Punjabi Women in the Changing Socio-cultural Environment of Pakistan: 1977-2012

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Abstract

In contemporary world, the placement of women in the changing socio-cultural environment has become a point of discussion among various scholars, human right activists and media personals. This debate revolves around the impact of different dominant variables on women placement in variant societies.

Generally in Pakistan and particularly in Punjab, the mentioned intellectual debate about the women position in society from various angels has taken place. Through this research, we will examine the traditional socio-cultural placement of women in Punjab, keeping in view the centuries old patriarchal system supported by conservative interpretation of religion and gender bias customary practices prevalent in society, across the social classes and rural/urban division.

During this research, our investigation revolves around the impact of agents of change; education, political process, media and civil society organizations in reshaping women condition in Punjabi society. After a detailed study of available literature, including primary and secondary sources at various public and private libraries; various women right activists, scholars and lawyers are interviewed to reach at expert opinion on various aspects of the lives of Punjabi women. Apart from this, through a comprehensive questionnaire from aspirant female university students of Punjab, an attempt has been made to understand the challenges they face in different segments of their lives. I have derived a conclusion from the mentioned research method that the condition of women in Punjabi society has been unevenly transformed in a way that in some segments of life they are conditionally independent, while in other they face various challenges posed by the centuries old socio-cultural customs and practices.

To improve the women condition in Punjabi society, I suggest an effective curriculum at primary and secondary level, in which the boys and girls are portrayed as equal members in society. Secondly, a firm implementation of pro-women laws should be made possible to culminate the growing percentage of various crimes against female population. Thirdly, civil society and media need to be matured in their struggle against gender related injustices and biases, presenting practical solutions to the victims and state machinery. Fourth, women representation in national and provincial legislatures should be equal to men, corresponding to their percentage of population, so that the pro-women laws with a deep conviction and understanding are formulated.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The peripheral position of women remains a ubiquitous phenomenon, throughout the history of mankind, regardless that some religions provided an opportunity for the women to be an equal partner. Interestingly, the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia provided women, considerable rights if compared to the pre-democratic society of Athens, as they could own property, work in different sectors of economy and even could take part in public life.¹

This trend continued throughout the centuries. Conversely, Islam right from its advent granted better treatment for women, in all walks of life.² It was around 18th century that some attention was given to women rights in different societies. This development synchronized with the advent of colonial dispensation. Hence, such issues like women’s right got resonated in the colonies. Similarly, about European societies, it can be said that although they had liberal pretensions, however maintained their conservative stance on the question of women rights. For example, the women status before World War I (1914-18) and World War II (1939-45) was confined to domestic chores, where only few could manage to enter the job market and that was also under dire necessity. Before 1914, there were few countries like New Zealand, Australia, and several Scandinavian nations, which enfranchised their women, but it did not determine that women were fully involved in

¹James C. “Thompson, Women in the Ancient World: The Status, Role and Daily Life of Women in the Ancient Civilizations of Egypt, Rome, Athens, Israel and Babylonia,” Posted March 07, 2013, http://www.womenintheancientworld.com/. This comparison is further elaborated by a historian Rit Nosotro in his writing “Women in Ancient Greece and Egypt”, March 07, 2013 http://hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/comp/cw03women-egypt-greece.htm: “In the early civilization of Greece the society was based on a patriarchal society. Because of this women had very little freedom, unlike the Egyptians. The women were watched and held under the supervision of a male at all times, whether it was their father, brother, or husband. The few times that women were able to leave their home were to go to weddings, funerals, or other religious festivals, or to briefly visit female neighbors. Other than these times, the women stayed at home. Their main job and role in this early time was to run the house, the most respected job, and to bear children. Most homes, however, had slaves, so the women of the house would simply take care of the children and make clothes for the family”.  
²The Prophet (PBUH) in his last sermon on 632 A.C, stated, “O People it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you.”
political process. In Britain, the women got the right to vote in 1918, with some limitations, however in 1928 they were granted equal voting rights.

Women rights movements in America have gone through three phases. First phase started in 1840, which successfully achieved the voting rights for women in 1920 but the demand of equal rights continued and led to the formation of different women organizations like Planned Parenthood Federation of America and National Council of Negro Women. The second phase (1960-1980) is considered important in terms of rising socio-cultural issues of women, leading to the formation of National Organization for Women in 1966. This phase pressurized the government for some important legislation and side by side the federal judiciary gave significant decisions in this regard. One of the examples is the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, which abolished gender discrimination and granted the right of abortion to women. The third phase (1990-Present) is continuation of the previous two phases, in which women in large number enrolled into educational institutions and job market and also became successfully independent, gaining right of marriage and inheritance. From America and Europe, the women rights movement spread to other parts of the world. Still, it took several decades for various governments to introduce appropriate laws granting the rights of women in matters of property, marriage, employment and began to address various socio-political issues.³

Although the women of British India remained far behind their western counterparts, however, there were still few instances where they managed to make some space for themselves. For example, in the provincial elections of 1937, they attained the right to vote. The awareness of socio-economic and political rights of the Pakistani/Punjabi women was set in motion right from the days of Pakistan’s independence movement, since 1940. Their participation was endorsed and encouraged by the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions. As witnessed later, the women participation could not retain its momentum nor did its effectiveness and decay in the social status of women become a norm in the newly established state of Pakistan.

Consequently, the question of women having equal status in the society remained unresolved though effectively debated at least till 1980s, notwithstanding the Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO) of 1961.

While examining the struggle of women rights in British India, one factor should not be neglected that it arrived late in Pakistan, in comparison to European and American societies. The major reasons of this delay and marginal role of women were ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity, along with high percentage of illiteracy. This phenomenon becomes more complex when examined in terms of rural and urban settings. This intricacy in the emergence of women rights in Pakistan is further explained by Professor Amna Imam,

Unlike the West, where once none of the women had the right of inheritance, and where no woman could own property in her name, Pakistani society is a mosaic of rights and obligations. Some women have power, others do not. This explains, at least to some extent, the inception of strong sisterhood and feminism in the West and other homogeneous cultures, and the relative absence of the same unified force in Pakistan.4

However, in this respect, one universal factor should not be over-looked that globally the women demands for their rights differed according to the urgency and values of the respective societies. Later, as the global communication system improved and there was more awareness about other societies, the variations transformed into an accepted comprehensive and unified demand of equal rights.

The intentions and desires of the founding fathers regarding women status could not materialize because the Punjabi society of Pakistan overtly exhibits the patriarchal mindset and its culture continues to adhere a traditional outlook, which commonly discriminates against the women and deny them a rightful place in the society. Consequently, women’s participation in social, economic and political spheres has been curtailed and is heavily depended on the approval/disapproval of men, of the family, who continue to dominate the decision making processes of all natures, within the household.

According to a study by Hakim and Aziz, a male member of the family dominates the extended family and women in particular. The authors further state, “In Pakistan the extended family is the basic functional unit. Such a family might include the dominant male (usually but not always the eldest) and his wife or wives; his brothers and their wives; his married sons and nephews and their wives; his married sons, daughters, nephews and nieces and, on occasions, other more distant relative.”

This composition of Pakistani/Punjabi family adheres to a subservient role of woman, who is bound to perform her daily activities as per the wishes and commands of her male family members. Here, it is important to identify that this distinctive socio-cultural setting has a baggage of peculiar customs and traditions.

Pakistani and Punjabi society shares various features of peculiar nature. First is the tribal system, governed by exclusive traditions and norms, along with it century’s old Baradari system. No doubt, this system is deeply entrenched in the culture of the land. The tribal/baradari systems have granted a dominant status to the eldest male member of the family, who is responsible for taking all important decisions. In such an environment, the women status remains subservient to the will of family patriarch. This gender discrimination is more evident in the rural setup, as compared to the urban centers. The main reasons are lack of formal education; limited access to print/electronic media; inaccessibility to civil society organizations and controlled participation in political process. These hindrances compel women to play a second fiddle to their male family members, despite of being actively involved in the manual labor in the fields, i.e., in addition to their full participation in the household activities. Consequently, women’s

6 Baradari means *Brotherhood*, originating from the Persian word "Baradar" meaning "Brother". In Pakistan and India it is used to denote a number of social strata among South Asian Muslims. The Hindu caste system influenced the South Asian Muslims and resulted into formation of *Brotherhood* or communities that shared social stratification. The Hindus of different castes converted to Islam, due to Sufi missionaries, formed their own *baradaris*. The tribal and clan affiliation are also considered as *biradaris* in Pakistan.
participation in every sphere of life has been curtailed and they remain at the mercy of men and their consciously designed norms and ethos.

The Second feature of the Pakistani/Punjabi society is the deep impact of Islam as the Muslims are about 97 percent of the total population of the country. The rigid interpretation of Islamic injunctions by the religious orthodoxy, who are mostly semi-educated, has further confined the role of the women. However, Islam according to various scholars of repute acknowledges the equal status of man and woman.

In the Pakistani/Punjabi society, hardly a distinction remains between culture and religion, which overlaps in such a manner that it becomes difficult to differentiate between the two. According to Singhal and Ikramullah, the culture and traditions of the Pakistani people are a blend of continued adherence to Hindu values and customs. On the other hand, the values and traditions of Islam brought by migrants and conquerors have a considerable impact on the habits and traditions of the people. The practice of seclusion of woman (Purdah) as status symbol and her exclusion from male-oriented work (which is also a prominent practice among Hindus) has over shadowed the Islamic traditions of providing due consideration to women, in matters of inheritance, approval for marriage, right to divorce (khula) and freedom to own an independent business. Theoretically, orthodoxy in Pakistan gives an impression of adhering religious injunctions however in practice, they most of time prefer customs, originating from the centuries old non-Muslim traditions, no matter it contradicts the Islamic laws.\(^7\)

The third feature is the existence of different social classes, which can be broadly defined as upper class\(^8\), middle class\(^9\), and lower class.\(^10\) There are variations within the classes, as

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\(^2\)The upper class is a group of people at the top of socio-economic hierarchy. Members of an upper class may have considerable power over the allocation of resources and governmental policies.

\(^3\)The middle class is broadly defined that those consisting of educated technocrats, army officers, senior bureaucrats, merchants and landlords. In socio-economic terms, the middle class is the broad group of people in a society who fall socio-economically between the working class and the upper class.

\(^4\)The lower class occupies the lowest socio-economic position in a society. Another term for low class is a working class, which is employed in lower tier jobs (as measured by skill, education and lower incomes, like laborers and peasants), often extending to those who are unemployed or otherwise possessing below-average material.
well. The cultural values have more or less an equal impact on the lives of the people, belonging to different classes, which ultimately determines the women status in the society. The upper class women are generally educated, with all available resources and are more empowered to guard her rights, mainly because of the awareness and strong financial position. However, in some cases, even the women of this stratum become a victim of strong prejudices, either from tribal or Baradari base structures. For example, the twenty-seven-year old Samia Sarwar, the daughter of a prominent businessman and head of the Chamber of Commerce, was gunned down in 1999 in her attorneys' office, in Lahore by family hired gunman, as she was in the process of seeking a divorce from her estranged husband. Similarly, women belonging to the middle class are handicapped in voicing their demands for empowerment. Serious hindrances exist in their free mobility and at times obstacles are created to get higher education of their choice. This class is regarded as the custodian of existing cultural and religious values of the society. The most vulnerable is the woman of the lower class, as she neither has resources to challenge the prejudices and violation against her, nor she is aware of her basic rights. In this situation, the question of her equal status with men is a far-fetched reality.

Keeping in view the mentioned features of Pakistani/Punjabi society, it is imperative to understand the placement of women in a comprehensive manner, discrimination and issues of gender inequality and its variations along with various dimensions of women empowerment. These aspects of Pakistani/Punajbi women have been supplemented with relevant arguments by national and international scholars. I also made attempt to derive the inner sentiments of the focuss concerns of Punjabi women through group discussions, supported by a survey through pre-graduate university students in detail. The mentioned issues are reflected in relevant chapters of my thesis.

It is a well-established fact that education; print/electronic media (newspaper articles, documentaries and talk shows); social networking web-sites (like facebook, Twitter, orkut, hi5, Google+); various administrative and legislative measures (in the shape of ordinances, bills and laws); the awareness efforts of non-governmental organizations
(pamphlets, newsletters, training workshops and street threatens), political process serves as principal agents of change (modernization) for any society. I will examine the Punjabi society, taking into consideration the level of impact these agents have in uplift and empowerment of women, transforming the patriarchal structure of the society. However, I will examine the magnitude of its even impact, both in urban and rural contexts because in both cases the effects of agents of change differ.

The mentioned agents of change were not effective enough in the initial stage of the Pakistani history rather their impact started to emerge gradually as they became more wide-spread and effective. During Zia-ul-Haq’s regime (1977-1988), his policies of “Islamisation” adversely affected the rights of women, especially their legal status, resulting in socio-economic and political marginalization. As a reaction to this, the civil society organizations and women rights activists did not only challenge the governmental policies but also highlighted various aspects of gender discrimination. During this research, I will examine the level of effectiveness of these measures with identification that how much they have been able to bring awareness in society. Another dimension of research is to examine that whether these efforts could became a torchbearer for women population, against gender discrimination, no matter how marginal it was. The variety of women related activities has inspired many scholars and commentators to contribute towards the women rights from 1977 onwards. The historical evidences assumes that even after the end of the dictatorial rule of Zia-ul-haq, the long spells of democratic rule by Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993; 1997-1999) and Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990; 1993-1996), made no effort to amend the draconian laws of previous regime, though, the civil society organization had been continuously raising this question. Apart from this, I would consider the role of modernizing agents through improved women literacy rate and acceptability of women employees in job-market, leading to the query that why the agenda of enlightened moderation by Pervez Musharraf (1999-2002), could not ensure glaring changes for the improvement of women status. Nevertheless, it is presumed that Musharraf regime managed to amend some despised clauses of Hudood Ordinance along with increased ratio of women in all represented bodies and enacting some laws to protect the rights of women. The urgency of women related legislation continued during the five years tenure of the democratic rule (2008-2013) by a liberal Peoples Party government. In
this situation, my focus of research is not only to evaluate the governmental actions but to examine the placement of women in a much wider societal perspective, notwithstanding that the enactment of laws and other measures by the government does make a difference. However, the main crux of the matter is that unless the society transforms itself, nothing much is going to happen.\[11\] The empowerment of women is closely related to the impact of various agents of change and the receiving capabilities of the Punjabi women population. However, it becomes essential to examine the level of correlation between the agents of change and the change itself, amongst the female population of Punjab. Along with that, it is to be comprehended that to what extent, the female population responded to the change as the impact of the agents varies from case to case and issue to issue.

1.1: Hypothesis

*The agents of change in the Punjab province of Pakistan have the capability to transform the placement of women in socio-cultural environment.*

1.2: Significance and Likely Benefits:

Many national and international writers have attempted to address women issues in Punjab; apparently neglecting a number of dimensions on this subject. My research attempts to contribute in the areas, which have been over-looked by the previous writers. Therefore, the main focus of research would be to find out the multiple hindrances as proposed by the traditional norms of Punjabi society. Various authors have debated the location of the women in the Punjabi traditional society, noting that it was an uneven process. However, there is no comprehensive study on women issues; keeping in view the transformation of Punjabi society has taken place in its various forms.

\[11\] According to UNESCO, “In social scientific literature the term social transformation is increasingly used to describe societal changes and generally indicates a critical stance towards older notions of the idea of development... In general, the concept of societal transformation in the social sciences refers to the change of society's systemic characteristics. This incorporates the change of existing parameters of a societal system, including technological, economic, political and cultural restructuring.” Posted on September 14, 2015, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/social-transformation/
The extensive review of literature on women issues manifests various gaps as some writers focused on the description of women deprivation, while the others discussed women problems by keeping in view the executive and legislative measures. Their writings neglected the correlation between the socio-cultural-traditional placement of women in society and the impact of modernizing agents like education, civil society organizations, media and political process. These gaps would be investigated through my research because my proposed study tends to evaluate the reasons of multiple hindrances, posed by the traditional sections and I would like to know the reasons of inequitable treatment towards women, within the societal development. This has been imparted by the induction of the agents of change within the Punjabi society, in an uneven manner. My efforts will be to find out the reasons which despite of increased female literacy, spread of print and electronic media, efforts of civil society organizations, increased women participation in the political process, and enactment of various women related laws; could not transform the socio-cultural status of Punjabi women to an equitable level. In order to understand the Punjabi women in its totality, I will be dealing with the query that how effective these modernizing agents have been to influence the placement of women in Punjab. Here, my question would be to observe that which particular agent of change has been more effective than the other and in this regard, the accessibility of these agents to various segments of the society. I will make a conscious effort to observe the significance of the agents of change, regarding their effectiveness along with the hindrances created by orthodoxy.

1.3: Objectives of the Study

This research will revolve around the following main objectives.

- To understand the socio-cultural settings of Pakistan in general and Punjab in particular, so as to visualize the traditional status of women, within these specific environments.

- To recognize handicaps of the Punjabi women in rural and urban settings.
• To examine the obstructions created by patriarchal structure, supporting the status quo in women condition.

• To identify the problems of gender inequality and discrimination along with their possible causes and solution, observing various handicaps that obstruct the socio-economic and political empowerment of Punjabi women.

• To comprehend various initiatives along with its effectiveness by the state institutions, both at the federal and provincial levels, to improve the conditions of women in Punjab.

• To evaluate the role-played by education, media, civil society organizations including women NGOs and activists and political process as agents of change, to reshape the status of Punjabi women.

• To investigate the gravity of the mentioned agents of change in transforming the status of Punjabi women by differentiating between the areas where women have been able to make their presence felt and where they are still in a state of stagnation.

1.4: Methodology and Plan of Work

The proposed research will employ primary and secondary sources to understand and evaluate the results of the stated hypothesis. As a female researcher and belonging to Punjabi society, I feel I am privileged to estimate the broader characteristics of Punjabi culture and its implications on its female population. I am also aware of the sensitivities and constraints of my fellow female citizenship. Therefore, to support my arguments, apart from examining the methodological premises of research, I have utilized my personal experiences and observation since my childhood.

As my research concentrates on the women issues of Punjab, therefore, I will visit the Punjab Assembly for legislative records, as well the debates relating to women bills. Secondly, apart from Lahore, I will make special efforts to spend reasonable time at the
National Assembly Secretariat in Islamabad, to access the data on federal legislation (National Assembly, Senate) and the debates that took place on women issues. Thirdly, I will explore the material available in the Ministry of Human Rights, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Women Division, Benazir Income Support Program and similar institutions in Islamabad. Fourthly, in order to re-enforce my findings, I will conduct interviews from the officials of Women NGOs, activists, university female students and Media Persons as well as those, who are well-versed with the issues of the Punjabi women. Moreover, I intend to circulate a questionnaire, where needed. The findings of interviews and questionnaire would be used as supportive evidence in the respective chapters. I shall also examine women related reports, commissioned by successive governments in Pakistan.

The secondary sources will include books, research journal articles, electronic database, newspaper articles (National and local dailies in English & Urdu); blogs and other domestic and international sources. For the utilization of secondary sources, first, I will explore the data available in the library of the Pakistan Studies Centre. Secondly, the main library of the Punjab University, which is known for its archives material and newspaper/magazine collection, would be used. Equally important would be the web related facility and sources such as ‘Jstore’. Thirdly, the Quaid-e-Azam Library the Punjab Public Library and resource centers of women organizations as these facilities are well equipped with valuable data.

1.5: Limitations:

The phenomenon of women related issues in Pakistan are not new nonetheless its magnitude and an unexplored dimension makes it a diverse subject for study. Therefore, it is not easy to define peculiar norms and traditions that effect women in different circumstances. Moreover, the multidimensional nature of women status covering social, economic and political aspect further complicates the phenomenon. Likewise, there are number of issues, which are interrelated when it comes both genders, therefore apart from discussing women placement, I need to consider a male perspective of things, which at time is not easy to grasp. The following are the key elements that can limit our research.
• Though, I intend to discuss the over-all socio-cultural pattern of women placement in Punjabi society, however, due to the time-constrain, I will not be able to take in to consideration, the placement of women in all parts of Punjab, due to its vastness. However, I believe that this will not distort the over-all findings of my research.

• Due to cultural constrains, the women of Punjab are hesitant to express their feelings openly to a stranger and would like to reveal only those facts that are permissible by their family norms, inculcated since their childhood. My challenge would be to find out the real stories and to read between the lines of their narrations. However, I will be carefully re-checking the facts and responses to access the reality.

• Being a woman, I cannot commute alone, as the rural culture does not welcome such kind of activity. Therefore, I would request one of my male family members to accompany me.

• Though, I will utilize my observation however because of the varieties of reactions and sensitivity of every individual, a synthesis is required to comprehend a complete picture.

• Punjabi families differ in their treatment towards female members-sensitive in certain matter, while providing more flexibility in some activities of their daughters, sisters and wives. Conscious of this fact, I will try to explore the generalized behaviors of my objects.

• There are many agents of change but it is not possible to evaluate the impact of all, therefore I have selected observable four to evaluate their impact on the placement of Punjabi women.

1.6: Research Questions

The main focus of this research is to investigate the impact of agents of change like education, media, civil society organizations/women NGOs and Political Process in
transformation of the status of Punjabi women of Pakistan. Following are the questions to be focused in this research:

- What are the components of the socio-cultural setting of Punjabi society in Pakistani milieu?
- What is the traditional status of Punjabi women in its various manifestations?
- How and when do the traditional forces in Punjabi society obstruct the prospects of women empowerment?
- What legislative and executive measures at federal and provincial levels could do to transform the role of Punjabi women?
- How much the selected observable four agents of change (education, media, civil society organizations/women organizations and political process) could reshape the status of Punjabi women.

1.7: The Chapters of the Thesis will be as Follows

To investigate my stated supposition, I have divided my study in 7 chapters, as summarized below.

1.7.1: Chapter -1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces the topic and its significance, with reference to the existing conditions and probability of changes in the Punjabi society. This over-view facilitates our understanding about the placement of the Punjabi women. In this chapter, subject matter of the thesis is presented briefly; enabling the readers to comprehend the forthcoming deliberations.

Chapter 1 includes the significance and likely benefits of this research project, along with its objectives. It describes the plan of work and methodology relying mostly on the primary sources as well as the secondary source of information and analysis. Apart from
this, the chapter also takes notice of the limitations, the research could confront. In this chapter, I have raised a number of research questions around which our research will revolve. In the end, a scheme of chapters is provided for an initial understanding of the forthcoming division of our research project.

1.7.2: Chapter-2: Themes of Literature and Conceptual Frame Work

In this chapter, I will categorize the available data in basic four themes, which will clarify our research work. The objective of these themes is to organize the existing literature into various compartments with similar thought and outcome. The first theme will deal with the data presenting comparative study of women issues in societies with near similar conditions, helping us to understand the problems of Punjabi women in a relative situation. The second theme will attempt to organize the material, describing the socio-cultural environment of Pakistani/Punjabi Women. The third theme will examine the literature on economic and political dimensions of Pakistani/Punjabi Women. The fourth and last theme will streamline the data available on the legislative and executive measures of state, dealing with empower Pakistani/Punjabi Women. The fifth theme addresses the core question of this research, which is the identification, description and its impact on the placement of Punjabi women.

1.7.3: Chapter-3: Socio-Cultural Setting of Pakistan, with Special Reference to Punjab

This chapter is divided in two parts. First part deals with the diverse social and cultural environment of Pakistan, including linguistic, ethnic, religious/spiritual and customary practices. The over-view of a Pakistani socio-cultural environment enables us to understand the placement of the Punjabi women, within an overall Pakistani context. The second part deals with the distinctive nature of Punjabi culture, which is characterized with Baradari/Quom, religion, economic growth, urbanization and gender division. These factors will investigate the impact of extensively existing patriarchal culture of
Punjabi society along with religious orthodoxy, influencing the placement of Punjabi women.

1.7.4: Chapter-4: Political Discourse and its Impact on Socio-cultural Status of Pakistani/Punjabi Women: 1947-1976

This chapter is a background for our future study enabling us to make a comparison, tracing the transformation in the socio-cultural conditions of the Punjabi women through political forces from 1947 to 1976. The chapter comprises of two parts, which would give an analysis of the socio-cultural and economic status of women during the political discourse of Pakistan’s history. The mentioned dimensions of women status would be evaluated by splitting the political history in two phases namely, Formative (1945-57) and Transitory (1958-76). In these two periods, the particular attention would be given to the legislation covering women issues and the efforts of women representatives/ activists in highlighting concerns of female population.

1.7.5: Chapter-5: Legislation on Pakistani/Punjabi Women and Responses: 1977-1999

Chapter-5 is broadly divided in two parts. The first deals with the women related policies of Zia-ul-Haq from 1977 to 1988, in shape of laws, executive decrees and orders. The second appraises the reactive response of civil society including women organizations and activists. It would also highlight the legislative and executive responses of democratic governments of Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League from 1988 to 1999 towards women issues as both political parties represent divergent dogma. Apart from governmental measures, I will also evaluate the supportive response of Pakistani/Punjabi women. The focus of research in these two demarcated parts would not only be the commitments of various governments but also their impact on the conditions of women. The chapter would also appraise the role of other variables like education, civil society organizations, women parliamentarians and media to highlight the issues confronted by women during this time period.
1.7.6: Chapter-6: Legislation on Pakistani/Punjabi Women and Response: 2000-2012

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter, in which I would trace the legislative and executive measures of military dictator Pervaiz Musharaff and democratic government of Peoples Party, affecting Pakistani/Punjabi women from 2000 to 2012 in two parts. This chapter is separately designed as there were sufficient activity generated by the governments and the civil society regarding the women issues. It was in this era that the women organizations and activists had matured themselves to comprehend various requirements of Punjabi women, along with the keen interest of the respective governments to legislate for women betterment.

