedness and creativity which appears to be counter intuitive given our cultural beliefs about the supremacy of right handedness and the value and efforts we put in teaching our children to be right handers. However, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow us to make any causal inferences about the effect of handedness and creativity. The reliance on self-report, cross-sectional, perceptual measures constitutes another limitation of the present study. Self-report measures pose a threat of inflating the observed relationships spuriously on account of common method variance as an alternative explanation for the findings. The study also entails certain limitations in terms of its sample as it was limited to students of middle to secondary classes from English medium private sector schools. Consequently, the sample may not be a true representative of its corresponding population.

The future research should investigate the role of intelligence as mediator of the relationship between creativity and handedness. Moreover, longitudinal designs should be employed to allow the causal interpretation of the hypothesized relationships. Neurological research can go a long way in disentangling the intricacies of relationship between handedness and creativity by providing not only the most conclusive evidence for the relationship of handedness and creativity but also the most plausible explanation for this relationship.

Conclusion

The present study corroborates the relative contribution of gender and handedness in relation to creativity suggesting the neurological differences in terms of brain lateralization and synoptic differences across the genders. The insight provided by the present study offers certain implications for our society which is primarily right handed dominated and where the creative endeavors of women are mostly undermined. A growing number of researchers have called for changes in the paradigm of how we view

women and creativity, and the need for changes in the society that could facilitate the development of women. Women have made and continue to make, many creative contribution that are different from the creative accomplishments made by men, yet men's creative accomplishments seemed to be valued by the society. The creative accomplishments of women are regarded by them as more modest, and do not reflect the types of creative productivity that results in awards, prizes, books, articles, art, patents, professional stature and financial gain (Reis, 1987; 1995; 1996; 1998). Nevertheless, the creativity of women is indispensable for the overall growth and prosperity of society.

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Book Review:
Modernizing Women
Gender and Social Change
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Publisher Viva Books Private Limited
By:
Dr. Rukhsana Hassan

Modernizing women: Gender and Social Change by Valentine Moghadam is a book that deals with the issues of social change in the MENA Countries (Middle East and North Africa) and Afghanistan. It thoughtfully considers the political social and economic issues and their impact on the gender during the process of state building and economic development. The author has adeptly documented a decade of changes that have occurred in the strategies adopted by MENA countries for economic development, with corresponding political changes and changes in the family structure, in the wake of global process of political and economic development. The book is about social change in the Middle East, North Africa and Afghanistan, and its impact on women's position and legal status in those societies. The main argument of the author is based on the premise that women's lives in these societies are not only shaped by Islam and culture rather affected by various interrelated process of economic development, globalization, internal policies and international politics, like rise and fall of Taliban in Afghanistan and reform movements in Iran, to name a few.

Most of the publications on the process of social change have dealt with the issues related to modernization, revolutions and social movements but hardly ever touched upon the dynamics of gender in the midst of social change. Moghadam work is unique in the context, as she has skillfully linked the role and status of women and changes in the family structures within MENA countries to the effect of regional and global changes on local politics and development processes. Moghadam further expanded the argument of various scholars who have discussed the role of globalization and structural adjustment program on the pace of female labor force participation and their access to economic resources, and has linked the economic status of women in MENA countries with class location, state policies, development strategies and changes in world market system. In the book the author has skillfully made the comparison among and between the women of MENA and other underdeveloped countries. Women with in and across the societies are stratified on the basis of class, ethnicity, education, age as well as ideologically and politically.

Discussing the literature on status of women in Muslim societies she has pointed out the different opinions among scholars indicating that critics and advocates of Islam hold divergent views about the role of Islam in determining the status of women. The countries discussed in the book are predominantly Muslim; it is generally argued, in the literature related to social sciences, that social positions and legal status of women in Muslim countries is worse than any where else in the world. She further points out the fact that women's lack of civil and legal rights is related to their reproductive function and religious norms. Which are generally used to justify their non visibility in public space and consequently their confinement to the domestic sphere. The argument is based on the prevalence of high fertility/mortality rate as well as distinct gender disparity in literacy level, and low female labor force participation. All these factors are considered to be the main reason, for the low status of women in any society. The author is critical of the literature on the status of women in Muslim countries which categorize them as different being and in author's words ..."*different* often meaning *inferior* in legal status and right" (p 4).