The first part would investigate the impact of Musharrf’s “enlightened moderation” on Punjabi female population from 1999 to 2007. In this part, apart from the analysis of legislation introduced in this regime, the role of women legislators, media and women organizations would also be discussed. The second part of the same chapter would deal with the measures of democratic government of People Party towards female population by keeping in view their literacy, health and employment status.

1.7.7: Chapter 7: Impact of Education on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

Chapter-7 will attempt to understand the impact of education on socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women, with a belief that the increased literacy is an important vehicle to transform their status in various ways. To evaluate the co-relation of female education with different aspects of life, the chapter broadly consists of three parts. First would deal with the role of education in improving Punjabi women’s health, while, the second part would deal with the opportunities of employment. Apart from this, in the third segment,
the focus of study would be on the attained awareness among educated female population of Punjab regarding their right of inheritance, marriage, divorce and mobility.

1.7.8: Chapter 8: Impact of Political Process on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

After assessing the impact of education on various aspects of women lives in previous chapter, here I will attempt to understand the role of political process in improving Punjabi women status, with the conviction that increased literacy is an important vehicle to determine the women involvement in the political process. This chapter consists of two parts, which would evaluate the contribution of Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Group) respectively, in mobilizing Punjabi women through political participation and representation.

1.7.9: Chapter 9: Impact of Media on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

Chapter 9 will enable us to understand the impact of media as an agent of change to reshape the placement of Punjabi women, providing hope for their transformed status. Through three segments of this chapter, I will attempt to understand the influence of print, electronic and social media on the status of Punjabi women, with an acknowledgment that these three kinds of media play a significant role in highlighting the women issues.

1.7.10: Chapter 10: Impact of Civil Society on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

Chapter-10 will focus on the impact of civil society, which with the passage of time has matured itself to the level that it is known today as an effective pressure group for the
decision making bodies of state. This evolution of civil society as an agent of change for women status would be discussed in three phases. The first phase deals with the reaction to the discriminatory policies of Zia-ul-haq, from 1977 to 1987. The second phase from 1988 to 1999 was the period in which the civil society with a great hope from democratic eras, by adopting a policy of understanding and accommodation, presented its demands for women rights. The third phase from 1999-2012 is theoretically and practically considered as the most active period of civil society, in terms of various pro-women legislative and executive measures. On one side, this study would enable us to understand the influence of civil society as an independent variable to transform the socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women, while on the other it would help us to comprehend the resistance from orthodoxy-both religious and secular.

1.7.11: Chapter 11: Conclusion

This concluding portion of the thesis will draw findings carried from the discussions made in the previous chapters. It will also testify the given hypothesis, emphasizing on the degree of relationship between the agents of change and their impact on the placement of women in Punjabi society. Based on my research and its results, I will suggest recommendations to transform the condition of Punjabi women, so that the half population of the Punjabi/Pakistani society can become more dynamic and useful towards the over-all developmental process.
Chapter 2: Themes of Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1: Review of Literature

There is a reasonable, though not sufficient written material available on social, economic and political aspects of the women lives in Pakistani/Punjabi society. Moreover, there is a dearth of systematic information on the dynamics of the women placement in socio-cultural environment. Though, many national and international scholars have attempted to address the socio-economic aspects, while focusing on the participation of women but the presumption is that without having a proper understanding of socio-cultural environment, it becomes difficult to understand an overall scenario of the problems and challenges confronted by the female section of the Punjabi society. Moreover, the women placement in Punjab and even in Pakistan cannot be comprehended in isolation, particularly when there are certain external factors, such as agents of change, which do have an impact on the transformation and status of the Punjabi women in a dynamic environment. On the basis of reasonable literature on women issues in Pakistan, in general and the province of Punjab in particular, I can identify a number of themes, presented by various writers, spotlighting the status of women in the Pakistani/Punjabi context. These themes can be identified as follows:

1. The progression of women status, in various societies, particularly those in the developing nations.

2. The placement of women in socio-cultural environment of Pakistan with its reflection on the province of Punjab.

3. The conventional economic and political placement of the Punjabi women in Pakistani/Punjabi society and the emerging changes in their status.

4. The role of state institutions towards women issues, through legislative and executive measures.
5. The role of agents of change – education, political process, media and civil society organizations in transforming the placement of Punjabi women.

2.1.1: First Theme: Comparative Study of Women Issues

The first theme relates to the women placement in various societies in near similar socio-cultural situations, particularly those in developing countries. In this regard, a systematic comparison can be made in particular, with the Muslim Middle Eastern and South Asian societies, to evaluate women status in almost corresponding socio-cultural set-ups, which are closest in their structural design. Examples can also be cited from some of the developed countries, especially when they were in their formative phase, struggling for the rights of women.

April Carter and Alyse Nelson in their respective books “Politics of Women rights”\(^\text{12}\) and “Vital Voices: The Power of Women Leading Change around the World”\(^\text{13}\), describes a comprehensive struggle of women rights, in developed countries. Carter reveals that prior to the First World War (1914-1918), European women were fully involved in household work, which however changed during the two world wars. By the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), women’s role underwent a complete transformation. In 1960s, they had more exposure to higher education and with that there was more participation by women, not only in economic and social fields, but also in local and national politics. Similar trends have been identified in other societies as Nelson defines the changed women status around the world as well, due to an increased trend of education, better prospects of earning and growing awareness about the maternal health. She point out towards few fields in which women gained respective position. In this context, she explains that this prosperous change reduced the cases of violence against women, as the

above mentioned trends caused better education, healthy family life and respect for human rights, among women as well as men. Nelson shares the stories of out-standing women of the world, who played significant role in not only making a respectable place in society but they also managed to bring significant socio-political changes around the world.

Apart from the above-mentioned literature in a global perspective, the position of women in developing regions like the Middle East and South Asia is also thoroughly analyzed by various social scientists. While writing about Middle East, eminent writers, Shahla Haeri and Nikki R.Keddie, Hayat Alvi and Nawal El Saadawi in their respective writings, “Social Reform in the Middle East”\(^\text{14}\), “Women in the Middle East: Past and Present”\(^\text{15}\), “The Human Rights of Women and Social Transformation in the Arab Middle East”\(^\text{16}\) and “The Feminist Movement”\(^\text{17}\), discuss the status of women in Middle Eastern society, with different dimensions. Haeri considers that the absence of political and economic reforms in Arab states is responsible for the disturbed equilibrium of social order, which ultimately intensified the conflict between Islamists and secularists. This hostile environment did not welcome any legal reform in the family laws, by the state to improve the status of women as she states that “in a few Middle Eastern states the reformers made minimal and conditional provisions for women’s maintenance after divorce, while leaving the wrenching issues of custody of children-religiously and legally a father’s prerogative- generally unchanged”\(^\text{18}\). While giving the historic perspective of the Middle Eastern women, Kiddie in her “first book” of the same volume\(^\text{19}\), evaluates the condition of women from pre-Islamic times to 2007, in which she traces the domination as well as prominence of women occurring in various eras. She points out that most western

scholars, who have little information on the region regard Muslim women as victims and she goes on to argue that in recent times, with better understanding, the scholars have started to highlight the “positive aspects of women lives”, as well. Professor Kiddie believes that apart from religion, there are various reasons and influencing actors that impinges upon condition of women in these societies. She points out an important aspect of women placement, which is relevant to the Punjabi society as, “over the centuries the words of the Quran and hadiths have been interpreted in ways that are in accord with the beliefs and mores of the time of interpretation. Today Muslim who believes in gender equality often interprets the Quran as supporting such equality.”  

In her “second book”, Kiddie talks about the change in the condition of Middle Eastern women in a different colonial experience and she asserts that the “changes in economy and society in the past two centuries, along with the western cultural impact, brought forces within Middle Eastern societies favoring changes in the conditions of women.”  

A similar analogy can be applied to the South Asian colonial experience when the British colonial power started to exert its impact, thus helping to explore the prospects of change amongst the women by various Muslim scholars like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, although, he talked about the community as a whole. Alvi also discuss the changing condition of women in Middle East countries, regardless of the fact that some of them (for Example, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria and UAE), are the member states or the signatories of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), however such developments made minor difference in women status. The author asserts that, “without ideological and attitudinal changes regarding women’s rights, there cannot be positive empirical changes in the status of women. Moreover, without positive empirical changes in the status of women, there can be no progressive social transformation for the societies as a whole.”  

Saadawi, in her micro study of the contribution of Arab Women’s Solidarity Association (established in 1985), which were formed after immense obstacles, discusses the core issues faced by the Arab societies, in respect of empowering women. She states, “Arab women are dominated by men in every

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20 Nikki R. Keddie, op.cit., p.10.  
22 Hayat Alvi, op.cit., p.254.
area of life in the Patriarchal family system: state, political party, trade union and public and private institutions of all types. It is not surprising, therefore, that the problems of Arab societies all reflect on the solidarity of Arab women.”

The impact of transformation in socio-political environment of Middle Eastern societies is dealt in a sub-regional contexts by Nesta Ramazani and Louay Bahry, in their respective articles “Arab Women in the Gulf” and “The New Saudi Woman: Modernizing in an Islamic Framework” as they focus on the changes in the lives of women, living in the selected Middle East countries, due to the growing trends of education, new opportunities for employment and accessibility to media. Ramazani makes an assessment that the already prevailed segregation of women in Arab society cannot be eradicated over-night. Therefore, the handicap for the women to enter into job market in a comprehensive way remains. Consequently, there is a need to introduce consistently a series of reforms to achieve a gradual transformation. The similar trends of change with little variation have been observed by Bahry, as he stresses that these changes were needed due to the pressure on Saudi economy to use indigenous expertise for development of their public structures, and the educated male as a sole contributor was not enough to fill the gaps. These two variations of this theme will enable us to understand the society like Punjab, which has similarities in context of the developmental process within socio-cultural Pakistani norms.

While talking about South Asian women with different dimensions, Farida Shaheed and Aditya Pandey in their respective writings, “Women’s Empowerment and Development Planning in South Asia”, and “Women Literacy and Development” stresses on the active role of women of this region. Shaheed take the term empowerment in its

23 Saadawi, op.cit., p.231.
comprehensive meaning, when it comes to the life of a woman and she believes in South Asia, “women’s participation in political and administrative decision making is one arena in which development planning and legislation has had positive impact….But if women are to be included in all levels of decision making, this needs to start with the family, an area which is notably missing in most national plans…”  

Another stride to empower South Asian women is discussed by a renowned social scientist, Pandey as he believes that the socio-economic and political development of South Asian countries is deeply linked with an effective role of their women, which is only possible when they acquire higher education as “women make the most effective providers of healthcare, be it grandmothers mother, nurses non-formal teacher and mangers of the local environments As a wife and mother, she is the most influential member in determining the stability of her family and the development of her children’s personality. Hence, the women’s development is a pre-requisite for all the round development of the society.”  

Here, it is relevant to point out that in some ways there is an overall similarity within the South Asian women, as they operate in a near similar socio-cultural set-up, traditions and family structures. In this regard, Arun R. Kumbhre, H. C. Upadhyay and Shanta B. Astige, in their respective writings, “Women of India: Their Status Since the Vedic Times”  

“Status of Women in India”  

“Role and Status of Working Women” exclusively talked about condition of Indian women. Kumbhare considers that the socio-cultural practices against Indian women throughout the long history of 6000 years (stared from vedic times), are responsible for gender discrimination in present India. While explaining the factors responsible for marginal role of women in Indian society, She states “the marriages of young girls at an early age and curtailment of her education probably was motivated by economy, the incursion by foreigners and a greater concentration of power and resulting corruption of the Brahmins, the priest class. All these factors in various degrees resulted in the poor women being subjected to a very restricted life.”  

Similarly, Upadhyay also provides a historical reference of

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28Farida Shaheed, op.cit., pp. 92, 93.  
29Aditya Pandey, op.cit., p. 168.  
discriminatory socio-cultural practices against Indian women and he comprehensively evaluates the change brought by state legislation on women issues. He further believes that “the position of women in the Indian society is clearly in process of transformation and will have an important impact of future social development.” Astige supports this notion, in her writing as she assesses that the stereotype role of women in India is in the process of transformation. She particularly takes up the issue of the changing role and status of the Indian women, within the family and at workplace, due to the quest of women to acquire higher education and serve at better jobs. Apart from India, the dimensions of change among the lives of women belonging to another South Asian country Bangladesh, Elora Shehabuddin in her book, “Reshaping the Holy: Democracy, Development, and Muslim Women in Bangladesh,” explains one of the dominant factors responsible for some improvement in women’s position in Bangladesh are secular organizations, who contrary to the government by realizing women problems provide them help to improve socio-economic status. Therefore, “the inordinate attention given to landless rural women in Bangladesh in recent decades, by international imperatives and local NGO initiatives, has created a large population of mobilized women in Bangladesh unparalleled elsewhere in the Muslim worlds. In the last few years alone, both secularist and Islamist elites have begun to undertake cautious modifications of their strategies, prompted by improvised women’s rejection of their traditional positions as well as by the wider democratic setting.”

This example of India and Bangladesh within the South Asian context presents a reasonable analogy to assist us to analyze the transformation of the Pakistani/Punjabi women in some detail.

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35 Recently, another literature is added to understand the conditions of the Indian women by Shehzadi Zamurrad Awan, “Socio-Economic Structures of the Indian Society and Conditions of Women”, Pakistan Vision (Pakistan Study Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore), 11:2 (December 2010), p.260. Awan gives suggestions to improve the status of Indian women by stating, “The Indian women can get equal status in patriarchal society. First, by equipping themselves with proper education so that they could attain better chances of job irrespective of their social status and their economic background. Second, the role of state is very important as mostly the women related acts remained in theory and could not get a practical implementation as per the requirement.”
37 Ibid., p. 5.
2.1.2: Second Theme: Socio-cultural Environment of Pakistani/Punjabi Women

The second theme of literature relates to the socio-cultural environment of Pakistani/Punjabi women, with implications on the province of Punjab. In this regard, Syed Abdul Quddus, M.H. Siddiqui, Taimur Rahman, Sean Sheeban and Shandana Khan Mohmand/ Hris Gazdar in their respective writings, “The Cultural Patterns of Pakistan”38, “Pakistan: The Land and the People”39, “The Class Structure of Pakistan”40, “Cultures of the World-Pakistan”41, and “Social structures in Rural Pakistan”42 exclusively discuss various shades of Pakistani culture with its implications on the ethos prevailed in Punjab. Apart from defining culture in general term, Quddus acknowledges the contribution of various civilizations in the construction of Pakistani culture, which manifests in its arts, crafts, customs and traditions.43 The characteristics of people living in different provinces of Pakistan are further explained by Siddiqui, with reference to the typological features of the state. He identifies that “most of the tribes and racial groups in the province of Punjab have been identified with the Jat and the Rajput races rather than with the early Greco-Iranian or the Central Asian races of the sakas (Scythians), Kushanas, Huns and others, most of whom came to be known as Jats and Rajputs after their conversion and assimilation. Even these two races are so mixed-up that it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other.”44 Acknowledging the multiplicity of caste system in Punjab, Rehman believes that “Marx's notion of the Asiatic capitalism” is the reason for this. Thus, the acclamation of wealth in various shades defined class system in this society. While adding in this theme, Sheehban provides analysis of the prevailed cultural practices in all provinces of Pakistan with a pictorial explanation of the life-style

42 Shandana Khan Mohmand and Hris Gazdar, Social structures in Rural Pakistan (Islamabad: Asian Development Bank, 2007).
43 Syed Abdul Quddus, op.cit., pp. 103-117.
44 M.H. Siddiqui, op.cit., p. 20.
adhered by the people of this land. In this socio-cultural setting of Pakistani society, Sheehban assesses women role as a second fiddle as they “are not seen as independent wage-earners, which explains the traditional preference for boys over girls.”\footnote{Sean Sheeban, op.cit., p. 52.} The author further explains that female child is not considered fully as part of the immediate family as right from her birth, the traditional family plans to get her married and thus expect her to become part of another family. It becomes undesirable, if for some reasons she remains single. This kind of stereotype characterization of woman with special reference to their mobility in Punjab is stressed by Mohmand and Gazdar, who explain that the “communities are defined by *biraderi*, the physical mobility of women within the village is less restricted because of mixed residence patterns. Women can move through the length and breadth of concentrated villages, but they do not freely visit the homes of other *biraderis*.”\footnote{Shandana Khan Mohmand and Hris Gazdar, op.cit. p. 37.} In this regard, an anthropologist, Zekiye Eglar, in her book, “*A Punjabi Village in Pakistan: Perspectives on Community, Land and Economy*”\footnote{Zekiye Suleyman Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan: Perspectives on Community, Land and Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). It is a micro-study of a Punjabi village and was researched in 1959, but its findings are relevant even today, in a number of ways.}, discusses the norms and culture of this particular province. Beena Sarwer, who wrote the introduction of this book points out that though, much has changed but whatever Eglar observed is “still relevant insights into Pakistani society, particularly its women.”\footnote{Ibid.,p.x.} Eglar evaluates the situation of women by discussing the socio-economic structures of rural Punjab existing well before 1958. According to the author’s observation the women were able to retain their position as an important factor in economic and social well being of their respective communities. She further states that whatever change occurred could not displace women as important and active managers of the household and also they helped to make a connection between different families thus prove to be an active vehicle to create a community relationship in rural Punjab through *vartan*\footnote{A Punjabi word, meaning “Dealing”.}. This notion contradicts a general impression as expressed by the previous three writers that women are passive actors, at least as the decision makers in rural setting.
An excellent description of social, religious and political background of Pakistani/Punjabi society has been provided by Tahmina Rashid, Farida Shaheed and Abdul Hakim / Azra Aziz in their writings “Contested Representation: Punjabi Women in Feminist Debate in Pakistan”\(^50\), “Socio-cultural, Religious, and Political Aspects of the Status of Women in Pakistan”\(^51\) and “Imagined Citizenship: Women, state and politics in Pakistan”\(^52\). Rashid in one of her themes deals with the dynamics of feminism in Pakistan, with special emphasize to the Punjabi women. She categorizes the Punjabi women in upper, middle and lower classes, culminating her arguments on the placement of lower/lower-middle class women. While, extending the same theme, using a different methodology, Shaheed, in her writing, clearly points out moods of patriarchal culture in Pakistan, where woman are considered economically, a non-productive part of the society and her journey towards her development has been impeded by traditional values.\(^53\) Here, it is important to explain that due to the prominence of conservative and orthodox elements in Pakistani society, common man is unable to distinguish between religion and culture, which confuses the society, regarding the rightful status of women. Our research will take Shaheed’s contention about the patriarchal culture, separating it from the Islamic principles. Recognition is made that it becomes difficult to comprehend the exact status of women, due to the presence of different religious school of thought, with variety of interpretations, regarding women status. Hakim and Aziz also believe that the traditional social structures and norms of Pakistani society are responsible for the low status of women. They reiterate that the increasing trends of education and employment for women have contributed little to improve their status, due to orthodox mentality and cultural restrictions on women, which conflicts with their aspiration to achieve equal status in society. The authors feel that there is a dire needs to review the misinterpretation of Islamic principles, which affect the customary laws and thus ultimately

\(^{50}\)Tahmina Rashid, *Contested Representation: Punjabi Women in Feminist Debate in Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 2006).


\(^{53}\)Shaheed also emphasizes on the role civil society in this situation which can promote women participation in political and social life, through its various programs. Moreover, these NGOs can play the role of a powerful pressure group forcing the government to legislate positively, on women issues.
impinges on the status of women. This research will be derived and expanded from the observations by the above-mentioned writers, that the absence of adequate knowledge and understanding about Islam make the placement of women in society submissive and subordinate.

The egalitarian spirit of Islam and its guidelines about the condition of women is explained by, a Moroccan sociologist, Fatima Mernissi and Asma Barlas in their respective books, “The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam”54, “Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society”55 and “Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an”56. In her first book, Mernissi utilize extensive and relevant references from the Quran, Hadith, and other historical commentaries, to support her arguments, on the status of women in Islam. While explaining her point of view, she quotes the examples of the Prophet of Islam, his wives, his companions, and early Islamic society, regarding the status of women. She further believes that the denial of women's rights is not allowed by the Islamic tenets. In reality, the existing social values in present Islamic societies are extension of the vested political interests and power struggles, following the era of the first four Caliphs. Mernissi continues to support her contention in her second book and states that “paradoxically, and contrary to what is commonly assumed, Islam does not advance the thesis of women’s inherent inferiority. Quite the contrary, it affirms the potential equality between the sexes. The existing inequality does not rest on an ideological or biological theory of women’s inferiority, but is the outcome of specific social institutions designed to retrain her power: namely, segregation and legal subordination in the family structure. Nor have these institutions generated a systematic and convincing ideology of women’s inferiority.” 57 This notion is further endorsed by Barlas, as she analyzes not only the Qur'anic text itself but also examines its relationship with the commentaries provided by different Islamic school of thought, and its merger in

57 Fatima Mernissi, Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society, op.cit., p. 19.
a cultural context. She further reiterates that the Qur'an rejects to advocate a view of sex/gender differentiation, recognizing equal spousal rights for both sexes and mutuality in marital relations. The Qur'an also stresses on the importance of female as a part of the household. Likewise, another internationally acclaimed scholar, Annemarie Schimmel in her literary book “My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam”\textsuperscript{58}, set aside the stereotype\textsuperscript{59} mentality by providing different examples, in which she stresses on the equality of women and men, according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, principles of the Qur'an and the message of mysticism.

The egalitarian shape of Islam as a religion is distorted by sectarian divide in the country as pointed out by S.V.R.Nasr and Syed Farooq Hasnat in their respective writings, “Islam the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan”\textsuperscript{60} and “Pakistan: Global Security Watch”\textsuperscript{61}. The authors argue that the Pakistani political leadership exploits this divide from time to time, with the purpose of attaining their objectives. Nasr states “the proliferation of militant sectarianism in Pakistan in recent years has produced an important fault line in the country’s politics with broad ramifications for law and order, social cohesion, and, ultimately, government authority and democratic consolidation.”\textsuperscript{62} This increasing trend of militancy has caused extremism in the society, which according to Hasnat was ignored by democratically elected leaders Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, who ruled for ten years (1988-1999). Apart from this, another factor pointed out by Hasnat was the inactive role of the liberal section of Sufi Islam, who did not “confront and oppose these interpretations of Islamic code, which were counter to their centuries-old teachings. They remained segregated in their shrines, docile and uninterested in whatever went around them.”\textsuperscript{63} In this situation, the orthodoxy in Pakistani society presents a different scenario regarding the status of women by misinterpreting religious

\textsuperscript{58} Annemarie Schimmel, My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2003).
\textsuperscript{59} Conventionally, the centuries old pattern of behavior is called stereotype but when applied to the Punjabi culture, it would signify that girls are not treated at par with boys in a household situation that reflects in the over-all gender relationship of the larger society.
\textsuperscript{61} Syed Farooq Hasnat, Global Security Watch - Pakistan (California: Praeger Press, 2011).
\textsuperscript{62} S.V.R.Nasr, op.cit., p. 109.
\textsuperscript{63} Syed Farooq Hasnat, op.cit, p.131.
injunctions, supported by the political leadership. The governmental factor further disturbed the social fabric of Pakistani society and also hampered the economic progress of the country by marginalizing women, who are 52% of the total population. To highlight this issue of Pakistani society, well-known research scholars, Anita M. Weiss and Farida Shaheed & Khawer Mumtaz have contributed articles, “Islamic laws in a modern State” and “Islamization and Women: the Experience of Pakistan”. Weiss evaluates the reshaped Islamic ideology of early 1980s, which aimed the conformity of state laws with the tenets of Islam. Weiss especially evaluates the program of Islamization by General Zia-ul-Haq’s, which led to the imbalance of the social order of the Pakistani society and the most vulnerable were the women. By adopting the same notion, Weiss in her another research article “Women’s Position in Pakistan: Socio-cultural effects of Islamisation” asserted, “We see the same type of conflict in Pakistan that has emerged throughout the Muslim world: the push of modernity (i.e., industrialization and the contemporary emphasis on realization of human potential) versus the pull of redefined tradition (i.e., Islamisation).” Similarly, Shaheed and Mumtaz in their above mentioned article, strongly believe that the Islamisation program of Zia-ul-Haq was responsible for the marginalized role of the women. While explaining another reason of women vulnerability in 1980s, they said, “being the least powerful and least organized section of society, women became easy targets for restrictive measures as obscurantists in and out of government adopted the easiest and most visible means for proving their Muslim credentials without, however, affecting the daily lives of most men.”

This theme takes in to account the construction of the Punjabi society as such and further on deals with those forces that distorted the genuine status of women through state

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67 Ibid., p.864.
actions in the name of religion. Our research will take into account the synthesis of these mentioned actors, while locating the placement of women in Pakistani society.

2.1.3: Third Theme: Economic and Political Dimension of the Status of Pakistani/Punjabi Women

The third theme is about the economic and political placement of Punjabi women in Pakistani society and the emerging changes in their status. In this regard, Shahla Haeri, Sabeeha Hafeez and Anita M. Weiss, in their respective books “No Shame for the Sun: Lives of Professional Pakistani Women”\(^{69}\), “The Metropolitan Women in Pakistan”\(^{70}\) and “Walls within Walls: Life Histories of Working Women in the Old City of Lahore”\(^{71}\), examines the challenges, ambitions and expectations of professional female. Haeri, with the help of oral history through interviews from six middle and upper class educated Pakistani professional women examines the roles of identity, violence, legitimacy, marriage, kinship and religion in their lives. These professional women shared their traumas, while struggling for their professional achievements and, at the same time dealing with the responsibilities in arranged marriages. Though the interviewed subjects of Haeri are success stories in terms of “power and authority in their chosen fields” as they are holders of doctorate degrees, manager of estates, poets, running schools, Sufi feminist thinker and a political activist. They all went through a difficult phase of their lives; due to the century’s old practiced social order, favoring the subservient role of women. Utilizing another research method, Hafeez looks at the expectations and ambitions of university female students towards career, marriage, and children, after completion of their education, to conclude the effects of these factors on their thinking patterns. While following the same pattern, Weiss also uses interviews to focus on the correlation between empowerment and social change, and to find out the level of such


change in the lives of educated women. For this purpose, she interviewed such women, living in walled city (the conservative side of the divide) of Lahore, to understand their socio-economic pressures, on domestic and professional shades of life.

Apart from the above mentioned literature on socio-economic placement of Pakistani women, there is a significant contribution by various eminent writers on their political participation. I do recognize that there is a relationship between the level of political participation of women and its effect on socio-cultural status. Relating to the subject, the role of women in national Politics has been discussed by various writers like Inayatullah, Farzana Bari and Dushka H. Saiyid in their respective writings: “A historical perspective on women’s participation in politics in Pakistan: Moving towards Change”72, “Women’s Representation in Politics: The Way Ahead”73 and “Women in Politics-Problems of participation: A Case Study of Pakistan”74. Inayatullah considers that the absence of direct elections for an extending period of time is one of the reasons of low political participation of women in Pakistan. However, he also asserts that this trend has changed now, as today women have comparatively more opportunities than in the past, through reserved seats in the National, Provincial and local representative bodies. While expanding her research model, Bari examines the role of Pakistani women parliamentarians, keeping in view the women struggle in different countries, in the backdrop of their marginalized political role. She does not only point out the reasons of the low political participation of women but also provides remedies for this situation. Likewise, Saiyid, unfolds the history of women political participation and the hindrances they face in this direction. Her research time-period is from 1947-1970. Stressing on the first elections based of adult franchise (1970), in which women actively participated, supporting a new kind of political agenda presented by their leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. The women anticipated that the slogan of caring for down trodden classes would include them as well, enabling to gain their due position in the society. Relating to the same

72Inayatullah, A Historical Perspective on Women’s Participation in Politics in Pakistan: Moving towards Change (Savera Monograph, 1999).
subject, Nabeela Afzal and Khawar Mumtaz in their respective writings, “Women and Parliament in Pakistan 1947-1977”\textsuperscript{75} and “Political Participation: Women National Legislatures in Pakistan”\textsuperscript{76}, exclusively discuss the role of women parliamentarians, in national politics. Afzal contends that “during 1947-69, there were five parliament assemblies in Pakistan; and in two parliaments (1955-56 and 1956-58), the women had no representation at all.”\textsuperscript{77} A similar analysis by Mumtaz evaluates the active participation of women parliamentarians on national and international issues since 1988. Nevertheless, she differentiates the performance of directly elected women legislators from those who were elected on reserved seats by stating that “the latter have expressed greater concern regarding women’s issues and have raised with the directly elected women, who focused more on the general issues of their constituencies.”\textsuperscript{78}

Generally speaking, the Muslim elite women became active in politics during the freedom movement and came almost at par with men, in this field. Haziqul Khairi, Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, Jahan Ara Shahnawaz and Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah in their respective writings, “Jagtay Lumhay”\textsuperscript{79}, “Tehreek-i-Pakistan main khawateen ka kirdar”\textsuperscript{80}, Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiograph\textsuperscript{81} and From Purdah to Parliament\textsuperscript{82}, not only discuss the literary contribution of Muslim women to sensitize female population about their rights in pre-partitioned India but they also highlighted the continuous struggle of women representative, for safeguarding the rights of women in the formative and transitory phase (1947-1976) of Pakistan’s political history. Khairi goes

\textsuperscript{75}Nabeela Afzal, Women and Parliament in Pakistan 1947-1977 (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, 1999).
\textsuperscript{77}Nabeela Afzal, op.cit., p.48.
\textsuperscript{78}Khawar Mumtaz, op.cit., pp. 350-351.
\textsuperscript{79}Haziqul Khairi, JagtayLumhay (Lahore: Ferozsons, 2012).
\textsuperscript{80}Sarfaraz Hssain Mirza, Tehreek-i-Pakistan main Khawateen ka Kirdar (Lahore: Nazree-i-Pakistan Foundation, 2004).
\textsuperscript{81}Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiograph (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
back to 1908, when the first women magazine ‘ismat (respect)’, was published, aiming to emancipate the Muslim women from centuries old socio-cultural systems and traditions by highlighting a proper place of women in the society. Most of the writings in this magazine were by the female and male writers of the Khairi’s family. The contribution of this family has been discussed as he states, “time and values has changed but thank God that this institution proved itself a torch bearer for Muslim women and has been in forefront in the struggle of their awareness, education and rights.” Nevertheless, one cannot over-look this fact that women writers, who contributed in the women magazines at that time were few and they came from Muslim elite as the literacy rate of common women was extremely low. Secondly, it was inconceivable for women to express their views in writing or otherwise. However, such kind of small participation in future years helped them to demand for their equal rights in 1917, when All Indian Women delegation met with the secretary of states to put forward their demands as Mirza states, “this was the first event in the history of Hindustan that women delegation first time demanded that women rights should be formally accepted at official level.” After independence, the question of women rights exclusively took a new shape, as the settlement of refugees from India to Pakistan, in which the Muslim women were in a great number, became a source of prime concern. A detailed narration about the problems faced by refugees including women during partition can be assessed in the works of Yasmin Khan and Pippa Virdee, “The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan”; and “Negotiating the past: Journey through Muslim women's experience of partition and resettlement in Pakistan”. Both considered women refugees the real victims of partition, as they faced the dilemma of finding their identities in the new place by having a baggage of being physically dishonored.

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83 Haziqul Khairi, op. cit., p.12. Translated from Urdu by the researcher.
84 Sarfaraz Hssain Mirza, op.cit., p.39. Translated from Urdu by the researcher.
After the settlement of refuges, as a member of constituent assembly Begum Shahnawaz and Begum Ikramullah continuing the cause of women uplift after independence, realized that women empowerment will remain a utopia unless more and more women would not be in legislative chambers and in this regard they demanded more reserved seats in central and provincial legislatures. Despite of the resistance, different legislations were initiated. The encouragement which Muslim women received from the examples of Fatima Jinnah, Begum Shahnawaz and Begum Ikramullah was further explained by Sikandar Hayat and Sarah Ansari in their writings, “The Charismatic Leader: Quaid-e-Azam Muhmmad Ali Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan”87 and “Winds of Change?: The Role of Women Activists in Lahore Before and After Partition”88. Hayat and Ansari focuses on Lahore and considers Punjab as a hub of all political activities of All India Muslim League, where first time Muslim women participated in rallies, protests and public conventions, along with men for freedom struggle. While giving the analysis about the role of 1945-46 elections in mobilizing Punjabi women, Hayat writes, “the Muslim women made the most of the opportunity provided by the 1945-46 elections to mobilize the Muslim masses behind the League, especially in the Punjab and the NWFP, the two provinces Jinnah needed to win for Pakistan.”89 This urge of women for political participation even after independence remained strong as Ansari gives various examples of women participation and highlights the role of Lahore (capital of Punjab), where such activities took place.

2.1.4: Fourth Theme: Measures by State-Institutions for the Empowerment of Pakistani/Punjabi Women

The fourth theme relates to the role of state institutions, during different democratic and dictatorial governments in Pakistan. An exclusive study of first pro-women legislation by

89 Sikandar Hayat, op.cit., p.242.
Mumtaz Hamid entitles, “The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of Pakistan”\(^9\). Hamid considered this legislation a first step in ensuring women their socio-economic rights and “its main significance, however, lies in the fact that the ordinance became a focal point of conflict between the Muslim modernists, on the one hand, and the orthodox ulama...”\(^9\)

The resistance ofodoxy on various segments of this ordinance are also highlighted by Shehla Zia, and Khawer Mumtaz/Farida Shaheed in their writings, “The Legal Status of Women in Pakistan”\(^9\) and “Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back”\(^9\). The writers further expand their study to the rule of Zia-ul-Haq, who enforced anti-women legislative and executive measures under the pretext of Islamization, which marginalized them in social and legal realms. While highlighting the effects of Zia’s discriminatory policies against female population, Mumtaz and Shaheed acknowledge that “---- it appears that Pakistani women took two steps forward in the preceding half century and are now being forced to take one step back as a result of the Islamization [sic] process.”\(^9\) This impact of Zia’s legislation on women is particularly discussed by Asma Jahangir/Hina Jilani and Shahnaz Khan in their works, “The Hudood Ordinance: A Divine Sanction?”\(^9\) and “Zina, transnational feminism and the moral regulation of Pakistani women”\(^9\). Being lawyers, Jahangir and Jilani discuss the legal implication of laws restraining female population. The authors provided statistical data to prove that the convicted belonged to middle/low class women. Within the Hudood ordinance, laws related to Zina (adultery) were most misused to convict female population. This law has been chosen as a focal study by Khan, who debate over the criminal effects of Zina law through interviews with its victims, assessing, “women’s stories speak of physical and emotional abuse; they do not speak of sexual abuse. This is because, should they accuse someone of rape and if they lack the efficient evidence to prove it, they will likely face

\(^9\)Ibid., p.39.
\(^9\)Ibid., p. 3.
zina charges.”97 Supporting this contention with a stress on its religious guise, Ruhi Khalid and Khalid Bin Sayeed in their writings, “Development of Feminist Psychology: A Pakistani Perspective”98 and “Western Dominance and Political Islam: Challenges and Responses”99 assert that Zia attained support from orthodoxy. According to Khalid, these orthodox “perceived women as incapable of leading a decent life by themselves without the protection of a man. Widows and divorcees were referred to as ‘unprotected’ and ‘deprived’.”100 Their views were contrary to the spirit of Islam as stressed by Sayeed, who generated a debate over the egalitarian nature of this religion by mentioning that many verses of Quran ensure equality of both genders, which are deliberately ignored by fundamentalists.

Later on the Hudood ordinance, in spite of widespread demand, could not be repealed because of strong resistance by the supporters of conservative ideas. Even Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif could not make even a minor change in these draconian laws; neither could they generate any substantial measures for the large scale women improvement.101 Contrary to the practical realities, Benazir Bhutto in her books, “Daughter of the East-An Autobiography” and “Reconciliation-Islam, Democracy and the West” shares her persuasion and policies towards women empowerment, which are refuted by Shahnaz Rouse and Lawrence Ziring in their writings, “Gender, Nation, State in Pakistan-Shifting Body Politics”102 and “Benazir Bhutto: A Political Portrait”.103 Rouse considers that being a female head of a state, and operating in an orthodox society, Benazir was bound to be in attire approved by the given society. In this situation Ziring believes, being a female head and politically weak as a Primer, Benazir further had no support to

97 Ibid., p.76.
100 Ruhi Khalid, op. cit., p.136.
101 It was in 2006, that some changes were made in the Hudood ordinance by the military government of Musharaff.
102 Shahnaz Rouse, Gender, Nation, State in Pakistan- Shifting Body Politics (Lahore: Vanguard Book, 2006).
amend or reverse the most sensitive legislation, *Hudood* ordinance. Similarly, the absence of commitment to transform women status in society by Nawaz Sharif is discussed by Sangh Mittra & Bachchan Kumar in their work, “Discrimination against Women”\(^{104}\). Mittra and Kumar stresses that being a political protégé of Zia-ul-Haq with religious inclination, Nawaz Sharif had no committed enough to bring any law, facilitating women segment of the society. The writers further states that, “when he came to power in November 1990, he promised to adopt Islamic law as the supreme law of Pakistan, and in April 1991 he introduced legislation to that effect. Many women’s rights activists, including WAF, feared that women would be forced to take yet another step backward.”\(^{105}\)

The prime era in terms of pro-women governmental measures through legislation and executive orders originated from Pervaiz Musharaff’s rule, when *Women Protection Bill* was passed in 2006, distinguishing rape from adultery. Pervez Musharraf in his autobiography “*In the Line of Fire - A Memoir*”\(^{106}\) boost that he took effective measure for women empowerment. He highlights his pro-women measures by increasing their seats in national and provincial and local governments. This increased political representation brought a number of women active members in the Punjab Assembly like Humaira Awais Shahid, who in her autobiography, “*Devotion and Defiance: My Journey in Love, Faith and Politics*”\(^{107}\) writes about her experience. Shahid narrates in detail the difficulties; she faced from conservative in the house, while proposing pro-women bills. She admits that the Punjabi society is yet to reform its self, moving away from the chauvinistic attitude towards women development. After Pervaiz Musharaff, the pro-women legislations continued with an active support of women activists and organizations. One of such enactment is a theme of Faouzia Saeed’s book, “*Working with


\(^{105}\) “Discrimination against Women”, op. cit., p.132.


Ibid., p. 108.
2.1.5: Fifth Theme: Impact of the Agents of Change in Transformation of Punjabi Women

The fifth and the last theme relate to the role and impact of the agents of change - education, political process, media and civil society organizations in reshaping the status of Punjabi women. At the outset, I will observe the transformation of the Pakistani society through the mentioned variables because the province of Punjab operates within the federal structures of Pakistan. This phenomenon of socio-cultural transformation of Pakistan is discussed by Mohammad A.Qadeer in his book, “Pakistan: Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation”\(^\text{113}\), where he presents a concept that the transformation of Pakistani society has a linkage with economic growth as it “includes some notions of social equality and reduction of poverty. Thus, inherent in the goal of development are social objectives calling for institutional reforms which now include responsive governance, democracy, and human rights.”\(^\text{114}\) Qadeer believes that the pattern of social development has been unequal, in which the non-material part of social interaction has “witnessed a grafting of modern form onto traditional functions and meaning.”\(^\text{115}\) Although, I have not chosen economic development as an independent variable, however keeping in view the linkages as mentioned by Qadeer, it will be considered while dealing with other agents of change.

The first identified agent of change for transformation of women placement is education, as it is considered as an important factor for women to make a distinction between right and wrong, suggesting ways and means to aspire for their rights and equal status. The significance of education in improving women status in various aspects of life has been discussed by Cynthia Lloyd/Cem Mete/Monica Grant, Zeba Ayesha Sathar and Abdur Rauf, in their respective writings, “Rural girls in Pakistan: Constraints of policy and


\(^{114}\) Mohammad A.Qadeer, op.cit., p.20.

\(^{115}\) Ibid., p.36.
“Does Female Education Affect Fertility Behaviour in Pakistan?” and “Rural Women And The Family: A Study of a Punjabi Village In Pakistan.” Lloyd, Mete and Grant in their co-authored work highlight that “…girls’ (education) enrollment rates have risen over time and gender gaps have narrowed, by the turn of the twenty-first century.” What, I observe from this particular literature about the Punjabi society is that although, the literacy rate still needs to be improved, along with quality of education among girls but one cannot over-look that even this little development has contributed in an over-all thinking pattern of female section of the society. Relating to the mentioned literature, I do conform that the educated female has more flexibility then their uneducated fellows in various ways. This connection is pointed out by Sathar in her writing, where she choses one aspect of women life effected by education stating that, “there are some significant associations between educational level of women and their attitudes and behaviour related to fertility. Educated women marry later, desire fewer children 'bear fewer births', lose less children through death at earlier ages, breast-feed for shorter durations, and use contraception more than uneducated women.” For educated women, to have the flexibility in afore-mentioned affair does not confirm their open choice in all matters as endorsed by proceeding literature. For example, it is not likeable for them, if they demand their religious and legal right of inheritance; no matter they operate in rural or urban set-ups. On this dimension, a detailed survey base analysis by Rauf conveys that though “many respondents feel that women should receive their fair share from the patrimony, yet they expect them to return it to their brothers for goodwill and retain claim to aid in unanticipated future emergencies.” Thus in rural/urban divide, despite of education, the female choices in various aspects are not unified as mentioned by Rashid in her earlier mentioned work, where she is convinced that “…
Unlike western societal structures, Punjabi society is moving in a different manner; despite the increase in female literacy levels and women’s entry into various professions, public space and the basic family structure has not changed.‖¹²³ What I gather from the above-mentioned literature is that education is no doubt an important variable which help women to achieve an upward social mobility. However, this phenomenon has its limitations as well because solely this agent of change might not affect the women conditions in a comprehensive manner.

The second agent of change as identified is the political process, which increases women participation, through representation and mobilization. The various aspects of women participation in Pakistan’s political history have been discussed by Dushka H. Saiyid, Farida Shaheed, Asma Zia/Sohail Warraich, Shehla Zia/ Farzana Bari, St. Louis Mona Lena Krook, Amrita Basu, Naeem Mirza/ Wasim Wagh and in their respective writings, “Women in Politics-Problems of Participation: A case study of Pakistan”¹²⁴, “Women in Politics: Participation and Representation in Pakistan”¹²⁵, “Baseline Report on Women’s participation and Public Life in Pakistan”¹²⁶, “Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform ...”¹²⁷, “Women, Political Parties and Social Movement in South Asia”¹²⁸, “A Five-Year Report on: Performance of Women Parliamentarians in the 12th National Assembly (2002-2007)”¹²⁹. According to Saiyid, 1970 elections proved to be the first instance, where women over-whelming participated with their own free will by setting aside the pressures from their family male members. In this regard, Shaheed, Zia and Warraich considered that in 1990s, the advocacy campaign of women rights organizations played important role in raising the significance of women

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 224-225.
¹²⁷ St. Louis Mona Lena Krook, Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide (USA: Oxford University Press, 2009).
political participation in their socio-economic uplift, with a belief that only women representations can advocate legislation concerning women issues. In this regard, Zia and Bari provides a brief review of women’s share in politics since 1980, furnishes a detailed data about women representation at local, provincial and national levels, mostly in tabulated form. The writers also discuss the handicaps in women political participation, ranging from cultural stereotype to economic dependence. The most interesting part of this historical analysis has been the performance of democratic governments, which according to Krook not only remained ineffective in increasing the number of women reserve seats but also could not give them numerical strength within their parties. While supporting these views, Basu writes, “the authoritarian political context has created serious obstacles to women’s participation in party politics and most parties are weak, unrepresentative, and corrupt.”\(^\text{130}\) This insensitivity of political parties was responsible for weak political participation of women. The situation changed relatively, when Musharaff increased women seats in national, provincial and local bodies as mentioned by Mirza and Wagha in their exclusive report on women parliamentarians’ performance during this time period. The writers consider the role of women parliamentarians remarkably as they through various ways not only highlighted women related problems but also actively participated on other national issues.

The third agent of change relates to the impact of print, electronic and social media, in reshaping the role of Pakistani/Punjabi women. Saqib Riaz in his book, “Agenda Setting Role of Media in Pakistan: Exploring Media effects on Society”\(^\text{131}\), provides a detailed insight of the role of media in Pakistan and its impact. Riaz believes that this impact is significantly strong, as it reshapes the public opinion unconsciously, owns the media agenda. Though, this book does not discuss the role of media on women issues exclusively, but it does highlight the powerful influence of media on the thinking patterns of Pakistani society. In the early years of Pakistan, there were limited media out-lets, making a little impact on larger segments of the society as mentioned by Shuja Nawaz in

\(^{130}\) Amrita Basu, op.cit., p.94.
\(^{131}\) Saqib Riaz, Agenda Setting Role of Media in Pakistan: Exploring Media effects on Society (LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010).
his writing, "The Mass Media and Development in Pakistan"\textsuperscript{132}. Taking cognizant of the fact that in the early years of Pakistan, there was limited number of media out-lets. Apart from highlighting various historical phases of media growth, Nawaz draws a correlation between a low literacy and decreased readership of newspaper. According to the writer, "education plays a major role in the utilization of mass media because these media can only be effective as change agents in an environment in which the population already has information that can be either strengthened or rebutted. Without that prior education, the mass media are unable to evoke the desired response among a target audience."\textsuperscript{133} Akbar Zaidi discusses radio, being a part of media in his article, "Radio as Social Metaphor"\textsuperscript{134}. Selecting F.M 100 as his case study, Zaidi discussed that "the callers are almost invariably female and hail mainly from middle class localities in the city."\textsuperscript{135} This new trend no doubt determines the interest of female audience along with the impact of transmitted programs on their thinking. Seema Pervaiz in one of her report for Women’s Division Government of Pakistan, entitle "Analysis of Mass Media Appealing to Women"\textsuperscript{136}, describes the hours allocated to women related transmitted programs on radio and television in 1980s. Taking television as an important segment of media, Shahid Siddiqui, in his book, "Language, Gender, and Power- The Politics of Representation and Hegemony in South Asia"\textsuperscript{137} focused on the impact of media in creating gender image in society. The writer believes that dramas, advertisements and films on television, which cover women issues, are effective enough to build the image of female in society, though it has negative effects as well. Siddiqui explains that dramas can "mount psychological pressures on young female to be like the perfect female character presented in the plays, living in posh mansions and having all the worldly facilities. Thus the ultimate potential outcome is frustration and depression. There is a serious need to revisit plays in terms of their plots, setting, characters and messages."\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 936.
\textsuperscript{134} Akbar Zaidi, "Radio as Social Metaphor," \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol. 31, No. 8 (February, 1996).
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 459.
\textsuperscript{136} Seema Pervaiz, "Analysis of Mass Media Appealing to Women," \textit{Women’s Division Government of Pakistan} (Islamabad, 1982).
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 175.
In recent times, the social media has become a near parallel means of communication along with print and electronic media, although, the scope and reach is limited. The growing influence of social networking website like ‘facebook’, ‘tweeter’ on a society is deliberated by Katerina Dalacourap, Paolo Gerbaudo and Wael Ghonim in their respective works, “The 2011 uprisings in the Arab Middle East: political change and geopolitical implications”\textsuperscript{139}, “Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism”\textsuperscript{140} and “Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People is greater than the people in Power-A Memoir”\textsuperscript{141}. These writers discuss the role of social networking websites in organizing people, including women in large number, for a political transformation in the Middle East, which at least religiously and culturally corresponds to the Pakistani society. Dalacourap considered the role of social media including Facebook and Twitter, as one of the vehicles to organize the mass-movements at large scale in Arab-spring 2011. This social networking provided a platform to group together and organizes processions and gatherings. Adding further, Gerbaudo writes that social media contributed “in constructing and choreography of assembly during the Egyptian revolution, and on the digital activists who acted as the choreographers.”\textsuperscript{142} Ghonim supports the views that in case of Egyptian Arab Spring, the facebook ‘mobilized’ and ‘convinced’ masses to react over injustices in the society through an organized form; however, it is yet to build its image as an effective agent to bring change. Such kind of impact is relevant for Pakistan also as the role of social media especially ‘facebook’ has been observed during the “restoration of democracy movement” from 2007 to 2009, which is highlighted by Zahid Shahab Ahmed in his writing, “The Role of the Pakistani Mass Media in the Lawyers’ Resistance against the Musharraf Dictatorship, 2007-2009”\textsuperscript{143}.


\textsuperscript{142} Paolo Gerbaudo, op.cit., p. 75.

The fourth identified agent of change is civil society, including women rights groups. Ever since the creation of Pakistan, these organizations have been presenting their thoughts (on social, economic and political empowerment of women), through various awareness programs, in rural and urban centers. Interestingly, majority of women rights NGO’s are operating from Punjab. Through, the efforts of these organizations, women are today comparatively more aware of their rights than in the past. The contribution of women rights groups is not only highlighted through their reports and magazine but also research writings. As far as, the contribution of women NGO’s and activist are concern, I cannot ignore the name of Shirkat Gah and Aurat foundation, who through their quarterly newsletters with the title of “News Sheet” and “Legislative Watch” respectively, sensitize society on various issues of Punjabi female population. Apart from the newsletters, these organizations also have their research publications, addressing various women problems. For example, Shirkat Gah in one of its reports, “Submission on child, early and forced marriage” addressed the problems of early age marriages and its impact on female health and psychology. Similarly, another report by the same organization addresses the women marginalized role in politics, “Women in Politics: A country study Pakistan”. This report further highlights various barriers/hurdles, blocking women’s political participation. Similarly, Aurat foundation apart from its newsletter has published various books, research reports and Annual studies on social and political issues faced by Punjabi women. One of such report is on the social issue of honour killing by Maliha Zia Lari entitled, “A Pilot Study on: Honour Killings in Pakistan and Compliance of Law”, which discuss various socio-cultural and legal dimensions of this crime on its victims. Similarly, the same organization published reports like, “Annual report on situation of violence against women in Pakistan 2008: collection and compilation of statistics on incidents of violence against women” and “Gender-based violence in Pakistan: a scooping study”.

Apart from the reports by women NGOs, the women rights activists and other writers also address the role of women organizations in sensitizing female population. Such contributions are by Mohammad Qadeer, Farzana Bari/Saba Gul Khattak, Afshan Jafar, and Fawzia Afzal Khan in their respective studies “The Evolving Structure of Civil Society and the State in Pakistan”\textsuperscript{149}, “Power Configurations in Public and Private Arenas: The Women’s Movement’s Response”\textsuperscript{150}, “Engaging Fundamentalism: The Case of Women's NGOs in Pakistan”\textsuperscript{151}, and “Street Theatre in Pakistani Punjab: The Case of Ajoka, Lok Rehas and the Women Question”\textsuperscript{152}. Qadeer explains the gradual rise of civil society in Pakistan by classifying its political history in various phases. Bari and Khattak exclusively focuses on the emergence of women rights organizations since 1960s, when Hudood Ordinance evoked protests from women NGOs. At that time, women NGOs and students joined hands to oppose the draconian laws of Zia-ul-Haq. Jafar also consider the Zia era responsible for the rise of civil society organizations, including women rights groups and her study exclusively focuses on the criticism faced by these NGOs from orthodoxy as the “Fundamentalist discourse often paints women’s NGOs as immoral, lying, and manipulative organizations.”\textsuperscript{153} Supporting the struggle of women NGOs, Khan discuss the contribution of street theaters (LokRehas and Ajoka) in highlighting women issues through performances during the same time-period. While talking about the effects of these street theatres on the Punjabi society, Khan states, “within the last decade or so, Ajoka (the major Parallel Theatre group in Pakistan) as well as its regional spin-offs, notably LokRehas, have cast a critical eye through their plays and performances on the way the state's coercive shaping of the constitutional subject of the new nation has had a repressive effect on the identities and rights of women, religious


\textsuperscript{152} FauziaAfzal Khan, “Street Theatre in Pakistani Punjab: The Case of Ajoka, LokRehas and the Women Question,” \textit{The Drama Review}, 41:3 (Autumn 1997).