In fact according to Moghadam attributing Muslim women status to "*presumed intrinsic properties of Islam*" is not only simplistic way of dealing with a very complex issue rather it is more like adopting a reductionist approach and ignoring other socio-economic and political factors which along with religious norm play a crucial role in determining the status of women in different societies. Gender asymmetry and status of women in the Muslim societies cannot be attributed just to Islam as there is a huge variation in the application of Islamic legal codes, as well as Islam is implemented and practiced differently across time and region. The author has made an attempt to refute the argument that religion is the main force behind the low status of women in Muslim societies. She is of the opinion that religious based law are not exclusive to Muslim societies of the Middle East, rather they are also present in the state of Israel and has stated that sexual division of labor in home and in the society is governed by Jewish Law (Halache) and norms which are discriminatory to women. She further extended her argument and stated that, the example of non-Muslim society like India and China where female feticide, gender disparities in delivery of health care and access to food has been well documented. She also documented that in 2002 the male/female sex ration in China and India was 94:100, respectively.

Apart from the variation in the implementation and interpretation of Islamic legal codes in the Muslim societies, the difference within and between these societies is also reflected in the class division, educational disparities, economic development and level of their integration into global economic system. The work of Moghadam is exceptional in the sense as she has successfully utilize the strategy of comparative analysis in order to understand the different and variable position and status of women in the Middle Eastern countries. Her analysis is based on the fact, which is well documented, that women around the world cannot be categorized as a homogenous group. She has discussed various socio-economic and political factors that have a profound effect on the status of

women across region and overtime. Discussing the issue of diversity the author has also emphasized the need to recognize the diversity within Middle East and among the women of the region. There is no second opinion about the diversity within Middle East, the region is diverse based on geography, history, level of economic development, access to resources, and the form of power structure. The power structure within the region ranges from theocratic monarchy (Saudi Arab) to secular republic (Turkey). Moghadam has used the term “neo-patriarchal states” as an umbrella term which encompasses a wide array of state types in which religion and state authority has a key role to play and where family, instead of individuals, is the building blocks of the community.

She presented an overview of the literature on the status of women in the light of what one scholar has specified as “misery research” or dignity research” in her words former focuses on oppressive aspects of Muslim women lives. While the latter seeks to show the strength of women’s position in their families and communities. In the opinion of secular feminist it is the prevalence of Islamic laws and norms that restrict women advancement and there is a consensus among them that Islam regards women as weak. On the other hand the proponents of ‘dignity research’ or Muslim feminists have based their argument on the concept of “complementarities of Sexes” in Islam. Their argument is specifically based on the content of Quran that is egalitarian and emancipator with respect to women.

The author in her analysis has competently integrated different structural determinants like sex /gender system, class, the state policies, and level of economic development to understand women status in a particular society and how these factors in turn have an affect on women’s status. Gender refers to asymmetrical power relations between the sexes, which is manifested not only in their unequal access to political power and economic resources but also in the educational institution, legal system and labor market. Author has explained, quite persuasively, the interconnection between the gender system, class, state policies and economic development. She has tried to demonstrate that ignoring these factors will not provide us with comprehensive understanding about the gender dynamics of social change.

The book covers topics that are important to discuss with respect to gender dimension of social change. It has tried to explore the causes, nature and direction of social change in the Middle East and Afghanistan with its corresponding effect on the status and position of women. State is a major player which, through its policies in the present era of globalization, not only affects women’s labor force participation, employment and their access to market but also their economic status. There may be unexpected changes with respect to status of women as a result of revolutions, political upheavals, and wars. The changes may be in the form of increase employment and educational opportunities for women or vice versa. The changes at the political front may also result in diverse range of strategies adopted by women of those societies to express their political ideologies. The chapter *Islamists Movements and women’s responses* discuss the issue of veiling as a symbol of response to changing socio-economic and political factors. In the wake of all these changes along with the process of globalization it will be overly simplistic to

assume that women in these societies are passive recipients of the effects of social change rather the author has documented that women are also the agents of change and have been actively involved in the movements of social change.

The credit goes to the authors that the book has applicability to a wider audience from a student of gender and social change to development practitioners and policy makers. Although the author has reiterated the fact over and over again that women in general and women of MENA countries in particular are not a homogenous category, yet her emphasis is mainly focused on urban middle class women, leaving aside a wide spectrum of rural and nomadic women who may have experienced all these changes in totally different manner.

Notes To Contributors

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

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