\textsuperscript{153} Afshan Jafar, op.cit., p. 264.
minorities, and the poor.‖¹⁵⁴ Our research will take into account the level and spread of the message of these NGOs, which they applied through various methods. It will also observe the gravity of influence that these NGOs have in transforming the lives of Punjabi women.

2.1.6: Conclusion

The above review of the literature regarding women issues, presented various propositions by taking care of multiple concerns and methodologies, to understand this particular phenomenon. I noticed that in corresponding societies, the impact of religion and culture undergoes near similar responses and even in developed countries, when they were passing through phases of transformation. Their concerns about women were not far away from those of contemporary developing societies, like Pakistan.

Various scholars in their discourse have spotlighted the role of women in Pakistani/Punjabi society and some of them specifically dealt with the issues confronted by female in their micro-studies. These authors have dealt with the placement of women through distinctive debate, attempting to locate the women placement in a traditional society like Punjab, which though is undergoing change in an uneven manner. However, there are few writers, who have discussed the problems of Punjabi women, overlooking a number of dynamics, which would be studied and analyzed during my research. Moreover, there is an absence of comprehensive study on the placement of Punjabi women in changing socio-cultural environment, due to such identified agents like education, political process, media and civil society organization.

The above-mentioned writers under five constructed themes highlights the traditional status of Pakistani/ Punjabi women as per the socio-cultural norms, religious inferences, economic and political conditions by keeping in view prevalent discriminatory practices. My study aims to evaluate the impact of those agents of change, which have over the years influenced the out-look and perceptions of the Punjabi women. The emphasize will

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp.39-40.
be to fill the deficiencies in already scribed literature, on Punjabi women placement particularly with reference to agents of change.

2.2: Conceptual Framework

To understand the plight and hope of the Punjabi women, it becomes essential that I examine those environments and circumstances (socio-economic and political), in which these women operate. In a number of cases, these women, though not in majority, are aware of their rights and capable if desired to improve their conditions. On the other side of the spectrum are the vast majority, who are either illiterate or having a minimum level of education, thus are unaware of even their basic rights. Therefore, it can be assumed that a vast majority of the Punjabi women population is not even sensitized to the fact that they are equal citizens of the country and have a right to enjoy socio-economic and political privileges. In order to comprehend this dichotomy, a question is raised that what are the causes of this disorderedly quandary? To find an answer for this question, I need to develop a detailed understanding of the socio-cultural environment, in which the female population of Punjab operates.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned conditions, the objective of this research would be twofold. First is to investigate the socio-culture structures in detail, where the socialization process as well as the exposure of a female child is value-biased and limited in a way that habits of subordination and dependency becomes part of her personality. Various dimensions of this construction of female personality would be investigated through the current research. Second is to identify those variables, which have a strong impact on the societal mind-set, regarding the roles of gender in the Punjabi society. I do understand that women as an independent individual by themselves cannot attain an equal status with men unless the male members of their household as well as the legislators/executors are not sensitized enough to take an active part for the betterment of the existing women conditions, which constitute 52% of the total population. While
studying this aspect, I also need to identify those forces in the Punjabi society, who have obstructed the formulation or implementation of pro-women policies.

A phenomenon to be studied, relates to the contribution of religion, which plays a central role, especially in Punjabi society. Religion provides different meaning when it merges/mashes with centuries old cultural norms that usually subjugate the women folk as inferior human beings. In this research, I would attempt to make a distinction between the religious injunctions of Islam and cultural orientations by keeping in view the real spirit of Islam, which provides equal rights to women in every aspect of their lives. Through this research, I would attempt to investigate those inculcated gender related biases in the Punjabi culture, which otherwise has no connectivity with religion.

After understanding the characteristics of afore-mentioned socio-cultural environment in Punjab, the most important component of our conceptual framework would be the impact of those selected factors/variables, which have a potential to modify, improve or transform the placement of women in the Punjabi society. Here, I would like to mention that these agents could be divided in to two broader categories:

1) The first category consists of those measures, which originate directly by the state with an intention to improve the existing condition thus ultimately leading to the empowerment of women, within the existing socio-economic and political spheres. The time-period from 1977 to 2013 presents a mix picture, where the women suffered because of laws, which not only curtailed their freedom but also minimized their status in comparison to men. This was followed by an era of inaction, where the governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif made little effort to reverse the situation. In this research, I would examine Zia-ul-Haq’s draconian laws and the reaction, generated by the civil society and woman organizations in particular. It would be followed by the reasons responsible for not altering these laws despite of tremendous pressure from civil society by the democratically elected governments, whose span of rule spreads over a decade (1988-1999).
Prior to 1977, the focus of governmental measures was confined to family laws, relating to the matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance, which facilitated the women by providing them some sort of freedom and dignity. This aspect has become a reference point for any meaningful research regarding women empowerment in the province of Punjab. However, after Zia-ul-Haq dictatorial rule, the attention of government was diverted towards political and economic rights of female population, with re-emphasize on their social status, particularly in Mushraff era, which continued during the Peoples Party’s government, after 2008 elections. The focus however remained in the symbolic increase of women representation in Local bodies, Provincial assemblies and National legislatures. Not to be ignored are certain laws, enacted during this regime, which enhanced and protected the Punjabi women in various spheres of their lives. This particular research will also take in to account two important factors, while assessing the impact of pro-women legislation on Punjabi society. First, it would ascertain the legal deficiencies in these women related laws; second it would trace the hindrances in their implementation. Apart from this analysis, the research would also focus on the conscious effort of different governments in Pakistan and the kind of role it played in the uplift and safeguard of Punjabi women. This study would also investigate the level of women empowerment in Punjabi society with an identification of those areas, where they are able to enhance their position.

2) The second category of variables is those, which the state indirectly support and play significant role in redefining the status of Punjabi women. These selected variables are education, political process, media, and civil society including women rights organizations. The focus of this research would not only confine to the dynamic existence of these agents of change but also on their level of impact in re-shaping the socio-economic and political status of Punjabi women. It is presumed that although the utility of these agents of change is recognized but it has made no significant effect regarding the transformation of an over-all society, providing an opportunity for the women to operate in an environment, equally in all fields of life. Thus, the pattern of change in the condition of Punjabi women is apparently irregular. The conceptual framework will exactly look in to the reasons of this imbalanced progression of the Punjabi women.
To see the existence of these categories of variables in Punjabi society, I would use books, articles, Public/private reports and surveys. However, there is an impression that when it will come to analyze the impact of some variables, the research might be limited due to the scarcity of data. At that point, I would conduct surveys and group interviews to measure the influence of these variables in reshaping or transforming the placement of Punjabi women. The effect of these variables on the placement of Punjabi society is essential because in order to achieve progress and create equilibrium in the society, gender discrimination needs to be abolished. This is only possible, when both male and female are treated fairly and equally with an acknowledgement that the pre-requisite of a healthy society is to uplift its weaker population by creating opportunities for their development, in all fields. This approach is not only complementary to the tenants of justice but is also a requirement of the Pakistani constitution, which in a long run would help to create a societal equilibrium.
Chapter 3: Socio-Cultural Setting of Pakistan, with Special Reference to Punjab

It is a well-known fact that societies have to go through various developmental stages, which primarily include economic growth with functional political structures, ultimately transforming cultural values. After passing through these phases, some societies become more mature with time, relating to the new requirements, while others still remain in transitory period. When this phenomenon is applied to Pakistan, it may be term as a struggling society, undergoing a process for a definite form, adjusting to the modern requirements, thus making efforts to alter centuries old traditional culture. Therefore, this society endeavors to move ahead by addressing and accommodating a variety of issues that it confronts and likely to do so in the future. However, the level of development varies from province to province and area to area.  

In general terms, culture can be defined, as an experience comprised of believes, values, attitudes and perceptions, which are acquired by a particular group of people. While writing on the same concept, a Social Scientist, Syed Abdul Quddus explains that “the body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits, constituting a distinct complex of traditions of a racial, religious group or a nation, also form a broad meaning of culture.” These attributes in the Pakistani/Punjabi situation are collectively transmitted from one generation to another. There are various groups as well as categories of people involved in the process but I observe that in a number of situations, different sectors are left behind, clinging themselves to a typical traditional culture, which hardly alters itself to the new requirements and traits. This notion is further interpreted by

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155 The National Human Development Report on Pakistan for the year 2003 considered the economic growth, health, education and quality of life as the parameters to estimate the Human development in different provinces. According to the report, “There is considerable variation across provinces with respect to literacy rates which vary from 51% in the Sindh to 36% in the Baluchistan. Similarly the primary enrolment rate varies from 75% in the Punjab, to 64% in the Baluchistan. As a consequence while the human development index for Pakistan, as a whole, is 0.541 the provincial HDI varies from the highest in the Punjab, at 0.557, to the lowest at 0.499 in Baluchistan.” Pakistan National Development Report 2003: Poverty, Growth and Governance, United Nation Development Program, Posted April 10, 2012, http://un.org.pk/nhdr/htm_pages/cp_1.html.

a professor of sociology Mohammad Abdul Qadeer when he states that “people have embraced the goal of material well-being. Regardless of their beliefs and traditions, they hardly adopt new technologies, particularly those bringing convenience and pleasure…. (Therefore,) some social institutions have changed more rapidly than others. Over-all, the material culture has continued to change towards modernism, while the non-material aspects have witnessed a grafting of modern forms onto traditional functions and meanings.”

When applied to the Punjabi society, I witness that the notion presented by Qadeer has mixed consequences. In more feudal parts of the Punjab, the instruments of modernism has merged with the traditional values to an extent that the orthodox practitioners continue to their loyalties with traditional values along with the hints of modern ideas, with an objective to achieve the best of both worlds. In its ultimate analysis, the traditional forces have the final say.

Normally such traits are not static because by the time, when the next generation adopts them, they reinterpret new values by merging them with the past practices. As a result, a combination of old and new values is inter-twined, thus making it difficult to draw clear lines between traditional and conventional practices. In a number of instances, the mixture of the two diverse practices creates a new situation and at times takes a unique shape by itself.

Every society has its own traditions and culture, incorporating sub-cultures in a broader sense, which in turn collectively formulates a larger over-arching commonality, comprising of dress, habit and belief at national level, enabling it to discriminate itself from other societies. These cultural elements of Pakistani/Punjabi society, with its impact on the placement of women would be discussed in the forthcoming portions of this chapter.

3.1: Diversity of Pakistani Culture

3.1.1: Influence of Different Civilizations

The culture of Pakistan exhibits a considerable diversity, as the “successive waves of migration have brought an astonishing array of people in to the country: Persian, Greeks, Moghals, Indians, Arabs, and a host of other Middle Eastern races have, over the centuries, complicated the racial mixture of the country’s population.” Consequently, this blend of different races left a significant impact on the cultural and linguistic transformation of this land. This shifting continued till and after the creation of Pakistan. A Chinese senior research fellow, Wu Yongnian, while explaining the characteristics and values of Indian culture, which also is relevant to the Pakistani situation, states:

Diversity stands out as one of the most prominent characteristics of the Indian cultural system. Within this system, there are different cultural elements such as Hellenic culture, Islamic culture, Persian culture, English culture and Chinese culture. The reason for this diversity is multifaceted and the most important factor is the alien cultures brought to India by invaders. For example, the Indian Islamic culture was launched after Babur defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, the ruler of Delhi, in 1526 and founded the Mogul empire. Babur, who had a Mongolian origin and came from Central Asia, was one of the descendants of the Turkish conqueror Timur. The introduction of English culture into India was completed after the British colonists invaded India and imposed colonial rule on it, which lasted for 200 years. Only the spread of Chinese culture into the subcontinent had occurred by peaceful means.

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159 The Hellenic culture influenced the Indian culture in 327 B.C, when the great Greek conqueror Alexander (Sikandar-e-Azam), invaded the north of India and left a great impact of its civilization, especially on the people of Punjab. Similarly, the Islamic culture in India was launched, in 1526, when the Mughal Empire was founded by a Mongolian origin, Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur in Sub-Continent, who came from Central Asia and was one of the descendants of the Turkish conqueror Timur. However, the influence of English culture into the Indian culture can be traced, after the 200 years of the British colonial rule in India. It is significant to note that only the amalgamation of Chinese culture into the subcontinent culture occurred by peaceful means and this friendly cultural exchange between the two sides lasted for several thousand years. With the perspective of time and language, then I would find different types of vernacular cultures like Vedic culture, Aryan culture, Dravidian culture, Brahmanic culture, Marathi culture, Punjabi culture and Assamese culture. Similarly, from the religious aspect today, the impact of Brahmanic culture, Buddhist culture, Indian Islamic culture, Jain culture, Christian culture, Sikh culture
Although, these foreign rulers inducted their language, as well as certain cultural traits (especially in the form of different styles in dresses, varieties in food and living style) in present Pakistan, but the centuries old customs and practices like *Baradari/Zath* system remained intact. Though, the above mentioned cultural traits in a boarder context not only refers the peculiar trends in society regarding music, art, design, names, signs/symbols, performances, architectural forms, handicraft and narratives, but they also deal with attitudes, behaviors and perceptions of common people towards different situations, in daily life. This dimension of culture is highlighted by a Japanese Professor, Hirai Naofusa as she believes that nearly, all activities that take place in a society concerning believes, laws and finer arts can be incorporated towards the definition of a culture, especially such attitudes are followed in a consistent manner for an extensive time period.

### 3.1.2: Linguistic and Ethnic Features

Pakistan comprises of approximately 180 million population with immense linguistic and ethnic diversity, consists of Pashtoons, Baloch, Punjabis, Sindhis and other minorities, who represent diverse cultural traditions and speak different languages. According to an estimate about ethnic groups, the Punjabis are the largest single group (44.68 percent), followed by Pashtoons (15.42 percent), Sindhis (14.1 percent), Saraiki (8.38 percent), Urdu-speaking (7.57 percent), Balochi and Bahai culture can also be identified in Indian culture and such type of diversity exhibits its uniqueness of Indian culture. Wu Yongnian, “Characteristics and Values of Indian Culture”, Posted May 12, 2012, [http://www.crvp.org/book/Series03/III-21/chapter-12.htm](http://www.crvp.org/book/Series03/III-21/chapter-12.htm).

160 The word *Baradari* is derived from a Persian word "Baradar", which means "Brother". In Pakistan and India, this word refers to a social classification in society. In Pakistan, the tribal associations can be equated with *biradaris*.

161 The ruler had formed a peculiar court culture and were not concerned with the details of the local culture and allowed the people to live their lives as they had done four thousand years.

162 Narrative is a kind of retelling, often in words (though it is possible to mime a story), of something that happened (a story). The narrative is not the story itself but rather the telling of the story—which is why it is so often used in phrases such as “written narrative”, “oral narrative,” etc. while a story is a sequence of events, a narrative recounts those events, perhaps leaving some occurrences but because they are from some perspective insignificant, and perhaps emphasizing others.
(3.57 percent) and others are 6.28 percent. The table 3.1 further clarifies the linguistic division of the country.

Table 3.1: Provincial Languages and Dialects of Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Main Provincial Languages</th>
<th>Other Languages and Dialects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>Balochi/Pashto</td>
<td>Barohie; Hazaragi (a Persian dialect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khyber-Pakhtunkhuwa</td>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>Hindko; Chitrali; Kohistani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>Saraiki; Pothohari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>Sindhi; Urdu</td>
<td>Pashto; Lasi; Kutchi; Thari; Saraiki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author. Other important regions of Pakistan, though not yet attained the status of a province are, (a) Gilgit-Baltistan (Burushaski; Shina; Balti); (b) Azad Kashmir (Pothohari/Mirpuri; Kashmiri)

There are around 50 minor dialects which exhibits the fact that, “the ethnic composition of Pakistani society has intensified and became more complex because of rapid growth in population and various linguistic variations due to colloquial differences.” Recently, these differences led to political demands for a separate entity, in the form of new provinces. However, despite of these demands on the basis of diversity, when it comes to the attitudes towards minorities and underprivileged section of society, the cultural pattern of every province are the same, with little modifications.

165 The main demand is to construct a new province consisting of Saraiki belt in South Punjab. Some of political leaders also demand Bahawalpur province, as well, i.e., within South Punjab. In Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa, there is a movement by the people of Hazara Division for a separate province, to be carved from Khayber-Pakhtunkhwa province.
3.1.3: Religious and Spiritual Inclinations

Apart from linguistic and ethnic shades of the Pakistani society, religion along with spiritual inclination plays an important role on the lives of 97 percent of the Muslim population. These influences become an integral part of their lives. Along with the rituals, Islam also provides a code of conduct and a definite set of laws. In the Pakistani society, rituals are observed according to various interpretations, as provided by different schools of thought, which forms a kind of an extension, within the over-arching Islamic norms. This Muslim diversity is mentioned by a well-known Professor, Syed Farooq Hasnat, as he states that “a vast majority of the Pakistani population is followers of one of the four schools of Islamic interpretation: Braidvi or Sufi order, Ahle Hadith, Deobandi, and Shias. The first three are grouped together as Sunnis, but Braidvis are closer to Shias in their beliefs and rituals than to the other two Sunni sects of Islam.”

In a historic perspective, these sectarian differences remained within their boundaries to a certain extent. One of the reasons was that during the British rule (1858-1947), the Muslim Civil Code dealing with such matters like inheritance, marriage, divorce and guardianship was not altered. The British had left these matters, to be dealt as per the religious affiliation of respective sects.

Today, despite of various sects in Islam, all agree on the basic five principles of the religion, being mandatory. As the detailed interpretations varies from respective sects, they become prone to national and regional power politics, creating a visible confusion and conflict on certain issues, including socio-economic and political affairs, which at times becomes violent, in various forms. Apart from sectarian divisions, Hakim and Aziz classify the Muslim preachers and scholars as follows:

Islam does not have an ecclesiastical system for training religious leaders, and three distinct types of religious authority can be identified in Pakistan. These are the local maulvi (local religious leaders/preachers), the maulana or ulema (learned scholars in Islamic teachings) and the pir (spiritual leaders). They operate through their mosques

166 Syed Farooq Hasnat, op.cit., p.129.

The literal meaning of \textit{maulvi} is a person, who is an expert in Islamic law but in Pakistan, the local \textit{maulvis} usually have a limited knowledge of religion and as they are not graduate from any formal religious institution, therefore mostly interpret Quranic versus through a conservative prism. Most of the time, such interpretations reflect their personal views, which hardly have any relevance with the true spirit of Islam. Therefore, most of the time, their opinions are subject to a certain bias towards liberal views, which they believe, are the reflections of western culture. Consequently, they are not open to reason, when it comes to the liberal interpretation of religion, nor are they conducive to change and innovation. They do not have a large following; nonetheless they are able to enforce their orthodox views, in letter and spirit firmly on their families, especially on women or on those who come to their mosques for prayers.

The second Pakistani Islamic authority is the \textit{Ulema} or \textit{Maulana}. The literal meaning of this word refers to the educated class of those Muslim scholars, who spend several years in training and learning of Islamic disciplines and are well versed in \textit{fiqh} (jurisprudence). Moreover, they have a near command on the Islamic law, based on Quran and \textit{Shari’ah} that they acquired from recognized institutions of Islamic learning. Even, in this category, there are different schools of thought, who interpret the Islamic law, according to the ideology of their particular religious institution. Therefore, the uniformity in the views of \textit{Ulema} is missing, when it comes to different socio-political issues of daily life. However, unlike \textit{Maulvis}, the \textit{Ulema} at times are open to reason and objectivity, when presenting their views. In short, their rationality and relative openness distinguishes them from \textit{Maulvis}. For example, 1973 Constitution was constituted by a secular ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), the National Assembly \textit{ulema members} unanimously signed the document, though after lengthy discussions, leading to a compromise.
Among these Ulemas, there are two divergent points of views of the Islamic law and practices. One are those, who present a *liberal* interpretation of Quranic verses and are open for adaptation of these laws according to arising circumstances, without compromising the basic tenets of Islam. Such well-known liberal religious Ulema/scholars of recent times are Javed Ahmad Ghamidi\(^{168}\) and Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri\(^{169}\). Both base their arguments on two basic sources of Islamic law; Quran and *Sunnah*, and as well as the concept of *Ijtihad*\(^{170}\) in particular. Ghamidi and Qadri are of the view that Islam acknowledges equal rights of man and women in socio-economic and political domains. Qadri stresses on the active political participation of women, by quoting the examples from the rule of the second caliph of Islam, Hazrat Umer Farooq.\(^{171}\) He asserts “during the rule of Hazrat Umer, women being the members of parliament opposed the bill presented by Hazrat Umer about limiting the dower and presented evidence from Quran to support their arguments, which was appreciated by the Caliph, consequently the proposed bill was withdrawn.”\(^{172}\) This empowered status of women in Islam is also explained by Ghamidi, who clearly mentions in one of his television programs, on a renowned channel that in Islam, women can become head of a state, if majority wishes so. Thus implying that irrespective of gender, women enjoy all social, economic and political rights and privileges, on equal basis, along with men.\(^{173}\) Both Ulemas have a large following amongst the educated section of Pakistan.

On the other side are those who present a conservative connotation of Quranic verses and limit their vision to theoretical application, by ignoring the changing practical realities.

\(^{168}\) A host of a popular religious program in one of the leading television network.

\(^{169}\) He is a law professor and a Sufi scholar. He was a former professor of international constitutional law at the University of the Punjab. Qadri is also the founder and Chairman of Minhaj-ul-Quran International and author of more than 736 books.

\(^{170}\) The literal meaning of *ijtihad* is to strive with one’s total ability and efforts to reach a goal which in this case is to endeavor to deduce the divine laws of shari’ah from the reliable sources and proofs. To reach the stage of *Ijtihad* therefore is the capacity to give an expert opinion in the matter of religion.


\(^{172}\) Ibid.

Consequently, they do not welcome any novelty in the interpretation of religious laws. In this regard, I can exemplify two religious Ulemas/Scholars, Abul Ala Maududi\(^{174}\) and Israr Ahmed\(^{175}\), who represent the orthodoxy. Both believed that in many ways, women status in Islam is equal to man in moral and religious affairs but not in legal matters. Ahmed goes even ahead by declaring that a man is one degree superior to woman, as he believes that a woman cannot divorce as a man can. Similarly, he consider that the head of a family can only be a male member and the married couple are not equal partners in domestic life, therefore the superiority of man is confirmed in such matters.\(^{176}\) Similarly Maududi expresses views in his writings\(^{177}\), where he clearly states, “thus Islam, while recognizing the natural superiority of one partner over the other, has also specified that ‘men are a degree above women’. It works on the foundation that the biological and psychological differences between the man and the women do exist; it keeps those differences as they are; and it employs those differences as they are; and it employs those differences for determining their place and responsibilities in the social system.”\(^{178}\) The orthodox school of thought believes that the status of women is attached with men in capacity as a mother, wife or daughter, and the women do not have a separate identity of their own.

The third religious category in Pakistan is Pirs (spiritual leaders), who are disciple of the Sufi\(^{179}\) saints, belonging to Brahlvi school of thought. The Sufi’s had played significant role in the preaching of Islam in the South Asian region and “...have historically been symbols of tolerance, peace, love and respect for humanity. These values are the anti-

\(^{174}\)AbulA’laMaududi was a journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist leader and political philosopher, and a controversial 20th century Islamist thinker in British India, and later Pakistan.

\(^{175}\) Dr.Israr Ahmad was a Pakistani Islamic theologian and a very great Islamic Scholar followed particularly in South Asia and also among the South Asian diaspora in the Middle East, Western Europe, and North America. He is the founder of the Tanzeem-e-Islami, an off-shoot of the Jamaat-e-Islami. He has spent more than 50 years of his life teaching Quran and preaching Islam. He hosted a daily show on Peace TV, a 24 hours Islamic channel broadcast internationally, and until recently on ARY Qtv.


\(^{178}\) Ibid.

\(^{179}\) The name Sufi comes from “suf,” the Arabic word for wool or “saf,” the Persian word for pure.
thesis to violence, sectarianism, militancy and terrorism…” Their followers became the spiritual guide for the masses and as mentioned above are known as *Pirs*. The Sufis spread the message of Islam, through poetry, and sermons. They present liberal interpretation of religion and deal with *Mamulat* (daily affairs of life). Their followers visit their mausoleums to pay homage and to seek guidance in different affairs of their daily lives. Therefore, they have strong influence on the thinking patterns of their followers.

Among the *Sufis*, there are four major mystic orders; Chishti, Suhrawardi, Qadri and Naqshbandi. Most of the rural population, in particular, is followers of these orders. In Punjab, the Chisti order is most followed. Some of the well-known Sufis in Punjab are Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh; Khwaja Ghulam Farid; Sultan Bahu and Bulleh Shah. The Mausoleums of mentioned saints ultimately came under the official control through *Waqq* (endowments), Shrines (attached with trusts) and Khanqahs (hospices). The contribution of these saints is well defined by a senior columnist, Nadeem F. Paracha, “The saints’ interpretation of Islam was more accommodating. Consequently, over the centuries a largely permissive culture of devotional music and indigenously cultivated rituals began taking shape around and inside the shrines. The shrine culture was enthusiastically patronized by various Muslim dynasties that ruled the subcontinent, and it became a vital part of the belief and ritual system of a large number of Muslims in the region.” After the death of these saints, their descendants, though not as pious as their forefathers, attained an over-whelmed followings. According to a social scientist scholar, Katherine Ewing, the political leadership realized that these *Pirs* through well-organized shrines influence the social and political decisions of their followers, which maximize their political power. Therefore, “… the secular government of the military leader Ayub Khan (in power from 1958 to 1969) established a different policy toward the shrines, which his successors Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (the "Islamic Socialist" prime minister from 1971 to 1977) and General Zia ul-Haq have continued essentially unchanged. Through the vehicle of a

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newly founded Department of Auqaf, these leaders maintained a policy towards the shrines that was consistent with their ideologies and goals."^{182}\footnote{Katherine Ewing, “The Politics of Sufism: Redefining the Saints of Pakistan,” \textit{The Journal of Asian Studies}, Vol. 42, No. 2 (February, 1983), p. 251.} Similarly, with the passage of time, these \textit{Pirs} extended their role from purely religious to political affairs, by contesting elections for national and provincial assemblies and also by throwing their weight behind certain political groups.

Such kind of political involvement provided them a chance to attain maximum authority, which is usually missing as an exclusive spiritual symbol. Ewing explained this acquired political role of \textit{Pirs}, apart from their religious role by stating that “though the hereditary pirs were embedded in this political structure from which they derived much of their present power and authority, their authority as pirs ultimately derived from the Sufi tradition. Their ancestors, with whose shrines they were associated, were Sufis. In the Sufi tradition, political leadership is clearly separated from spiritual authority.”^{183}\footnote{Ibid., pp. 251-253.} The reason to make religious figures separate from the political affairs was primarily to intact the sanctity of spiritual responsibilities. However, despite of the dual role of some spiritual healer’s, the respect and following of these pirs still exists in the Pakistani society, and are regularly visited by their followers, primarily to seek guidance on various affairs of their daily lives. There are various rituals associated with the visit to shrines like Bayat (taking oath), lungar (free public kitchen) and mannat (divine intercession or making vows).

\section*{3.1.4: Social Customs and Ceremonies}

Another shade of Pakistani culture is located in customs, social practices and ceremonies, which also becomes the basic ingredient of women related social activities in this society. It is not relevant here to deal with all social customs of this peculiar culture; therefore, I have classified those customs, which relate to woman’s life. One is birth of a child,
second is the death of any member of family and third concerns with the arrangement of the marriage ceremonies.

Before explaining the customs associated with these three events, I need to understand the patriarchal nature of Pakistani society that exhibits the male dominance over female member of a family. Normally, the eldest male member of a family enjoys a pivotal role and is considered as a sole protector and guide of the family, thus he expects unconditional obedience, from the rest of the family members, especially from women. Such type of a system ultimately gives more pleasure to the family, on the birth of a baby boy, instead of a baby-girl. This is further explained by Zekiye Egler:

The birth of a boy is an occasion for rejoicing. A boy is considered to be a young man from birth; therefore, power is added to the family. The birth of a girl raises mixed emotions. If there were no children before, the family is pleased. In a poor family, if they already have boys, they need to have a girl to exchange her later for a wife for one of the son. In rich family, she is the means to form new links with another family through marriage.184

As a tradition, gifts are given to the parents of a new born baby regardless of the gender. In a joint family system, a loss of any family member is considered as a great collective lose. All relatives gather on such occasion to share this painful movement with the aggrieved family. After the burial of the deceased, the relative shares a time period of mourning depending on different sects. According to the Islamic principles, if the deceased leaves a widow, she observes an optional set period for mourning and exclusion known as (iddah)185. The same is relevant for a divorcée but with little difference. In both cases, Islam encourages a woman to remarry.

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185 The period of Iddah is 4 months and 10 days long, after the death of husband. She neither can remarry during this period, nor can she meet strangers. However, in divorce the time period of Iddah is three months. The reason for this exclusiveness for widows and divorcées is to verify the parenthood of the new born child.
The third important event is marriage. Conventionally, the family takes the decision of marriage from both sides and the consent of bride and groom is hardly entertained. In addition, the matters related to the fixing of the date, dowry and even life after marriage is interfered by the families. The religion emphasizes the willful consent of the wedding couples, which is usually denied under socio-cultural mind-set of the society. However, there is an exception amongst the educated families, who take into account the likes or dislikes of their daughters and sons and also provide them support in this regard. Generally, in arranged marriages, the female relatives, who put all efforts to find a reasonable match for the couple, play the important role. However, the male head of the family, who usually is either the father, grandfather or even can be a paternal uncle, takes the final approval. The role of the family patriarch determines patrilineality of the culture. Professor Korson elaborates the process of finalizing a potential proposal for marriage:

In Pakistan, when it is felt that the proper time has come for a young man or woman to marry, the adult women of the family—mother, sisters, aunts, and even cousins (as well as male relatives)—will combine to search out the best possible prospect. Furthermore, all members of the family feel a certain responsibility toward those more directly involved in the search and are expected to render whatever assistance is necessary. Although the preliminary screening and negotiations will often be made by the women, the final decision must await the approval of the fathers of the principals or other male heads of the family. The details that go into the wedding preparations themselves, of course, are usually left to the women.\(^{186}\)

The wedding feast according to Islamic principles is supposed to be simple, rather than extravagant. On the contrary, this religious festivity is mostly arranged as per the social rules, where the rich arrange a number of functions, according to their extended budgets, and in this matter they keep all religious directions aside. While the poor usually limit their wedding related festivities to one or two days with simple food. Another handicap

which delay the weddings of the poor families daughters is the cultural requirement of dowry by the bridegroom’s family, which they cannot full-fill.

3.1.5: Socio-Cultural and Religious Festivities

From the above investigation, I get an impression that the Muslim festivities are intertwined with each another to an extent that apparently no distinction is visible but this is not the case. I can classify these festivals in three categories; religious, national and cultural. The religious festivals are celebrated according to respective calendars,187 while the national days take place to demonstrate love and unity for the country. It is important to note that religious and cultural practices are merged in the Pakistani culture in such a way that it becomes difficult to discriminate between the two. For example although marriage is not a religious obligation but the societal pressures has compelled the girls in particular to remain in marriage, weather she is contended or not. In the Punjabi society, un-married girls are looked upon as incomplete human. The biases of Pakistani/Punajbi society about an unmarried woman is well-defined by Ayesha Hoda as she states, “single women who chooses to ignore the demands of our society and do as they please with their lives – work where they want to, marry when they want to, date etc. – are described as rebellious, too modern, incapable of having a family life and so on.”188 The same negative attitude with more intensity is observed, when it comes to single mothers, divorcees and those women, who marry without the approval of their families. Though, with the passage of time, there has been a little acceptance for such kind of women, but majority of the population retains a similar mind-set as explained in a survey based article by Rahat Kamal, “in spite of the positive change in our society’s viewpoint most women, principally those belonging to the middle class and lower, still have to fight a solitary battle in order to erase the ugly blot that is unfairly placed on their reputation. Many

187 There are two major festivals fall in this category; Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated on first Shawal of an Islamic month, after observing a month for fasting and worship and this month is known as Ramadan. Eid-ul-Adha is celebrated on 10thZilHaz and it is also known as Eid-e-Qurban as the Muslims sacrifice animals and distributes its meat among the relatives and needy people. These two festivals continue for three days. Traditionally, all Muslims men, women and children are dressed up at their best on these events and meet relatives over feasts and they do exchange gifts. Apart from these two religious festivals there are other religious festivals celebrated among Muslims like Eid Milad-un-Nabi, Shabe--Bara’t, Shabe--Miraj etc.

succeed in finally gaining marital bliss but still have to face the slander.”

The views of Islam about the matrimonial matters are accommodating as discussed by Lee L. Bean and Mohammad Afzal, in a sampled research, stating that a “marriage is a religious act in Islam. The institution of marriage is strongly and explicitly stressed as the only acceptable pattern of life for adults in Islamic theology, although marriage itself is not a sacrament but a civil contract. The event, conditions of marriage, and the resulting family unit are subject to rather explicit norms; …(which stem from culture with no relevance to religion).”

Another factor to be taken into account is that there is an impression that the appearance, including clothing reflects the mind of a person. This correlation is studied by Professor Galinsky, in a different societal context. He is of the view that the dress reflects a person’s mind-set and his perception about others. Galinsky in his experimental study concludes “women who dress in a masculine fashion during a job interview are more likely to be hired, and a teaching assistant who wears formal clothes is perceived as more intelligent than one who dresses more casually.”

When this concept is applied on Pakistani society, one can assert that the women with veil are considered to be more religious and conservative with an orthodox mentality, conversely, those who are in western style or follow recent trends in fashion, reflect their liberal approach, less religious and more open mindedness, with an adaptive attitude towards changing tendencies of society. This mind-set clearly explains that the persons conduct play insignificant role in creating his impression, however the dressing style is a dominant factor to define his personality. This approach is well defined by Nadeem F. Paracha as follows:

This is especially so in societies (such as Pakistan) where faith has increasingly been advocated as a way to judge one’s character not through his or her actions in the modern context of nationhood, law and order; but on how frequently a person exercises religious rituals that now also include adorning correct Islamic attire. So, for example, a hijab-clad

woman may be interacting with a number of secular-materialistic situations, her hijab here becomes a statement suggesting that she has not lost her Islamic identity in the amoral commotion. She believes that her moral character will be judged more harshly (especially by men) if she did not adorn the hijab in non-religious surroundings.\textsuperscript{192}

I might not completely agree with the above observations that the attire by itself reflects a certain behavioral convictions. Rather there are number of other factors which demonstrate a certain conviction judged by the acts but not a particular clothing style. Today, I cannot neglect that in the changing Pakistani society, three kinds of varieties in dress is witnessed. The grandmothers covering her face while their daughters in hijab (covering of the hair) and the granddaughters without any such attire. On the other hand, there are instances, where young daughters with their free will and conviction are dressed up in more conservative style. The mentioned examples reflect un-uniformed pattern of clothing in the women of Pakistan. Relevant observation about the variations of dresses is that, no matter what brand of attire is embraced by women of different age groups, but the peculiarity of unified mind-set, regarding a specified gender role still remains the same.

3.2: Punjab as a Distinct Cultural Province

Punjab\textsuperscript{193} is Pakistan's second largest province in terms of area, with approximately 205,344 km\textsuperscript{2} (79,284 sq mi) as according to 2003 census. However, it is the most populated province of the country with 82,710,000 inhabitants. The rural and urban division in Punjab is approximately 66 % and 34% respectively with different cultures, attires and habits. Apart from this, Punjab can also be classified in sub-regions, based on their typology- (i) North Punjab (Potohar Plateau), (ii) Central Punjab (Doab) and (iii) South Punjab (Saraiki belt) with its distinct dialect and culture.

\textsuperscript{193}Meaning of Punjab is the land of five rivers, which signifies the land drained by the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej rivers.
The largest city and capital of Punjab is Lahore. According to 1998 census, Punjab does not only represent the largest single ethnic group (although, it has multiple linguistic dialects, which distinguish these groups in a number of ways). Therefore, with approximately 80 million people living in the “land of the five rivers”, “Punjabis make up over 60% of the country’s population. This numerical superiority, along with their living in the most fertile and prosperous region of Pakistan, explains the fact that Punjabis constitute a large proportion of the country’s political and social elite.”

Various devices of the Punjabi population compartmentize themselves especially when it comes to family affairs and to some extent political affiliations. However, the overarching attitudes and cultural habit remains the same. These various components of Punjabi society can be understood by identifying the composition of baradari/zath system, influence of religion, economic growth and gender division.

### 3.2.1: Baradari/Quom Composition

The basic social stratification of Pakistani society is normally born out of kinship structures, which create certain divisions, based on criterion of differentiation. These kinship structures have different names as well as connotations in geographically diverse

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194 Sean Sheeban, op.cit., p. 44.
areas of Pakistan. According to Qadeer, “it (kinship) is called biradari (literal meaning brotherhood) in Punjab and parts of Sindh, khel (clan) or kaliwal (community fellow) among Pashtoons, quomorzat by Balochs.” Like other provinces, the caste composition of Punjab is determined by ancestral profession, which ultimately becomes their identity. However, the ancestral linkages of different castes existing in this province are unique as their historic diverse identity in past has reshaped their structure. This phenomenon is explained by Butler, in which he identifies the perception of the Punjabis, where they connect their lineage with various tribal groups, within and outside the Punjabi society. He goes on to say that:

Most Punjabis trace their ancestry to pre-Islamic Jat, Rajput and other Hindu castes. However, as they intermarried with other ethnic groups who came to the area, certain qaums (clan or tribal groups) came to predominate, especially Gujjars, Awans, Arains, and Khokkars in northern Punjab, and Gilanis, Gardezis, Qureshis, and Abbasis in the south. Other Punjabis trace their heritage to Arabia, Persia, Balochistan, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. Thus, in contrast with many other areas, where people often remained isolated, Punjabis had very diverse origins. The extent of this diversity facilitated their coalescence into a coherent ethnic community that has historically placed great emphasis both on farming and on fighting.

There is another view held by Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan that the cultural and social linkages of the people of Pakistan in general had “unbroken politico-cultural links with Central Asia for longer periods.” In his view, the claim of the Punjabis that they are the exclusive descendants of the Arabs is not wholly correct. In the pre-British times, the composition of the society depended on the ownership of land, where the landowners

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195 Mohammad Abdul Qadeer, op.cit., p. 203.
196 Caste is a form of Social stratification characterized by endogamy, hereditary transmission of a style of life, which often includes an occupation, ritual status in a hierarchy, and customary social interaction and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and pollution.
were few and the large percentage of population was dependent on them, therefore, they were conditioned to work for landlords. An observer of Punjabi society and culture, provides a precise relationship between these two categories, as he explains that “three per cent owned 30 per cent of the arable land, most of them Rajput and Jat.”

Taimur Rehman, a sociologist, has his own explanation regarding the progression of the baradari/zath system in the Punjab. His description, which is “marxists” in nature, asserts that during the British rule in India, certain changes began to develop in the baradari/zath system, depending on their social status.

The above writers have explained the composition and development of the baradari system in their own way. Whatever the reason they ascribed for the composition of this peculiar Punjabi society, the ultimate reality is that association with the same biradari or clan become an instrument of emotional exploitation by those who have political agendas and are running for some public offices. Guzdar in his field research noticed that some of the castes are discriminated and considered to be lower in status than others. The author however recognizes that due to the changing circumstances, some were able to achieve higher social and political leverage thus defying the basic norm of discrimination. To assess further, I would like to mention that regardless of baradari/zath affiliation, people prefer to socialize with similar socio-economic status. An example can be quoted from the decision of marriage, where people of same caste, but with different socio-economic status do not establish matrimonial relations with each other, nor do they socialize within the framework of family get together. Therefore, one can assert that the baradari/zath loyalty is only for convenience, where the influential use the ‘unity’ of the baradari to gain benefits for themselves by enhancing their political or social status.

The class identification strictly adheres to the rural areas, while it becomes weak in urban centers, as it is difficult to trace the ancestry of one's neighbor as well as co-worker. In

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urban centres, while dealing with daily matters, there is no consideration of
baradari/zath distinction but this factor becomes a hindrance, as mentioned earlier, when it comes to inter-caste matrimonial and other social interaction issues. In rural set-up, baradari/zath system at times loses its meaning, if a person is reasonably educated, with a proficient profession or has gained a sufficient financial status. This is due to a change in the value system of the Pakistani society, where education and professional excellence is gradually replacing lineage considerations. From rural Punjab, large numbers of youngsters are expatriates and because of their reasonable earning capacity and remittances, their families have been able to improve their financial status and shift to the urban areas, thus enhancing their social position, no matter to which caste they belong. In comparison with urban, the rural communities of Pakistan are more sensitive about the caste/baradari system, sometimes even by ignoring the financial status of a person and his ability to contribute towards its society. Although, it seems unjust that academic qualification and professional record should be taken in to consideration in order to determine the social status of an individual within its surroundings but it hardly is a norm in the Punjabi society. In other words, a coherent and vibrant society demands that a person should be respected on the basis of his academic achievements rather on the basis of caste, family background and economic status.

In rural centers of Pakistan, the tribal system, governed by exclusive traditions and norms, predominantly inspired by the century’s old Baradari system, deeply entrenches itself in the culture of this land. This tribal/baradari system grants a dominant status to the eldest male member of the family, who is responsible for taking all important decisions and the women status remains subservient to the will of family patriarch. Mohmand and Gazdar explain the significance of patriarchal system by stating that, “a social structure…cuts across all provincial and district boundaries (of Pakistan), and that has perhaps proved to be the most resilient of all, is patriarchy.” This factor is one of the dominant features of Pakistan’s socio-cultural set-up and it has a strong impact not only in rural centres but also in the urban households. While explaining the process of

202 The male head of a family, tribe or a clan.
transformation of the Pakistani society, I can say that urbanization as well as modernization brought a lopsided societal change between the rural and urban centres, as the thinking patterns varied between the two especially when it comes to the status of women.

Although, inter and intra-caste biases and perceptions have a variety of dimensions and contradictions, nevertheless, when it comes to social affairs particularly family matters, a uniformity in attitude is observed in the Punjabi society. The differentiation amongst various individuals and family structures is conditioned to their exposure to education; type of employment and in some cases due to economic motivations. Therefore, I may say that irrespective of baradari/zath system boundaries, a certain level of uniformity is observed when it comes to social relations, especially those leading to the treatment of men towards women, in the Punjabi society.

3.2.2: Influence and Complexities of Religion

As discussed above, Islam is an important component of the Pakistani society, comprising of different sects. The main sects are two; Sunni (80 percent) and Shia (20 percent), and these two are further divided into various sub-groups. The sectarian division of Pakistani society is well-addressed by M.H. Siddiqui as he states:

…both sects believe in the basic principles of Islam. Among Shias, sub-groups like the Ismailis, Bohras and Khojas (the followers of Aga Khan) represent difference of opinion with regard to the line of Prophet’s successors, i.e. Imams, while among the Sunnis the different orders, the Hanafi, Shafi’i, Maliki and Hanbali, represent the various schools of thought, i.e. fiqh (jurisprudence). More recent among such groups representing different shades of thinking are the Deobandi and the Barelvi group, but these do not generally impinge on social harmony.204

In the sectarian divide of Pakistan, the fall-out of post 1979 Afghan had a strong ideological impact on the border areas of FATA, ultimately spilling over the impact on

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Punjabi society. Later on, Taliban, and Al-Qaeda with their orthodox and extreme views joined hands with the bigoted sectarian groups of Punjab. These groups started to target those, who deviated from their set agendas of religious beliefs, promoting culture of orthodoxy. As a consequence, the prevalent orthodox religious leaders were pushed to the centre of the religious divide. Though, the sectarian groups at the beginning aimed to target only Ahmadis, but later on in Zia-ul-Haq’s regime (1977-1987), the Shias in particular became the prime target. The situation further worsened, when the killing of Shia accelerated, with vengeance.205

The Shia and various subsects of Sunnis have their own madrasahs (religious schools), who do not only provide religious education to the new generation, as per their own interpretation of Islam, but also inculcate diverse set of values in their thoughts. Some of these religious schools, revolve around hatred towards the other sects and religions, have a contempt for women with modern out-look, and repulsion towards music and art. Some of these outfits also provide military training, which ultimately is used for terrorist attacks, when required. After completion of religious education and training from the madrasahs, the students have different responses in the real world. Some have ambitions to alter the existing patterns of social and political structures and for that they join militant groups, without knowing the real agendas of these organizations. However, some of them remain non-violent, but advocate and propagate for the establishment and

205 “Sectarianism began in earnest during the Zia period, for it was after 1979 that mobilization of Shia identity galvanized the shias into a distinct political group in Pakistan’s politics. Until that time, Shias had, on occasion, placed demands before the state, and had asserted their political importance by lending critical support to Z.A Bhutto and PPP in the 1970s. After 1979, however, taking note of Shia importance in the political arena gave place to using as well as contending with sectarianism as a political force” by S.V.R.Nasr, “Islam the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan.” Christophe Jaffrelot , ed., Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation (Delhi: Lordson Publishers, 2002), p.102. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, in Punjab from 2006 to 2012, 1495 causalities took place as a result of terrorist attacks in the province and most of them were sectarian in nature. Posted in “Punjab Assessment – 2013”, Institute for Conflict Management; South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP): New Delhi, Posted January 12, 2012, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/punjab/index.html. The most alarming aspect of these attacks is the weak stance of state and the major reason behind this attitude is that “the Islamic veneer of sectarian groups has conveniently served to legitimate the authority of the local power structure and limit the ability of the state to infringe upon it. The rise in the political fortunes of the local powerbrokers has therefore occurred under the cover of sectarianism and helped entrench it in politics.” Vali R. Nasr, “International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization: Sectarianism in Pakistan 1979-1998,” Comparative Politics, Vol.32, No. 2 (January, 2000), pp.181-182.
strengthening of orthodoxy, within their immediate families and the social structure of the society, as according to their own conservative understanding. The women folk become the first victim of such ideas and propagation, as most of the stress is on the change of attire and restriction on the mobility – may it be for education, or jobs or even social get-togethers, unless accompanied by a male member of the household.

The culture of militancy and extremism spread during Zia’s regime, and could not be curtailed by the governments, thereafter. Such tendencies created an environment of intolerance, where bigotry became supreme and accommodation, benevolence and tolerance diminished from the society. Although, the aim and objectives of militancy might be different nevertheless, it had direct impact on the daily lives of the people of Punjab, especially the younger population, who began to perceive things in a narrower manner, thus, promoting a culture of extremism and non-tolerance. The attitude and treatment towards women became more intolerant as the female population was considered as inferior and its utility was perceived to serve men, in any capacity. Thus, this inclination disturbed the equilibrium of the society, with far-reaching impact on the lives of women. In such environment, the women who are already bearing the cultural burden of patriarchy faced another challenge of a peculiar mind-set, reflecting extreme religious interpretations. In other words women were taken for granted, as a subservient object, whose sole task is to facilitate the wishes of male family members.

3.2.3: Economic Growth and Societal Adjustments

The economic growth of Pakistan can be estimated by keeping in view at least some of the key variables like nature of country’s economy with the rise of Multinational Cooperation MNCs, contribution of expatriates, role of middle class, and level of poverty, accompanied by functional political institutions, with a mechanism to combat corruption.

Being an agrarian state, after independence, due to a low percentage of industrial bases, a major portion of Pakistan’s revenue was generated through agriculture sector. According
to a Pakistani columnist, Pakistan “secured less than 10 percent of the industrial base at the time of independence and about the same percentage of industrial workers.” However, with the passage of time, the need to develop the industrial sector was realized, leading towards an expansion of industrial units, in at least three provinces of Pakistan. According to an estimate of Economic Survey of Pakistan 2011-2012, the agriculture sector, industry and services shares 20.9%, 25.8% and 53.3% of Pakistan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), respectively. As a consequence, the Pakistani economy underwent a drastic change, where it was shared by the newly grown industry in 1960s by relying on the private sector. Even then, the revenue generated from the agricultural based rural centers remains a dominant component of Pakistan’s economy. According to the Economic Survey Report by the Pakistani Ministry of Finance for the year 2009-2010, “the agriculture sector contributes over 21 percent of GDP and absorbs 45 percent of the country’s total labour force as nearly 62 percent of the country’s population resides in rural areas, and is directly or indirectly linked with agriculture for their livelihood.” Therefore, apart from a reasonable contribution in industry, as hinted before, agriculture remained a basis of Pakistan’s economy. The Punjab province sustained its prominence towards the economy of Pakistan, where the main crops are wheat, rice, sugarcane, cotton, sorghumad (Jowar), millets (Bajara) and Pulses. Our contention is supported by a data, provided by the Agricultural Department of the government of Punjab:

    The Punjab province has about 29% of the total reported, 57% of the total cultivated and 69% of the total cropped area of Pakistan. It contributes a major share in the agricultural economy of the country by providing about 83% of cotton, 80% of wheat, 97% fine aromatic rice, 63% of sugarcane and 51% of maize to the national food production.

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Among fruits, mango accounts for 66%, citrus more than 95%, guava 82% and dates 34% of total national production of these fruits.\textsuperscript{209}

I am aware that a proper combination of industrial advancement and agricultural capacity determines an economic development of a society, which ultimately enhances the presence of a sizeable educated middle class\textsuperscript{210}. This educated class can in turn create a kind of equilibrium, by eroding the traditional attitudes and conventional patterns of thinking, a situation that lacks in the case of Pakistan. The women folk of the Punjab contribute significantly towards the agricultural activities along with their men, which remains unrecognized. The growth of Punjabi rural economy can therefore owe to the contribution of the women. However, it does not elevate the socio-cultural status of the contributing female population. In urban set-up of Punjab, the contribution of Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) towards strengthening women economic position cannot be neglected as they introduce a new corporate culture on comparative merit by inculcated new job ethics. Therefore, I may assert that to some extent; urbanization\textsuperscript{211}, economic development along with corporate culture plays a significant role in transforming the social culture and traditional thinking patterns. An example of this change can be witnessed from various franchises of the MNCs, who now hire women as employees, which were not the norm in the Punjab domestic market before. Another development can be ascribed to the friendly environment provided by these corporations, where in the work place a culture of equality is created, accepting the women workers as equals. In this situation, women also feel themselves as active contributors, towards the economy of the country and their province, granting a psychological edge, as a useful member of the society.


\textsuperscript{210}Max Webber considers three factors, “wealth, prestige and power,” while Karl Marx classify classes on the basis of means of production. There is no agreement between these two thinkers on an exact definition of a middle class but for the purpose of this study. However, I may assert that the Middle Class falls in between the Upper and Lower classes, on the basis of socio-economic factors, with a possible overlap, within the two extreme categorizations – devoid of a sharp boundary.

\textsuperscript{211}Urbanization is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of rural migration and even suburban concentration into cities, particularly the very largest ones.
Apart from MNCs, the contribution of expatriates\textsuperscript{212} through remittances has also to be taken in consideration, while assessing the dynamics of economic activity. According to the economists, Nishat and Bilgrami, “the remittances from overseas as a part of the net factor income from abroad basically serve two primary purposes. Firstly, it supplements the foreign exchange resources available to the economy and to that extent it reduces the balance of payments constraint. Secondly, the corresponding domestic resources which are generated can then be used to supplement domestic investment or domestic consumption.”\textsuperscript{213} According to a report on remittances, 2011 was a positive year, in which the remittances jumped to 25\% as a result of severe flooding of 2010. This is a witness to the fact that overseas Pakistanis are sensitive about the needs of their families and have been a great help as already discussed.\textsuperscript{214} Along with economic contribution, the expatriates also introduce a new culture; which at times reflect the values of such conservative societies like Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries, where most of the expatriates reside. Just taking the attire of women as an example, it is noticed that the Arab Middle Eastern clothing, which covers the whole body of a female, including her face, has increased manifold in Punjabi cities and towns. Such is not a cultural requirement of the common Punjabi women, but is rather a borrowed concept. On the other side, in cosmopolitan cities, girls have adopted western dresses, due to the influence of their exposure to the Western countries – either though their interaction with the Western based expatriates or through such modern information Medias, like Internet and cable TV. However, the acquiring of certain attire does not necessarily conform to a particular conviction.

Normally, when a country advances towards economic growth, it transforms itself to a stage where middle class increases, thus laying a foundation for a healthy and viable

\textsuperscript{212} A person, who is not living in the country of his citizenship but he is living in any other country for certain reasons is known as expatriate. Most of the people live in host countries for different reasons especially for the sake of good employment opportunities.


society. However, there is an absence of a consensus over the definite meaning of this class, as reflected by Durr-e-Nayab in her research paper, where she states:

Despite its (term middle class) frequent use there is, however, no consensus on what the term exactly implies and its meaning remains ambiguous depending primarily on the context in which it is used. It is viewed as the class that is between, and separates, the lower and the upper classes, that is the rich and the poor, but there is no agreement on the exact boundaries that separates them. Most of the definitions and measurements of the middle class continue to be somewhat arbitrary and vague.215

In Pakistan, there is no consensus among writers over the size of its middle class. Therefore, after bearing in mind various assessments, I may estimate that the size of this class in 2011 was between 40 to 70 million people, constituting 24 to 40 percent of the total population, which seems to be a considerable number given the struggling condition of economic development of the country.216 Here, it is important to mention that in this country, due to an increased level of poverty, lack of job opportunities with the risen population; a migration to urban centers has taken place. Even in rural setting, the migrants mostly engage themselves in manual work due to low literacy rate. They can hardly acquire enough finances to improve their living standard. The migrants to urban centers also include wealthy farmers and land lords, who can effort to maintain an alternative residence in the cities, mainly for a better living and to educate their children. The presence of middle class population in four provinces of Pakistan has been identified by Durr-e-Nayab as:

The provinces of Punjab and Sindh, having over 36 per cent middle class households, fare better the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan that marginally lag behind at 32 and 28 per cent, respectively. When we look at the regional trends, we

216 These three divergent estimates as provided by Durr-e-Nayab, Shahid Javed Burki and Yousuf Nazar vary considerably : Ibid., p.11; see also Shahid Javed Burki, “The Middle Class Debate,” The Express Tribune, April 01, 2012; see also Yousuf Nazar, “Is Pakistan’s Middle Class that Big?,” Dawn, April 9, 2012.
observe the national level pattern to be replicated at the provincial level as well. The size of the middle class is estimated to be much bigger in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas in all four provinces, strengthening the argument that the middle class is more of an urban phenomenon.\textsuperscript{217}

Generally, the existence of a middle class in any society is considered as a vehicle of economic development, political maturity and social change. This opinion is supported by a well-known American political/social scientist and author, Francis Fukuyama, where he states that “it is most broadly accepted in countries that have reached a level of material prosperity sufficient to allow a majority of their citizens to think of themselves as middle class, which is why there tends to be a correlation between high levels of development and stable democracy.”\textsuperscript{218} The emergence of middle class and its socio-cultural patterns are discussed by Mubarak Ali, an eminent historian along with limitations, as:

The middle class in Pakistan became weak when Hindus, Sikhs and other non-Muslim communities migrated from Punjab and Sindh to India. These immigrants had no roots in the local culture and traditions and hence failed to become agents of change. In Sindh the new middle class emerged in the 1950s. Since its emergence, it became involved in ethnic conflict. In Punjab, the middle class is associated with the army and bureaucracy, which have hampered its role in political or social change. In Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the limited middle class survived under tribal leaders. In Pakistan, the middle class cannot play a role in transforming society as it appears to be under the influence of landlords and tribal leaders who use it for their own vested interests.\textsuperscript{219}

Nevertheless, a former economic advisor to the government of Pakistan, Sakib Sherani is of the view that the middle class in Pakistan has increased in due course and has become economically well heeled and more literate than other sectors of the society.\textsuperscript{220}

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\textsuperscript{217} Durr-e-Nayab, op.cit., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{218} Francis Fukuyama, “The Future of History: Can Liberal Democracy Survive the Decline of the Middle Class?” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol.91, N.01 (January/February, 2012).
poverty line, which has increased manifold in the last decade. The major reason of this amplified size of middle class populace in Pakistan is due to a significant growth in an overall population of the country and not due to the improvement of economic uplift by itself. Apart from the rising number of the middle class, “Pakistan is a two-speed economy where the vulnerability of too many people has increased”, due to various reasons.\textsuperscript{221} In this transformation, the shift from lower to middle class has remained trivial.

In a general understanding, the middle class has the ability to educate its children, including that of higher education and to possess a minimum level of facilities like possession of a car, along with other modern means of communication and comfort of life. Further, the middle class has the ability to move away from the rigid socio-cultural attitudes mainly because of its growing educated family members. However, the level of change in attitudes depends on individual families, along with the settings, where it resides. Most of the members of this middle class are in medium to higher-level bureaucracy, military officers, along with the trading class. However, in case of Pakistan, this class is identified purely on the basis of economic criteria, while exercising little influence to bring a noticeable change in the society, due to the sharing of socio-cultural mind-set with the upper and lower classes. This is in spite of the reality that the middle class has much more literates’ than the lower classes. The women of this class are more educated than the lower classes, due to affordability factor and a healthy family tradition towards learning. Consequently, their academic credentials enable them to acquire even higher education and are inclined to attain an employment with reasonable dividends. However, they face serious handicaps when it comes to other choices, like marriage, divorce and mobility, without a male accomplice. In spite of their newly gained empowerment through education and a job, in these matters they face stiff resistance from their families and the society. In other words, there is an uneven pattern of betterment for the Punjabi women, as their freedom of choices is not uniformed, in spite

\textsuperscript{221}Ibid.
of the fact, as observed above, the middle class has grown, providing opportunities and enlightenment for them.

Despite of mentioned economic factors that shape the socio-cultural setting of the Pakistani/Punjabi society; I cannot neglect that the history of Pakistan’s economic growth is plagued by weak political institutions, increased percentage of corruption, due to the absence of accountability and irregular patterns in unchecked poverty. These all mentioned causes are inter-related and collectively hamper economic development. As far as the corruption is concerned, according to an annual report of Transparency International for the year 2012, Pakistan is ranked 33rd as most corrupt nation, while in 2011, it was ranked 42. The reported corruption in different departments is around 12600 billion rupee, which indicates an increased trend in just one year. This escalating drift in corruption and its impact on the development of country is well-explained by an author and journalist, Zahid Hussain, as he states that the “corruption stands at the top of the list of issues that are affecting the country most. It presents not only a serious development challenge, but also undermines democracy and governance. More importantly, corrupt practices have eroded the legitimacy of the government and democratic values. It has infected Pakistani society from top to bottom.” The mentioned corruption is widespread due to a dearth of accountability in political institutions, which leads to an insensitive administration that hardly shows any concern over the serious issues of masses. This phenomenon is reflected in a reviewed work of Hilton L. Root and Mohammad Waseem as they state that the “discretion without accountability is deeply rooted in Pakistan's political history, profoundly shaping the country's administrative system. Pakistan's political institutions offer the leadership many opportunities for violating citizen trust.”

In the presence of above-mentioned predicaments, the fiscal activities can hardly bring meaningful economic development, where the percentage of poverty is on its verge.

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While dealing with the rampant poverty and its consequences in this country, the World Bank estimates that “Pakistan is ranked among the 43 countries most exposed to poverty risks. Poverty is widespread in Pakistan and is predominantly a rural phenomenon.” The same report highlights the absence of normal facilities in villages and small towns, which are pre-requisites for a healthy society like adequate schools, health centres and fresh water including various services that are necessary for the well-being of people, especially women. The rural poverty in Pakistan is well versed as follows:

Most of the poor are rural and will be so for several decades. Their income, spending and employment usually concentrate on staple food. They have little land, schooling or other assets, and face many interlocking barriers to progress ….the share of international aid and attention devoted to agriculture, rural development and the rural poor has been small and falling …. Rural poverty reduction deserves much greater emphasis.

This increased percentage of poverty has multi-faceted impact on society, ranging from economic to social degeneration because poverty by itself causes a society to modify its norms and values, as the struggle for existence leads one to compromise on many such goals. Consequently, this compromise reshapes the gender roles. In Punjabi society, the poverty factor has affected the role of women in various dimensions. On one hand, because of financial necessities, even the conservative families, compromising their traditional values allow their women folk to work, though in selected jobs like teaching. On the other hand, because of the poverty factor, the economically weak do not find themselves to be equipped to educate their daughters and prefer to get them married at an earlier stage. Thus, the fiscal factor is a double-edged sword, where on one hand the educated Punjabi women get an opportunity to enhance their individual economic condition. While on the other, the illiterate-girls in impoverished families are married at

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an early age, spending rest of their lives in the four walls of their in-laws, with little or no empowerment.

### 3.2.4: Gender Division

The female share is around 59 percent of the total population of Pakistan, and being the most populous province, while in Punjab, the ratio of male and female population is 111 to 100. As this chapter only describes the over-all situation of the society, therefore, I will restrict our study regarding gender division to the minimum, the details to be addressed in subsequent chapters. Thus, the gender division in Pakistan/Punjab will be briefly mentioned here, keeping in mind their role in three situations; first in a family, second in an academic institution and third in a job market.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Pakistani society is patriarchal, where male “supremacy” is more evident when it comes to the family related matters. In a family life, mostly the head is supposed to be a male, and female plays a second fiddle. Another aspect to be considered is that the gender role is defined according to the social status and environment, within which they operate. Naushin Mahmood describes this notion, while comparing modern societies with those of traditional set-ups:

> In relatively modern and gender-egalitarian societies, one would expect greater female autonomy and freedom of movement on account of widespread schooling, greater opportunities for work, and equality of gender relations, whereas in traditional and patriarchal settings women's actions and behavior at the individual and community levels are influenced by social norms, division of gender roles, and the variability in gender relations.227

Therefore, I may assert that the patriarchy manifests itself in all shades, especially in those families, who are traditional, less educated and reluctant to accommodate change. Usually, they are more prone to gender related abuses and justify their chauvinistic

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attitudes, based on religious misinterpretation and socio-cultural mind-set, as per their own understanding and at times convenience, which suits their vested interests. On the contrary, educated and modern families provide equal weightage to women views and treat them at par with the male members of the family. However, according to Sathar and Kazi, the principle of equality does not sustain itself according to the status of a family. They believe that by and large, most of the times “gender systems in Pakistan are posited to be unequal in favour [sic] of men, because of strong patriarchal systems, which ordain that men and older persons make all major decisions. As a result, women's status is argued to be low in most dimensions: poor educational attainment, few economic opportunities apart from family based employment which is largely unpaid and the virtual seclusion of women from the public spheres of life especially those involving financial transactions.”

Therefore, I may state that the men of Pakistani/Punjabi society, as father, brother and husband, are dominant over women as a daughter, sister and a wife. The most vulnerable are the newlywed wives in their early days of marriage, as they face multiple challenges in their adjustment period. First, they are expected to build relations with their in-laws, especially with the mother-in-law, to make them acceptable. Nevertheless, the newlywed confronted comparatively less handicaps, when married within the larger family, as the communication is easy due to acquaintance and familiarity with family traditions/values.

Second, in Pakistan, the families of bride and groom mostly arrange marriages. Therefore, before marriage, the potential couple has less chance to exchange views related to their future married life. This communication gap exists more in initial period but continues even well after marriage, which poses a great challenge, especially for a wife as she is expected to understand the nature, habits, likes and dislikes of a husband, as well as her in-laws. It is expected from her to compromise and it is she, who has to follow the instructions of her new family. With the arrival of a child, especially if it is male, her social status enhances to some degree. The well-known women activists, Mumtaz and Shaheed confirms this contention that, “a woman’s assets are calculated

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only in terms of her power of reproduction, and as an object of sexual satisfaction.”

The social status of a woman, who cannot conceive a baby has a low position and her status is well-comprehended by Hakim and Aziz as they state that “a childless wife may suffer the disgrace of having her husband take a second wife in few years, and a wife who bears only daughters faces the same possibility. The husband is traditionally less concerned with the social companionship of his wife than with her ability to bear him sons and carry on the family name.”

After giving a birth to a baby, the mother is expected to give full attention to the bearing and rearing of a child, no matter they are working women or a house-wife, where the father has a lesser role to play. This over-whelmed expectation from a wife is well defined by Asna Ali as she states:

This phenomenon is very visible in Pakistan where many women either put their careers on hold while raising children or juggle their multiple responsibilities as best as they can. While they do have support from family and spouses, our society has unfortunately not become evolved enough where shared responsibilities can move beyond traditional roles and be divided up more equally. Even western societies are lagging behind in this regard; stay at home fathers and the practice of giving men paternity leave to care for a new born still remain relatively novel concepts.

The women attain more sound position, when their children are grown up as I can say that in Pakistani societies the elder women are more respected and their decisions acquire a certain level of importance. I can assert that women role in family life is conditioned with many factors like their marital status, their reproductive capabilities and their ability to conceive boys than girls, however the dominance of male is not conditioned with any factor.

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The second situation in which I will evaluate the role of gender is education. The literacy rate in Pakistan is approximately 55 percent and according to the Global Monitoring Report, “the gender-based ratio (female - male) of illiterate youth between ages 15 - 24 is, 64 per cent - 36 per cent. This shows that gender gap still exists. Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of the 5.1 million out-of-schools children of primary school age group are girls. There are more female adolescents (3.9 million) than male adolescence (3.3 million) who are out-of-school”.

When the literacy rate in four provinces of Pakistan is taken into account, according to the Economic Survey 2010-11, the province of Punjab prove to be the most educated among all with 59.6 % literacy rate. Similar trend is observed in other provinces, when the Gender Parity in male and female enrolment was observed for 2008-09. According to Gender Parity Index (GPI), the difference in the enrollment of male and female is high in Punjab.

There are various reasons of gender disparity in terms of education. The most significant among all is the patriarchal mind-set, which believes to provide the best opportunities of education to a male child. Most of the families especially men consider that the primary objective of their female member is to take care of household work. This attitude is sharper, when a family have more children and less income. In such situations, the family head usually prefer to educate only boys as he assumes that they have a responsibility to earn and feed their family. Therefore, the lacks of education deprive women to understand the hard realities of life as they have less exposure to the world, outside their homes. Ibraiz, Fatima and Aziz have discussed this plight of household women with no exposure to education:

Women's lack of education perpetuates further the rigid public/private dichotomy. Uneducated women remain unequipped to gain access and establish contacts with the public world. Since men are culturally unrestricted in terms of developing links with the outside world, working for wages outside the home, comes to be perceived as a male prerogative and the domain of men par excellence. Not only that, other domains

involving any kind of financial transactions outside the domestic realm are also monopolised [sic] by men.\(^ {234} \)

However, I cannot ignore those families, though in small minority, who provide equal opportunities to their children irrespective of gender. Again in some exceptional cases, without encouragement of parents, girls because of their in-born ability to learn and enhance their status manage to pursue their academic ambitions. Only such kind of educated women are equipped to face the challenges of life without depending on male members of family, especially in difficult circumstance.

The third situation, in which the gender division would be evaluated, is the job preferences of women. The above-mentioned discussion on discriminatory attitude of society towards women education indicates a less percentage of educated women in comparison with their male counterparts, especially those, who successfully pursue and complete their higher studies. After completion of higher education, the challenge to choose a profession is another daunting task, particularly for women. In most of the families, women are expected to be teachers or doctors, perceiving that these two professions are respectable and provide flexible working hours. In such cases, their personal interest is setting aside. On the contrary, though the pressure on male for the selection of a profession also persists but with a different magnitude as they don’t have problem of mobility and late working hours. This gender division in social and professional lives is well-addressed by Ehsan Masood:

Women rarely live alone in Pakistan, unless they are widowed or divorced. Most live instead in extended families, in which parents, husbands and brothers often have the final say in decisions affecting their lives. Women cannot apply for a university place, a public-sector job or even a passport without completing a section on an application form that asks them for details of their father or husband. Most are forbidden by families to travel long distances without a male escort. Few drive cars beyond the limits of a handful

of large cities and none ride bicycles or motorbikes on public roads. Women cannot marry without the written consent of a male, usually their father. The gender discrimination in the above three mentioned situations is more evident in rural set-up as compared to urban areas. The reason is the absence of awareness amongst the rural women, due to lack of formal education, which compels them to play a second fiddle to their male family members, despite of being actively involved in the manual labor in the fields, i.e., in addition to their full participation in the household activities. Consequently, women’s participation in all spheres has been curtailed and they remain subordinate to men and their consciously designed norms and ethos.

3.3: Conclusion

Although this thesis focus on the placement of women in relation to the agents of change in Punjabi society, however, it is important to understand this phenomenon with reference to the socio-cultural setting of the Pakistani society in general. This is so, as the Punjabi society by itself encompasses the variety of ingredients of the Pakistani landscape, where numerous cultural traits and habits merge with each other. The whole phenomenon of change and transformation concerns with existing socio-cultural and economic structures. Therefore, the understanding of these would help to analyze appropriately the crux of this thesis, which deals with the transformation of society and its effect on the female population of the Punjab. Considering this, I have surveyed the socio-economic factors of Pakistani society in general and Punjabi society in particular.

After the study of various socio-cultural characteristics of Punjab in this chapter, we noted that the linguistic and ethnic diversity of this province, including the existence of different baradaris and tribes have a strong religious impact. Beside this, the fluctuation of economic development along with urbanization has adapted various new trends and

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left a deep impact in the re-shaping of this society. One aspect to be recognized is that Punjab is different from the other provinces of Pakistan with its variety of distinctive features. Asad Ali Khan has further explained this notion, as he states that, “in sum Punjab can be viewed as a distinctive region with regard to its demographic shape and socio-cultural setup. High rate of population growth, highly variable size of the population of districts, young age structure, high age dependency ratio, higher proportion of male population, higher proportion of married population, and heterogeneity in castes and languages are some of its distinguishing features.”

While examining the various dimensions of Punjabi culture, we cannot over-look the mind-set of the other provinces of Pakistan, which is also male-dominant and bound to have its influence on the province of Punjab as well. Further, the fact remains that the connotation of patriarchal culture exists in all provinces but with a little difference. The dominant factor of patriarchal society in all the provinces is recognized by two eminent writers, Ali and Haq, who state that the male dominant society is “..., bound by age-old traditions of a subservient and subordinate role of women. A girl child in Pakistani society often grows up learning to serve and obey men. Most of the time, decisions relating to her career, marriage, number of children to be borne etc. are to be made by a male - her father, her brother, and then her husband after her marriage.”

In the forthcoming chapters of this thesis, I will examine and evaluate in detail the placement of women in Punjab, in an environment of traditional attitudes towards female gender. I will also analyze in detail the new developments that are taking place towards the transformation of the conventional patterns of thinking.

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After analyzing an over-all socio-cultural and economic setting of Pakistani/Punjabi society in chapter 3, the focus of study in this chapter would be the political discourse and its impact on the socio-cultural placement of Pakistani/Punjabi women from 1947 to 1976. For the purpose of study, this chapter is divided in two parts. The first part deals with the political process, including the struggle of parliamentarians including women to highlight their issues in legislative chambers during different governments in Pakistan. For the comprehensive analysis of these efforts, it is important to understand the participation of Muslim women during Pakistan Movement, which was purely a political struggle for a separate homeland. This study would not only create a background by ascertaining the level of women political activism in the formative (1945-57) and transitory period (1958-76) of Pakistan’s history, but it would also equip us to analyze the time-frame of our research, including the women related legislative and executive measures, put forth by the women representatives, civil society and media from 1977 to 2012.

The second part of the same chapter would analyze the socio-cultural and economic status of Pakistani/Punjabi women, by keeping in view the legislative and executive measures. This segment of research signifies that the status and placement of women can not be estimated correctly unless the variety of changes regarding women empowerment during different phases of Pakistan’s history are not assessed. This particular contextualization would not only create a background for better understanding, by ascertaining the level of women placement in the formative (1945-57) and transitory period (1958-76) of Pakistan, but it would also enable us to analyze the dynamics of contemporary placement of women influenced reshaped by various agents of change.
4.1: Political Discourse Effecting Women of Pakistan/Punjab

The history of women political activism in Pakistan has its roots in the Khilafat movement of 1920, where for the first time, urban elite Muslim women followed their male members, to actively participate in a political action. A noted Professor of history, Dushka H. Saiyid, highlights this role by stating, “The Khilafat Movement of 1920s had been the first instance when Muslim women have made their presence felt.” Later on, with the change in the British India landscape where an understanding was created to progressively grant limited autonomy to the Indians by the colonial authority also encouraged women to raise their demand for suffrage. A noted Punjab based Muslim Political leader Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, who was actively involved in the Muslim politics of British India, points out that during the preparation of 1935 Government of India Act, the proposals were presented to the British to grant women the right to vote. Consequently, the Act granted property related conditional voting right to six million women. Apart from that 42 seats were reserved for women in the legislatures. In these conditions, the Muslim women were seriously handicapped, as per the tradition they hardly own any property. In 1937 provincial elections, “the Muslim women seats were to be filled by separate electorates and in the Punjab and Bengal, they were to be elected by women voters only.” Shahnawaz writes in her political autobiography that “we women had realized very early in our work of general advancement that, unless women entered the sphere of legislative work, it would not be possible for them to achieve economic independence and emancipation. Women, so far, had remained a neglected factor.” As a result of Punjab provincial elections of 1937, the women representing Muslim League could only get one seat, which was compensated by the mobilization of the women in the shape of political activation and coordination to spread the political message of Muslim

\[\text{Footnotes: 238} \quad \text{The mother of the forerunner of the movement Mulana Muhammad Ali Johar and Moulana Shokat Ali, Abadi Begum who was also known as Bi Amma (the respected mother) filled the gap when her sons were arrested by the British. She led the movement through her speeches and mobilized the people while wearing a veil. This became an example for the future Muslim women as well as an initiative where women could play a leading role, may it be to supplement the traditional role of the male members of the family.}
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\[\text{239} \quad \text{Dushka H. Saiyid, “Women’s Role in Pakistan Movement,” The Dawn, March 23, 1999.}
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\[\text{240} \quad \text{Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiograph (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.143.}
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\[\text{241} \quad \text{Ibid., p. 149.}
\]
League. An active participant of those elections is described by the mentioned autobiography is that the women of Punjab worked in the matters of administration in processions and inter-provincial coordination. The tradition which they have established continued till the time of 1946 elections and afterwards, where a number of Muslim women in Lahore even went to jail for the demonstrations and speeches against the British rule.242

During those time, it was realized that there was a need for the Muslim women to have rights, granted by the Muslim Personal Law of Shariat “as wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters”.243 Finally, the Shariat Bill was introduced in 1937, which despite of its weaknesses proved to be the first step during the British rule for the acknowledgment of Muslim women rights. Due to the conservative pattern of society, however, the male dominance remained a ubiquitous phenomenon.244 Although, the efforts of the Muslim leaders made some advancement but it did not occur on its own. Whatever, little women related reforms were introduced; they were under consistent “pressure from different members of the local population, initially elite men and later educated urban-based women. At the same time, the impact of these reforms was largely limited to women in the upper castes and classes; few changes trickled down to the impoverished rural population.”245 One of the major reasons of this minimum impact was rigid patriarchal setting of society which provided space only to the elite class women246, who became a self-appointed delegates of the common women while demanding for their basic socio-political rights. This view is endorsed by Kazi, as she states, “this was hardly surprising in a context where the notion of individual women’s rights could not supersede

242 “Muslim League women committee was established along with Women National Guard which became more organized after 1940.” Salma Tassaduque Hussain, Azadi Ka Safar: Tehreek-e-Pakistan Aur Muslim Khawateen [Journey of Independence: Pakistan Movement and Muslim Women] (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, 1987), pp. 24-44.
243 Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, op. cit., p.150.
244 The act provided the right of inheritance and divorce to Muslim women, in accordance to the Islamic law. In 1939, the “Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act” was able to remove one of the main concerns of the women who wanted to divorce in a problematic marriage. It provided a provision with the approval of the Muslim Ulema that a woman can revoke a marriage, through a Muslim judge. This provision ultimately included all sects of the Muslims.
246 For example: Begum Shah Nawaz, Begum Tassadque Hussain, Geete Ara Begum, Begum Zainab Kakakhail, Begum Hafeez-Ullah, Sughra Aftab, Zari Sarfraz, Begum Qazi Muhammad, Sirin Wahab, Nazir Niaz and Begum Kamaludin.
communal or family ties. However, the fact that women’s rights within the family were subject to public debate consolidated the position of Muslim women and their participation in the emerging women’s movement.”

Consequently 1946 elections to elect Constituent Assembly mobilized the Muslim women from all over British India, even from the most conservative province of NWFP (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhuwa). A Social Scientist, Professor Dr. Sikandar Hayat, while writing about the results of Muslim women participation in these elections assess:

The Muslim women made the most of the opportunity provided by the 1945-46 elections to mobilize the Muslim masses behind the League, especially in the Punjab and the NWFP, the two provinces Jinnah needed to win for Pakistan. They organized themselves into several groups and canvassed for the League candidates in their respective constituencies… .The League captured on over-whelming majority of the Muslim seats in the Punjab legislature and two of its women candidates (Begum Shaista Ikramullah and Begum Shah Nawaz) managed to get elected with huge margins. In the NWFP, of course, things proved a little disappointing, in spite of the best efforts of the women’s leaders in the province and a helping hand extended by their counterparts from the Punjab.

As a result of these elections, Begum Shaista Ikramullah from Bengal and Begum Shah Nawaz from Punjab on reserved seats, managed to reach in the first constituent assembly of Pakistan. They were also appointed as members of Standing and Select Committees of the House. Begum Ikramullah, as a member of assembly in her autobiography writes, “we were two women in a house of seventy-nine members. Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, a veteran political worker from Punjab who had attended the Round Table Conference in London as early as 1923 was one, and I from Bengal, was the other. We each had a small desk to ourselves and though there was room for two to sit no one else shared our desk. It

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249 Jahanara Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaishta Ikramullah worked hard in the committees of the first constituent assembly, trying their best to ward off the criticism obstructions created by the religious orthodoxy.
was a small thing but it was a gesture of deference which we appreciated."250 She further explains that despite of being in minority as female, they enjoyed a great level of respect from their male colleagues. A precedent had already been set by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (leader of Muslim League), who encouraged her sister Miss Fatima Jinnah to accompany him in all political gatherings, “where (she) always sat on the dais alongside the Quaid. She sat in full view and so the rank and file of the Muslim League’s women workers could also sit in like manner on the benches facing the dais. There was a separate enclosure for women and many sat there behind the purdah. But for those of us who preferred not to do so there were no cat-calls, no rude remark. We were treated with respect and deference, and this tradition once established continued in the House."251

The above mentioned account signifies the fact that during the early 20\(^{th}\) century, the exclusive socio-economic and political rights of women were side-lined, as the Muslim community was facing larger political challenges and issues. In this situation the strategies were evolved to demand rights for the Muslim community as a separate nation, regardless of gender consideration. Even when there was a limited activity, the socio-cultural and religious restrictions allowed only few elite women to break the barriers of traditional society through public appearance and political participation. Therefore, it was a symbolic representation in which a common Muslim woman devoid of proper education remained ignorant of her rights and could hardly play any role, even in the struggle for an independent state. Those elite women who actively participated in various political activities were also initially encouraged by their families to acquire education. Even in that era, the minimum role of education for the proper status of women was recognized, while other agents of change like media, civil society organizations and women participation in political process were still in its infancy stage.

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251 Ibid., p.158.
4.1.1: Formative Phase: Women Related Legislative Measures

The political participation of women in legislative bodies, during the formative phase, is an important factor to understand their socio-economic placement in Pakistani/Punjabi society, though limited and confined.

At that time, the country was administrated under the amended British Indian Act of 1935 and the main urgency was to frame a constitution, acceptable to all sections of the society. The cooperation was required even from those *ulemas*, who under various reasons opposed the creation of Pakistan, but were keen to contribute towards the constitution making process. These religious elements desired to create an Islamic state through the forth-coming constitutional arrangements. A Canadian based sociologist explains as follows, “although the party (Jamaat-i-Islami) was staunchly opposed to nation-state based nationalism, its founder Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi migrated to Pakistan soon after its creation and since then the party has been fighting to establish an Islamic state based on Maudoodi’s radical formulations.”252

As mentioned above, the first session of Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11th August 1947 included two women members which reflect the negligible presence of women, in the decision making bodies and the main reason being the prevalent socio-cultural impediments, as there was a little acceptability for the women to participate in matters outside the household. These two Muslim elite ladies became members of various legislative committees and during their tenure; they tried hard to safeguard the women rights, with complete pursuance253.

253 Begum Shahnawaz and Begum Ikramullah were elected as members of the Basic Principle Committee of Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and in its Sub-Committee on Franchise. Begum Shahnawaz was elected on Standing Committee of Commerce and Work. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Common Wealth Relations and the Ministry of Health and Works. Begum Ikramullah was not only a member of standing committees for the Ministry of Refugees and Rehabilitation but was also a member of Ministry of Interior, Information and Broadcasting.
In perspective of Punjabi women rights, just five months after the creation of Pakistan, West Punjab Muslim Personal Law (*Shariat*) Application Act (1948) was passed. It did away with the customary property law related to inheritance, including agricultural land, in which women were regarded as ‘limited heirs’. Initially, the bill was removed from the business of the house. However, on the pressure build by the Punjab Assembly women members, the Muslim League Women’s committee, along with hundreds of women protested in front of the Assembly chambers in Lahore, demanding that the bill must be reintroduced, including the sections pertaining the rights of women. According to Urdu newspaper from Lahore, during the discussion on the bill on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1948, 500 Muslim women demonstrated in front of the Assembly, supporting the bill, raising the slogan that ‘Muslim women demand rights granted to them by God and his Prophet’.

Most active women members in favour of this bill were two Muslim League women members, Begum Salma Tassaduqe and Begum Shahnawaz. In response to these demands, the bill was reintroduced in the assembly, approved and became a law on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1948. This law acknowledged that the women had the right to own all kinds of property, including agricultural land. After the bill was passed, Begum Tassaduque in her speech at the floor of the house stated, “this is an important day for the Muslim women and this *Shariat bill* is a great achievement of the Muslim League government. We are sure that there will be another law granting us rest of the rights…it was the women opinion (through a demonstration) that helped to get this bill passed.”

Through this act, the customary law was replaced with an Islamic law, which ensured a fair inheritance to the women. University of London Professor of Politics, Matthew J. Nelson defines the backdrop of this Act as:

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254 “The Punjab Muslim League Women Wing issued a statement, highlighting an urgency of this bill stating, “after the creation of Pakistan it becomes a duty to enforce Islamic laws. The women of Punjab took part in every revolutionary movement and during the election campaign of Provincial Assembly and that since 15th August we are serving the refugees. Today, these very Muslim women now demand that Shariah bill must be passed.” *Daily Inqilab*, January 28, 1948. Translated from Urdu.

255 *Daily Inqilab*, January 28, 1948. Translated from Urdu


257 Ibid.
After ...the formation of Pakistan in 1947, however, the laws of inheritance were changed. In particular, owing to the rhetorical and, to a certain extent, the ideological thrust of the Pakistan Movement led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his party, the All-India Muslim League, the term of ‘tribal’ custom were rejected and, eventually, replaced by a specific understanding of Islam. Local customs favouring the disinherirtance of married women, in other words, were replaced by formal written laws in which the rights of all women (married and unmarried) were clearly and carefully defined.\textsuperscript{258}

In this phase, the demands to legalize the women’s rights through legislation have been identified by Anita M. Weiss:

After independence, elite Muslim women in Pakistan continued to advocate women’s political empowerment through legal reforms. They mobilized support that led to passage of the Muslim Law of Sharia in 1948, which recognized a women’s right to inherit all forms of property. They were also behind the futile attempt to have the government include a charter of women’s rights in the 1956 constitution.\textsuperscript{259}

I can quote another example, where the two women members in wake of opposition from the conservative elements, made efforts to successfully grant women’s right to select nationality, if different from their husbands, as according to the principle of equality in Islam. Similarly, in Zakat Committee, Ulema were hesitant to sit along with the women members like Begum Shah Nawaz, and demanded that only women over 50 years, with proper veil could sit along with men in committees. Despite of these discouraging remarks, Begum Shah Nawaz protested and Governor General pressurized the objecting members to tolerate the presence of a woman amongst them. In this committee, Begum Shah Nawaz presented valuable suggestions and views on different matters and at the end

\textsuperscript{258} Matthew J. Nelson, \textit{In the Shadow Shari‘ah : Islam, Islamic Law, and Democracy in Pakistan} (London: C.Hurst& Co. Publishers Ltd, 2011), p. 11. Professor Nelson states that “in fact, strictly speaking it was not until the 1980s and, in some senses, even the 1990s-fully forty years after the formation of an ostensibly ‘Islamic’ Republic- that the terms of ‘tribal’ custom were finally removed (in an official sense) from the courts of postcolonial Punjab. Initially, of course, each of these new laws, beginning with the West Punjab Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act of 1948, was designed to replace the terms of ‘tribal’ customs with the specific term of shari‘ah.” pp.163-164.

of deliberations, her positive arguments were acknowledged by one of the member, Maulana Muhammad Shafi when he said, “…if women were to work as I (Begum Shah Nawaz) had done, they (ulema) would have no objection to sitting and working with them.”

She further writes in her auto-biography that, “in fact the Ulema-i-Din (religious scholars) had been very kind in accepting most of my suggestions for setting up institutions and in allocating special funds to lesson women’s sufferings and their cooperation had been valuable in my work to improve the lot of women.” The acceptance of women as assembly members by orthodoxy in the formative phase of Pakistan’s history sent a message that if women are determine to have acceptability and equal placement they can achieve their goal—though it is an uphill task.

Another instance, which prompted women to demand for legal guarantees through a formal legislation, was a family related incident. On the second marriage of the Prime Minster Mohammand Ali Bogra, there was a huge protest by the women activists, demanded some kind of regulation in the matrimonial affairs. Under this pressure, the Prime Minister created a Commission on Marriage and Family Laws in August 1955, consisting of seven members under the leadership of Chief Justice. The commission included three women members as well. After much deliberation, a report consisted of laws on marriage, divorce, maintenance and custody of children, in the light of the Islamic law was formulated and handed over to the government on 20th June 1956. The report received a dissenting note from Maulana Ihteshamul Haq Thanvi (one of the cleric member of the commission). Apart from that, Maulana Ameen Ahsan Islahi, an important member of religious political party, Jammat-i-Islami, while writing in the party’s monthly

261 Ibid.
263 First, the Commission recommended that it would be compulsory to register Nikah and divorce. Second, the minimum age of marriage was fixed to 18 years for the boys, 16 years for girls and below that the marriage would be considered illegal. Third, the right to divorce by women will be included in the Nikah form, which she could exercise if need be. Fourth, three divorce at a time will be considered as one and law will be enacted in which three divorces will be considered legal only if given in three different stages. Sixth, permission from the first wife is required for the husband to re-marry. Maulana Ameed Ahsan Islahi, “Aili commission ki report par tabsara ( A commentary on the report on Family Commission) ”Turujuan-ul-Quran (a monthly magazine of Jammat-i-Islami), Vol 47 (October, Part 2, 1956), pp .48-106.
magazine *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, presents his arguments against this commission’s report, representing orthodoxy’s view. Islahi challenged the basis of the report, by arguing that:

If the recommendations of the report are accepted then the prevalent social structures of our society would be drastically altered. As a result of this change the social system of Islam would be eliminated and our customs and values whether they are correct or not would be done away with, although generally we have been respecting them. Secondly, all the sections of the society would be affected, as a consequence and no institution would remain intact and as a result our state will adopt different shape, which is contrary to the draft presented in the making of a new constitution. Thirdly, if we accept the report then it means that our intellectual treasure becomes irrelevant which we were able to gather from last 12 to 13 hundred years and thus making Quran and Hadith irrelevant.  

Because of stiff opposition by orthodoxy, inside and outside the legislative assembly, government opted not to publish the report. This presents a glaring example where even at the initial stages of the constitution making; the orthodoxy remained a serious obstruction to governmental measures for the better placement of women. The orthodox members of the clergy argued around the view that the women’s rightful place is at home.

After nine years of Pakistan’s creation, it got its first constitution in 1956. In this constitution, some safeguards were guaranteed for women population. First, the principle of reserved seats for women, on the basis of special women’s territorial constituencies was accepted. Second, five seats were reserved for women for each of two wings (East and West Pakistan), for a period of ten years in National Assembly (NA) and the same number of seats were reserved in Provincial Assemblies (PA), after stiff opposition of a sizeable male members. Though initially, the two women members demanded for the reservation of 10 percent seats for women in both legislatures, for the next two elections

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with an argument that traditionally, it was not possible for women candidates to be elected in an environment, where Muslim men discouraged them to work along with them. Third, women were also accorded a dual right to vote for general and reserved women’s seats, as well.

4.1.2: Transitory Phase: Efforts of Women for Reforms

The transitory phase of Pakistan’s history (1958-76) is marked with serious measures to address women issues, not only through legislation but also by giving them representation in national and local administrative bodies, by Ayub Khan’s regime. Ayub Khan, being a military dictator (1958-1969), ignored the democratic process by promulgating 1962 constitution with autocratic presidential system. However, this era witnessed socio-economic development in the shape of record economic growth, accompanied by agricultural/industrial reforms. Ayub Khan also legislated on pending women concerns by setting aside the orthodoxy and provided range of laws, affecting every aspect of women lives. His approach to address the women issues was within his certain thinking patterns, aimed to modernize and liberalize the Pakistani society, by confining the domain of orthodoxy. These intentions are well-explained by a French Political Scientist, Cristophe Jaffrelot by writing that “General Ayub Khan, who took power with the first military coup d’etat in 1958, had modernist inclinations. He had worked closely with the secularizing elite during the constitutional debate, and he was prepared to grant the men of religion only the minimal concessions to guarantee Islamic legitimacy.”

The women related reforms during the transitory period are though few but effective. First was the promulgation of Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO) 1961, which helped to uplift the socio-economic condition of common women. Second was the articles relating to constitutional safeguards for women in 1962 constitution. Third can be ascribed to the Presidential election of 1964-65 between Ayub Khan and Miss Fatima Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, op.cit., p.249.

Jinnah. Although the election campaign was not a gender base issue but it served two major causes. On one side, it helped to mobilise the women population of Pakistan as Miss Jinnah became a role-model for the female section, even accepted by the orthodoxy, who over-night change their stance by supporting her in these elections, conceding their stance on women presidency. The Fourth came later, during the first general elections of 1970, in which women for the first time independently voted by setting aside the pressures of their male members of family. The last were the women related constitutional safeguards in the third constitution of 1973.

The first legislative measure was the promulgation of MFLO. Its history goes back to 1955, when a *Commission on Marriage and Family Laws* was constituted, presenting a comprehensive report over matters dealing with marriage, divorce, polygamy and inheritance for grandchildren. The report received severe reaction from orthodoxy and remained unpublished. This report became irrelevant once the 1956 constitution was promulgated but it provided a base to the formation of MFLO in 1961, as Ayub Khan wrote in his autobiography that when he was requested to introduce the Family Laws, in accordance with Islamic principles, he referred to the report that was presented by said Commission in 1955. He reflects:

> I had the report examined by distinguished jurists including Justice Mohammad Ibrahim of East Pakistan and Mr. Manzur Qadir, ex-Chief Justice of the High Court of West Pakistan. The recommendations of the Commission did not interfere in any way with any Islamic injunction on the subject; they only provided a procedure for the proper and judicious implementation of the Islamic principles related to marriage. I decided to implement the procedure recommended by the Commission because I considered it my duty as a Muslim and as Head of the State to do what was necessary to eliminate a grave social malpractice which was affecting the lives of the people.\(^{267}\)

Finally, the Muslim Family Law Ordinance was enforced in 1961. The announcement of this ordinance brought a serious resentment from orthodoxy but Ayub Khan was determined to enforce his agenda. Ziring mentions in his writing that “…the Ayub

government had to ward off religious agitation on a number of occasions. The Muslim Family Laws, which the President insisted on implementing through special ordinance in 1961, infuriated many conservative elements….But despite the opposition of the traditionalists and conservative orthodoxy, the government passed its program.\textsuperscript{268} The table 4.1 explains the significant features of 1961 ordinance. For details see Appendix A.

Table 4.1: Main Features of 1961 Muslim Family Law Ordinance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nikahnama</th>
<th>The new format of Nikahnama was introduced with full detail, in which the right of divorce for women was provided. The previous draft of Nikahnama was of one page with no details.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration of Marriage and Divorce</td>
<td>To register marriage and divorceis mandatory to make it legal. The ordinance bound Local Council to finalize the procedure of divorce within 90 days. During this procedure, the applicant cannot re-marry. The person seeking divorce needs to apply for this in a written form to the Chairman of the Local Council.\textsuperscript{269}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second marriage</td>
<td>The law requires that a person desirousof getting remarried must seek approval from his wife. The law makes it compulsory that Arbitration Council (which comprises of representatives from husband as well as from wife) must be informed about the second marriage with explanation. The right of granting permission is delegated to this body of arbitration. \textsuperscript{270}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age for Marriage</td>
<td>The ordinance restricted the age limit both for the girls and the boys. The minimum age for the girl is fixed at 16 and for boy is 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbitration Council</td>
<td>If the parties do not appoint their nominees to the Arbitration council, it could function even without the representatives of the parties. The nominations have to be made within a time-period mentioned by the law. The arbitration council has been given the powers to explore options for any reconciliation between the parties. Regarding this, the Chairman is bound to constitute the Arbitration council within thirty days of receiving report from the concerned party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of inheritance</td>
<td>The orphan grand children could inherit the property of their grandparents from their share of ancestral belonging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iddat\textsuperscript{271}</td>
<td>The period of <em>Iddat</em> begin, once the prescribed procedure of divorce is finalized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{269} Before this ordinance as there was no written record, the women felt insecure in case the ex-husband denied either the act of marriage or divorce. Through this ordinance, a proper record is to be maintained in both cases. A provision was provided where the concerned parties were unable to narrow down the differences, for the intervention of an Arbitration Council, which normally consisted of influential of the locality. Arbitration council was given 90 days to finalize its deliberations.

\textsuperscript{270} The ordinance laid down a proper procedure for a second marriage. In this case Arbitration Council was involved, so that this decision could be taken with a valid reason.

\textsuperscript{271} *Iddat* is a period of waiting that Islam has imposed upon a woman who has been divorced or whose husband has died, after which a new marriage is permissible.
This ordinance was warmly hailed, especially by the women section of society, as for the first time women were ensured legal guarantees in matrimonial affairs, as per the principles of Islam, which ultimately identified their proper position in the family.\textsuperscript{272} First, the registration of marriage and divorce with the chairman of a local council, by following a proper procedure, legalized marriage to outlaw any problem in future and the divorce through the reconciliatory role of a council provided a chance to estranged couple to review their decision. The criticism of religious orthodoxy and some sociologists on this provision have presented different arguments. The critique of orthodoxy over the role of council, as defined in table 4.1 was due to the curtailed influence of a \textit{Maulvi} in matrimonial matters according to this ordinance. On the other hand, the sociologists raised questions on the delegated power of reconciliation, to the heads of Union Council, arguing that they were ignorant of the subject of human relations and society and they are devoid of any expertise to understand the sensitivities of matrimonial conflicts.\textsuperscript{273}

According to the ordinance, the written permission of husband from his first wife, for second marriage although did not discourage polygamy as such but it could ensure an equitable treatment by the husband, as first wife’s endorsement was sought. This permission would also discourage the misuse of the permission by Islam for four marriages, under dire circumstances. The editorial of \textit{The Pakistan Times} justifies the logic of this particular provision:

\begin{quote}
Polygamy is permitted by Islam only in exceptional circumstances and subject to the difficult condition that all wives shall be equitably treated; but down the centuries this permissive provision of the law has been abused by large numbers of men in every Muslim society. In Pakistan, the case for restrictions on polygamy is put forth very convincingly by the commission on Family Laws. Special social diseases require special
\end{quote}  

\textsuperscript{272} Begum G. A Khan, Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, Begum Wazir Ali, Begum Zeenat Fida, Begum Asma Qureshi from the Lahore under the forum of APWA and Banat expressed their gratitude on the promulgation of MFLO. “Most Generous Award for Women (Feminist Leaders Hail Family Laws Ordinance),” \textit{The Pakistan Times}, March 04, 1961.

\textsuperscript{273} They further advised to the government to appoint the head of Union Council from such semi-government agencies, which have a basic knowledge and understanding of psychological dimension to solve the domestic disputes. So that by keeping aside the partisan, they could restore the peace in affected families. “Talaqdaenykarujhanbarhnylaga (the Trend to Divorce is on increase),” \textit{Nawa-e-Waqt}, March 06, 1961.
remedies and if anything that was permitted by Islam because human society was yet in an early stage, but not enjoined, has resulted in the abuse of permission, the permission is to be hedged in again with conditions and restrictions that may tend to minimize the prevalent abuses.274

On this point, representing orthodoxy, a religious scholar Maulana Maududi believed that the man could not be prevented from second marriage, as according to Islam “it would lead men taking up mistresses and girlfriends.”275 While further explaining the views of traditionalists and modernists, scholar Mumtaz Ahmad states that “the traditional and orthodox position has been that Islam allows polygyny and that the conditions attached to this permission are not in the form of legal imperatives but are moral prescriptions. The modernists argued, however, that the Quranic permission to have more than one wife was qualified with the condition that one must do justice to all of them.”276

After MFLO, the second measure taken by Ayub’s government was the appointment of constitutional commission with five advisors, two of them being women. The commission recommended six reserved seats for women in the National Assembly and five in each provincial assembly, increasing to eight in both legislatures in 1967 on proposal of woman M.N.A, Begum Dolly Azad. The women could also contest elections on general seats, although the socio-cultural environment made it difficult for them to be elected, or even venture to contest the elections. While in the Provincial Assemblies of East and West Pakistan the women reserved seats were increased from five to eight in 1967. The 1962 constitution also provided certain guarantees for the women population of Pakistan. This token representation of women in the legislatures, could not serve any useful purpose for the enhancement of women’s status.

The third significant event, which describes the women political participation in this phase was the indirect presidential election of 1965, in which Ayub Khan contested against Miss Fatima Jinnah, the sister of the Father of the nation, challenged the

legitimacy of General Ayub Khan. The Electoral College for the presidential election comprised of 80 thousand basic democrats equally divided between the two provinces. Miss Jinnah was a candidate from the coalition of five political parties by the name of Combined Opposition Parties (COP). The support of even rigid Islamic parties for a female candidate put a question mark on their previous statements against the women ruler ship as written in *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, a monthly magazine of Jammat-i-Islami, where it was stated in 1949:

> Islam has divided the domain of male and female, according to their natural capabilities. Male has to bear the burden of the matters related to politics and female has a responsibility to train the up-coming generation. Absence of women in politics would not disturb anything but if they ignore this training for new generation in lieu of their political participation then it would cause a great loss for the nation building.  

This argument was refuted by the orthodoxy in 1965 presidential elections, where Maulana Maudoodi with his wife and followers did not only support the candidature of Miss Jinnah but also played an active role in her election campaign by taking a stance that in normal circumstances, the responsibility of a state should be in the hands of men but in extra-ordinary circumstances, to hand-over the governance to women is not inadmissible in Islam. In this regard, the wife of Maulana Maudoodi also mobilized women to come out for the election campaign of Miss Jinnah by giving a warning to the women that if they casted their vote for ineligible candidate then remember they have to be answerable in front of God and at the same time she condemned the MFLO. This massive support of orthodoxy unveiled the fact that it can even compromise on principles for their own vested interests. In this regard, COP also took a fatwa in support of women ruler ship in an Islamic state, from Maulana Mufti Mohammad Shafi (who was a

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277 The opposition alliance included such religious parties as Jamat-i-Islami (JI) headed by Maulana Maudoodi, who previously held the view that a woman cannot become a head of the government or state.  
279 “Marad sy Quom ko faida na pohanch sakta ho to khatoon sarbarah-e-mumlikat ho sakti hai (If from man, a nation could not get benefit then a woman can be head of the State),” *Nawa-e-Waqt*, October 22, 1964.  
280 She was also supported by Begum Geeti Ara, Miss Rabia Qadri, Begum If tikhar-ud-din: “Khawateen Madar-e-Millat ki Intikhabi Mohim ko Kamyab banany ky leye medan-e-amal main a jayen (Women to come for the Success of the Mother of Nation in her campaign),” *Nawa-e-Waqt*, October 28, 1964.
president of Dar-ul-Aloom Karachi and was a Deobandi scholar, belonging to the Hanfi school of thought), in which he stated that “in a democratic government, to have a women head is not against Islamic values. In special circumstances, to support a women candidature for the office of president is of no harm and this fatwa has been given by Hazrat Hakeem-ul-Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi some fifty three years back.” In response of this fatwa, Ayub khan who was already apprehensive of the growing popularity of Miss Jinnah seeked a fatwa from 650 Ulemas against the for fatwa against women headshipin Islam as mentioned by his information secretary, Altaf Gohar in his biography:

In her speeches Miss Jinnah attacked Ayub mercilessly, portraying him as interloper and a dictator, and alleging that his minsters and governors were his lackeys who had no real power….Ayub was persuaded by his party to use the religious card against Miss Jinnah. A ‘fatwa’ (religious decree) was obtained from some ulema to the effect that a woman could not become the head of a Muslim State.

The unexpected election results against Fatima Jinnah, where she received 36% votes, in comparison with 63% of Ayub Khan jolt the supporters of Miss Jinnah. The opposition parties accused Ayub Khan of rigging, resulted in protest demonstrations against his rule, which was also joined by women organizations. No matter, whatever the results of these elections were but it determined a strong trend for women as it was the first time that a woman contested for such a high profile office.

The fourth significant event was 1970 Elections, where women over-whelmingly participated in polls. During the election campaign, Begum Nasim Jahan of Pakistan Peoples Party motivated Punjabi women, particularly from Lahore to their cast vote, as well mobilizing them. The major reason of this massive women political mobilization during these elections was the focus of Peoples Party towards the deprived section of society, including women. Impressed by the manifesto of PPP, it was the first election, in

281 “JamhooriHukamat Main Aurat Sadar-e-Mumlikat Ban Sakti Hai (A woman can be a President of a State in a Democratic form of government),” Nawa-e-Waqt, November 01, 1964.
which “women voted overwhelmingly for the PPP, sometimes defying their husbands.” 283 Though women participation as voters remained high during these elections but as representative it remained negligible as only nine women contested for the National Assembly seats (3 from East Pakistan, 1 from Punjab and 5 from Sindh), but not a single woman could be elected on general seats. PPP did not allocate any ticket to the women candidate. In parliament, only 13 women (which comprises 4% of their representation) were selected on the reserved seats (6 from West Pakistan and 7 from East Pakistan). Thus from 1972 to 1977, in the national legislature, out of 6 women on reserved seats, 3 were from Punjab namely, Nargis Naeem, Nasim Jahan Begum (she was also a member of Constitution Committee formed in 1972) and Zahida Sultana. They all belonged to elite class with strong political backgrounds.

The fifth measure was the women related constitutional safeguards in 1973 constitution. In 1972, a Constituent Committee having three women members, named Nasim Jahan, Mr Jennifer Qazi and Begum Ashraf Abbasi structured the constitution, promulgated on 14th August 1947. The 1973 constitution ensured some social and political rights to women through article 25, 32, 34, 35 and 228. The major points of these articles were following:

- No discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste or sex.
- Reservations of seats for women in national, provincial legislatures and local bodies.
- State protection for marriage, family, mother and the child.
- One women member in council of Islamic ideology

Apart from these safeguards, for 10 years, 10% seats for women were reserved in National and Provincial Assemblies, which were opposed by representatives of orthodoxy in parliament like Maulana Ghulam Ghaus and Muhammad Hanif Khan. The constitutional guarantees in 1973 constitution opened space for women to be a part of high profile jobs like Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan was appointed Governor of Sindh,

283 Dushka H. Saiyid, op.cit.
Dr. Kaniz Fatima Yousuf was chosen as Vice Chancellor of the University of Islamabad and Mrs. Nargis Naeem was to be parliamentary Secretary of Health and Social Welfare Division and the Population Planning. Though these all women belonged to elite class but the later years of history proved that its impact gradually trickled down to the women of other classes. However, the peripheral efforts for women empowerment were witnessed during Z.A Bhutto government. Another such example was celebration of *International Women’s Year* in 1975 under Mexico Declaration. Apart from this, in 1976 Women’s Rights Committee under the chairmanship of Attorney General Yahya Bakhtiyar was formed. The purpose to form this committee was to identify economic, legal and social problems of women. Regarding this, Nasim Jahan, Mariam Habib, Rashida Patel and Zari Sarfraz shared their recommendations. The report concluded that the main hindrance in women empowerment was not laws but the centuries old prevalent patriarchal mindset was the real obstruction.

4.2: Socio-cultural and Economic Status of Women in Pakistan/Punjab

The narrative of the status and placement of women in newly establish state of Pakistan has its origin in the colonial era, where the Muslim women emancipation was a far-fetched concept, because at that time the sole objective for the Muslim elite was to identify themselves as a separate nation, regardless of gender. The efforts to reform the Muslim community by their leaders were further intensified, when the discriminatory attitude of British Raj against the Muslim community discouraged Muslim children, from attending newly established English medium schools. Thus, they were unable to equip

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284 women became eligible to join public services because of 1972 reforms, their participation in job-market increased (in which the labour policy of Bhutto also unconsciously played a role, when the male belonging to middle and low class went to the Gulf countries to earn) and they were also appointed in high profile offices in government but I should not forget that this token representation of women in various fields could not bring even a minor difference in the destitute middle and low class women, living in rural and urban areas.

themselves to acquire adequate jobs in the British Empire. For this reason, an Indian Muslim reformer Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, along with his companions strived hard to convince the Muslims to educate themselves, which could become a first step towards the achievement of their rights. At that time, the focus was on the Muslim community as a whole and being a patriarchal society, it was obvious that the male members of the families were preferred while girl’s education was ignored, due to cultural constrains and with a conviction, that it was not likable for them to take up a job. Therefore, they believed that education is mandatory for males, as they had to acquire a job. However, there were few exclusive elite girl’s related Maktab or elementary schools to provide knowledge of reading and writing. The girls also acquired basic knowledge of reading and writing through home-based tutoring. Therefore, the very concept of comprehensive women emancipation was an inconceivable phenomenon at that time, but one cannot neglect the fact that “the trend initiated by Sir Syed was to evolve a socially progressive ethos which was particularly relevant for women, and it is among Sir Syed’s followers that we find the first advocates of women’s education and of an enhanced status and role for them.”

However, later on there were some enlightened families, although few in number realized that women being an important member of the family structure must be educated and

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286 The socio-economic status of Muslims faced a serious set-back with an absence of employment opportunities as they have been deprived of high profile jobs by the British. Moreover, the English was declared an official language; to which majority of the Muslims had no acquaintance. In this situation, there was a need to learn the English language and modern skills to achieve their lost socio-economic status in society. Another challenge, which was faced by Muslims was the preservation of Muslim culture and values in presence of missionary schools tough Muslim community recognized that the acquisition of modern education with the understanding of western culture is not only pertinent for them to achieve better employment but also necessary to get rid of the social boycott of Muslim community, as an aftermath of war.
287 His companions were Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, Maulana Hali, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Allama Shibli Nomani, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, Chiragh Ali, Mohammad Hayat and Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan.
288 Sir Syed laid the foundation of Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. The college served as an institution to inculcate modern pattern of thinking in youth with a deep understanding of western traditions, so that the communication gap between British and Muslims could be overcome.
290 Khawer Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, op.cit., p.5.
become aware of their rights. Consequently, limited magazines, weekly journals and newspapers emerged to highlight the women related issues. However, these publications could only influence a small number of Muslim women, due to their limited scope and low literacy rate. A fact to be reckoned is that these women were from privileged families, supported by their male members, confining to urban-based upper and upper-middle class. Gender issues expert, Seema Kazi with little variation, further explains this notion of the same time-period:

Although the leadership of the women’s movement was restricted to women from elite families, it was possible for Muslim women to share their experiences with women from other classes and to transmit ideas to wider audiences. The link between a rising women’s movement, the proximity of several of its leaders to the Indian political leadership and the recognition of the importance of women’s issues by the national leadership, contributed towards strengthening the women’s movement as a whole. The movement’s success in bringing about social and legal reform facilitated the struggle for the enfranchisement of Indian women.

One can agree with Kazi’s notion that meager attempt by elite women for female education had a reasonable impact on the privileged families and did not leave a convincing influence on the significant Muslim women population, especially those living in rural areas, which was approximately 70% of the total population. Nevertheless, it at least paved the way for the future endeavors towards women development, resulting in social reforms, in the later period of 20th century. This concept is well-defined by women activists, Farida Shaheed and Aisha Lee Shaheed, as they believe that “education was a key social reform issue in the subcontinent during this period [the late 19th and early 20th century]. Concern extended to female education as well, with at least some reformers advocating a change in women’s role…. Women’s journals were an important

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291 Like Maulvi Syed Mumtaz Ali and his wife Muhamaddi Begum; Shiekh Abdullah and his wife Alla Bi; Mian Muhammad Shafi and his wife Amirunnissa and daughter Begum Shahnawaz; and Rashid-ul-Khairi and his wife Begum Amna Nazli. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza, *Teheereek-e-Pakistan main Muslim Khawateen ka Kirdar (Role of Muslim women in Pakistan Movement)* (Lahore: Nazria-e-Pakistan Foundation, 2004), pp. 6-27.

292 For the names of the magazine and other information see Appendix B.

means for women to voice their concerns, to engage with their social environment, and to link up with each other. They were also a means of inspiring and being inspired by other women.”

At that time, these efforts were exclusively for women education, devoid of their social issues. The desire for political participation was equally non-existent as they were not enfranchised by the British until 1924. At that time, the distinction between social, economic and political rights of women did not exist and one of the major reasons of this divide was the confined role of women as explained above. Furthermore, in the prevalent environment, the Muslim political leadership was focused to substantiate their separate identity as a nation and the socio-economic issues remained a secondary consideration.

For the purposes of this research, I will trace the progressive awareness that the women of Punjab attained, in a rudimentary society. I will also analyze the continuous obstructions, created by the orthodoxy, clinging themselves to a particular socio-cultural mind-set. In this regard, the study will also focus on the placement of rural and urban Punjabi women, in their socio-cultural environment, ranging from their status within the families, extending to a larger Punjabi society.

4.2.1: Formative Phase: Women’s Struggle For a Rightful Placement

The new state of Pakistan carried with itself variety of problems, among which the most acute was under-developed social structures, with fragile economy and entrenched orthodoxy. Apart from the negative induction of orthodox opinion, the new Pakistani society faced a chronic deficiency of low literacy rate and as a result of this backwardness; the female population suffered the most, as they were not even aware of

295 Another significant event which broadened the dimension of women reforms from education to other fields of development was the formation of Anjuman-e-Khawateen-e-Islam in 1908, with the great efforts of Mohammad Shafi, who himself was a British qualified. Apart from the educational reforms for women, the organization stressed on social reforms and the acknowledgement of women rights under the principles of Islam. The organization had a firm stand on various political issues of that time, which proved its activism. In 1917, this organization passed a resolution against polygamy and put forward the demand of providing education facilities for women, improved health and maternity services and equal franchise for women with men.
their socio-economic rights. Notwithstanding, some of the elite urban women who actively participated in independence movement. They were not only appreciated but also gained respectability amongst the larger section of society. A handful of elite women were members of the new legislatures, with little or no contact and awareness of the basic women related issues- their relations with the families, obstruction to achieve their rights and the perceptions that the men had towards them.

The early deaths of two prominent founding fathers of Pakistan, who were liberal in their approach and acknowledged women status in its proper perspective, left a void for the rights of the Pakistani women and whatever little they had hoped for their betterment remained a distinct dream. Apart from that in the formative phase of Pakistani history there was a negligible presence of the ‘agents of change’ (education, vibrant and extensive media, civil society organizations), with a low literacy rate of 16.4 % (according to 1951 census). At that time, there was only one women related organization, with main focus on women issues (like All Pakistan Women Association [APWA]), three radio stations with limited range of frequency and few newspapers and absence of Television.

After independence, it was expected that the placement of women will be accompanied by series of measures, to grant them equal rights and opportunities in a new state. This impression was created by two-fold experiences of Pakistan movement. First was the contribution of elite urban women by cutting across the socio-cultural divide and motivating the less privileged female population for a common cause. Second, the

296 Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali died on 11th September 1948 and Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated on 16th October 1951.
297 For the details of APWA’s activities see “A P W A Annual Report,” (the University of Michigan: All Pakistan Women’s Association, 1962).
298 At independence Pakistan possessed three radio stations at Dhaka (established in 1939), Lahore (1937) and Peshawar (1936). A major program of expansion saw new stations opened at Karachi and Rawalpindi in 1948, and a new broadcasting house at Karachi in 1950. This was followed by new station at Hyderabad (1951), Quetta (1956), a second station at Rawalpindi (1960) and a Receiving Centre at Peshawar (1960).
299 On the eve of independence, however, only four major Muslim owned newspapers existed in the area constituting the new state of Pakistan: Pakistan Times, Zamindar, Nawa-i- Waqt, and Civil and Military Gazette, all located in Lahore. A number of Muslim newspapers moved to Pakistan. Dawn began publication as a daily in Karachi, then the federal capital, on the day of independence in 1947. Other publications were also shifted to Pakistan including the Morning News and the Urdu-language dailies Jang and Anjam.
women equal participation in socio-political sphere as encouraged by the founding fathers. The aftermath of independence posed serious non-gender related challenges for the political leadership, including the settlement of huge influx of refugees from India. Therefore, the priorities were elsewhere, sideling the women issues with minor exceptions like the gross human rights violation, during migration and later in the refugee camps of Punjab, where women were the targeted sufferers. A Historian Pippa Virdee, while describing the suffering of partition observes that “women were targeted as they represented the ‘honour’ of the family, and during these chaotic and harrowing days many women were raped, mutilated and killed, while others felt compelled to commit suicide or ‘martyr’ themselves in order to preserve the family honour.” The trauma of migration left a long lasting affect not only on the psyche of women but it also shook the social order of the society, where the normal placement of considerable number of women became difficult. The real issue in these conditions became the very survival of migrated women, as a living soul, in which even the concept of their comprehensive rights became a fading proposition. A known historian, Yasmin Khan gives a considerable space to this phenomenon when she writes that “even by the standards of the violent twentieth century, the partition of India is remembered for its carnage, both for its scale-which may have involved the deaths of half a million to one million men, women and children-and for its seemingly indiscriminate callousness.” The partition affected especially the Punjabi women the most and their sufferings continued when they settled in the new state of Pakistan. Khan mentions the instability of the Punjabi social order in this manner:

In the worst affected places, in an almost carnivalesque manner, relationships between men and women and between families became up-ended and distorted as every taboo was broken and people clutched at older caste or regional identities while trying to recreate in strange new conditions and alien cities something of their former existence.

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300 Around 8 million Muslim refugees migrated from India to Pakistan.
303 Ibid., p.207.
By keeping in view the adverse environment for women, Governor General Jinnah strongly believed that the nation-building process requires both male and female to work side by side. Therefore, he motivated women, by acknowledging their efforts during Pakistan movement, so that they could extend their spirits towards this process. He expressed these views on 28th March, 1948:

In the great task of building the nation and maintaining its solidarity, women have a most valuable part to play, as the prime architects of the character of the youth that constitutes its backbone, not only in their own homes but by helping their less fortunate sister outside in that great task. I know that in the long struggle for the achievement of Pakistan, Muslim women have stood solidly behind their men. In the bigger struggle for the building up of Pakistan that no lies ahead, let it not be said that women of Pakistan had lagged behind or failed in their duty.\textsuperscript{304}

In response to his call, elite women involved themselves in the rehabilitation process of women. In particular, notable them being Fatima Jinnah (sister of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah) along with Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan (wife of the First Prime Minister), Begum Shah Nawaz and Miss Macqueen.\textsuperscript{305} Even the few Punjabi college girls, who were normally confined to their homes, organized themselves for these helping refugees. This act was limited in nature, with little long-term consequences, however, it laid the foundation for the future by setting an example, where women could become active part of the society. This contention is supported by Virdee as she points out:

Women were also taking the initiative themselves and organizing and mobilizing other women to work and help in refugee camps. Indeed this was a crucial time for Muslim women to come out of ‘seclusion’ (Purdah) and assist in the rehabilitation process. It was, no doubt, an appeal to their maternal instincts, but it was also an opportunity for women to improve and educate themselves.\textsuperscript{306}


\textsuperscript{305} Prominently through Women Relief Committee, Pakistan voluntary Service provided food, clothes and first aid facilities to refugees.

\textsuperscript{306} Pippa Virdee, ibid., p. 474.
In the beginning of Pakistani history, an observation of an over-all environment of Punjabi society presents the fact that the rural women, especially those living in K-P, Balochistan and Interior Sindh, were even worse than their Punjabi counterparts. They faced two-fold challenges-first being a part of a more conservative society than Punjab, they operated within certain strict barriers. Second the scarcity of academic institutions in these areas allowed few females to educate themselves. The first feature of this rigidity in these three mentioned provinces was the observation of strict *Purdah*\(^{307}\) and well-defined male and female responsibilities, ensuring the dominance of men over women in socio-economic and political fields of life. This notion about these areas is further discussed by a scholar, Hanna Papanek, as she states that the “women's proper behavior, as sheltered persons, becomes an important measure of the status of their protectors, and the achievement of symbolic shelter is valued by the man as a measure of control over his environment. In a culture where male pride is a very significant and very fragile element of identity and status, the seclusion of women is an important aspect of male control.”\(^{308}\)

The Punjabi society shared some of the described features but were less rigid than existing in other parts of rural Pakistan.

While evaluating the socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women in formative phase, two elements can exclusively be examined. First is the religious factor and second being the “traditional forums”. These elements became more significant in the absence of codified laws and proper procedures for women representation in legislative bodies. As far as the religious factor is concerned, one cannot ignore the fact that though during that time the orthodoxy was not involved in the policy making process, however, by presenting a rigid interpretation of religion (Islam) in a society, where majority are Muslims, they achieved a considerable following, as mentioned by a Social Scientist that, “the religious orthodoxy, despite lacking political clout, has always been successful in negotiating the role of Islam in the polity of Pakistan. The tug of power among the politicians,

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\(^{307}\) practice that was inaugurated by Muslims and later adopted by various Hindus, especially in India, and that involves the seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing (including the veil) and by the use of high-walled enclosures, screens, and curtains within the home.

\(^{308}\) Although, the article was published in 1971 but the conditions of women in these areas, as described by the author, are not different from this particular era of research. Hanna Papanek. “Purdah in Pakistan: Seclusion and Modern Occupations for Women,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol.33, No.03 (August 1971), p.519.
bureaucracy and military enhanced the role of orthodoxy, in certain periods of Pakistani history; which in turn generated more confusion about the role of Islam in a modern state.\textsuperscript{309} This is contrary to the expectations of the female population of Pakistan who expected that the religious texts should be interpreted correctly in letter and spirit, providing them equal rights in all walks of life. The stiff reaction from orthodoxy came against women’s demand of these rights, by quoting some Quranic verses. While referring these religious texts, orthodoxy conveniently ignored the context of relevant verses. This notion is addressed by a renowned scholar, Khalid Bin Sayeed:

…it is often argued that the Qur’an states very clearly that men have been charged with the responsibility of protecting and maintaining women because God has given them more strength and the means for their maintenance. In their eagerness to score points in this regard, these writers often disregard both the specific and historical context in which these verses were revealed and many other verses where equality between men and women has been either stressed or recommended.\textsuperscript{310}

Another factor which further played a significant role in defining the placement of women in the Punjabi society were the “traditional forums” like Panchayat (which is also known as Parya) in Punjab and Sindh; and Jirga in Baluchistan and NWFP, comprising of exclusively elder male members to decide on various issues ranging from murder in the name of honor to minor abuse cases. However, the representation of women in such forums remained inconceivable; no matter how much respectable and active they were/are in their families. Such women usually play a significant role behind the scene, by influencing the opinions of especially their sons and in some cases husbands as well. When it comes to the petitioner side of representation, it becomes extremely difficult for women to take the initiative and present their grievances, before such gatherings. These views are highlighted by a renowned women activist Farida Shaheed, as she states:

None of these traditional systems include women as decision-makers. In fact, traditionally women have largely not been allowed to appear in these even as petitioners. Yet because the state has, in effect, failed to effectively replace these forums with its own structures, many routine problems and local disputes are taken to these forums where women can rarely hope to be heard or receive justice.311

There was no chance in the formative phase for the Punjabi women to even strive for representation in such bodies, as they did not get adequate opportunities to receive proper education and employment-two basic elements which can become a catalyst for the women to play their due role in the society. Generally speaking, the above mentioned environment in the provinces of newly liberated Muslim state left few avenues for women’s social and economic participation, consequently the percentage of their presence in different fields of life remained negligible. Here, it is important to mention that the real sufferer of the socio-cultural conservatism were the uneducated women of rural class who were deprived of adequate resources, favorable surroundings and were not even given enough incentives so that they could become an important member of society and the state. As a result of all these handicaps, they were restricted to their homes. On the other side, as already mentioned, only those women who resided in urban areas and belonged to established families were not able to play suitable role in socio-economic matters nor did they had freedom to live their lives according to their personal judgments. In this formative phase, the legacy of pre-independence era continued and no substantive change in the status or the position of the women could be witnessed.

4.2.2: Transitory Phase: Women’s Enhanced Social Status

The transitory phase of Pakistan’s history is marked with the sensitization of women population for their equal rights, resulted in the promulgation of Muslim Family Law Ordinance (1961) and the re-structuring of old women organizations, with the formation of some new NGOs, to raise women rights issue. This slight progress for women could

not improve their social status in reality. There were no significant increase in their literacy rate, nor were there enough employment opportunities.

The socio-cultural environment of Pakistani/Punjabi society in transitory phase, and its impact on women placement can be examined, by keeping in view various factors like the role of military, with its modernist approach in nation building process; impact of economic development to increase agricultural/industrial growth; and the continued influence of orthodoxy in decision making process.

The first factor can be understood better if taken in a wider perspective. The national leaders of developing countries of Asia and Africa, after gaining independence, struggled to establish institutions on weak socio-economic structures and could not succeed to address the basic issues of their society, let alone providing a rightful place for women. As a result, in most of these countries an authority vacuum was created, filled by more organized military establishment. This interference carried with itself a modern institutional approach, which had proper hierarchy in place, discipline in attitude, access to modern technology and authority to respond physically to correct a situation. Similarly, Pakistan is no exception. This notion is well-explained by an American professor, Raymond A. Moore, with reference to the Pakistan Army, as he states that the army spearheaded the forces of “modernization (which) may not be deemed unusual considering its technological skills, training, and discipline as compared with that of the rest of Pakistani society,…”312 A Pakistani professor of civil-military relations endorses this point of view. While evaluating the expectations of many international scholars from the military coups in 1950s and 1960s, he explains that they considered the presence of military in politics as a sign of progressive change in society, which would come through introduction of modern methods for fiscal growth, ultimately leading towards societal transformation and national unity.313 I can draw an example of Ayub Khan’s rule (1958-

313 “The major political features of the developing state witnessing the expansion of the role of the military include a low level of social cohesion, fragmented class structure and the absence of a strong articulated middle class, lack of common symbols for political and social mobilization, conflict between the center and the periphery, a low level of institutionalization, weak and ineffective political parties and voluntary organizations, poor political management by the leaders and their inability to govern with consent, and an
68), which was though autocratic in nature in which all the powers were concentrated in one office but because of his liberal pretentions, the question of women rights received positive response in the shape of MFLO (1961) and representation of women in legislative and administrative offices, confining not only at national but also in local level institutions, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter.

The second possible feature that had the prospects to re-define the women placement, in this particular phase, could be attributed to the ambitious and aggressive economic development and agricultural growth agendas of Ayub Khan.

The required transformation in Pakistan was made possible in the form of scientific and technological based inputs like high yielding varieties (HYV) of seed, fertilizers, pesticides and water accompanied by a greater spread of agriculture mechanization like tube-wells and tractors. The result was that the growth rate in agriculture sector jumped from 1.8 percent per annum in the fifties to over 5 percent per annum in the 1960s.314

Agricultural developments in rural areas because of ‘Green Revolution’, where most of the Punjabi population lives though minimized the poverty level but posed other restrictions on female population. This agricultural growth could not bring a positive change for rural women, as rural economic prosperity hindered their mobility to work in the fields, providing a sense of freedom and achievement. Hamza Alvi describes in his writing that the ‘middle peasants’ who benefited from the agricultural growth and got adequate monetary profits did not want their women to work in the fields because of two reasons. First, there was no need for their women to work as earner as they could afford extra male help; second, to demonstrate their better economic condition, women were restricted within home to boast their newly achieved improved social status. These feelings of deprivation among Punjabi women is further reflected in Alvi’s writing as he explained his experience during his research in a Punjabi village:

overall anxiety and uncertainty about the future-personal, group and the state.” Hasan Askari Rizvi, Military, State and Society in Pakistan (Lahore, Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003), pp.17, 22.

Researching in a Punjab village in 1968-69 my wife and I found that far from welcoming this partial relief from the burdens of work, the women resented the change. Many of them described it as being locked up in prison; as well as their freedom of movement they had also lost their much prized economic freedom, however small; their control over some disposable resource which they could use as they themselves wished. This change suggests that a conceptual distinction be made between exploitation of a woman's labour and woman's oppression. In this case although the burden of labour was a little eased, the burdens of oppression had increased enormously.315

Similarly, in the wake of rural development, a water supply system in villages deprived the women to fetch water from wells, where they could socialize and gossip for catharsis. Now, they were confined to their homes although free of the labor at the cost of their freedom. This demonstrates over-lapping dilemmas, where one benefit is compromised for the other in the wake of rural economic development. Here, it is important to mention that the urban women got more opportunities in comparison with rural counterparts, in the wake of industrial development programs316 of Ayub Khan as it classified the society, where the ‘indigenous Punjabi bourgeois’ were able to push new “forms of business organization into peoples’ lives and in actually transforming culture.”317 This growing industrialization opened the new avenues of employment for urban women, encouraging the girls to get education.

The third feature of this phase is the reaction of orthodoxy, which continues to build pressure on Ayub Khan, as well as Bhutto’s regime to introduce measures, so that the

316 “Ayub believed that capitalism would be the most direct path to economic development in Pakistan. Accordingly, he pursued industrial policies that favored business and capital-intensive investment. Indeed, Pakistan’s gross domestic product grew at a very rapid rate (approximately 6% per year) during Ayub’s regime. However, Ayub’s policies also resulted in increased economic inequalities between East and West Pakistan, as most foreign and industrial investment were channeled to West Pakistan. His policies also increased the inequalities of income distribution within the population—the rich got richer, but the poor remained poor.” Craig Baxter, Yogendra K. Malik, Charles H. Kennedy and Robert C. Oberst, Government and Politics in South Asia (Lahore: Vanguard Book, 1988), p. 210.
country could be ruled on Islamic principles. As a result, “subsequently, Pakistan governments, including those of Ayub, Yahya, and Bhutto, continued to seek compromise with the Islamists. They indulged in the rhetoric of Islam, but none were serious about implementing an Islamic blueprint, even if one could be defined to everyone’s satisfaction.”\(^\text{318}\) The most significant role was played by Jamaat-e-Islami, under the leadership of Maulana Maududi, with his radical approach. The response of Ayub Khan towards such Islamist parties has been explained by Stephen Philip Cohen, as he states that “Ayub Khan regarded the Islamist parties, especially the well-organized Jama’at, as a dangerous nuisance. The Jama’at was banned, and Mawdudi was imprisoned, a move that only enhanced his personal status.”\(^\text{319}\) In this particular phase, the efforts of women NGOs received serious criticism from the orthodoxy consequently the relationship between conservative ulemas and women rights activists remained strained, as both were working in opposite directions.\(^\text{320}\)

This phase in terms of the socio-economic development of Pakistani/Punjabi women, witnessed a virtually static environment. Despite of the modernist approach of rulers, especially those who were empowered for a long period of time, and an-over-all economic prosperity could not bring the trickle down impact on the socio-economic status of Pakistani/Punjabi women and their basic issues remained unresolved. In short, I may say that as per the expectations, the progression in one sector did not necessarily generate a chain reaction in the case of Pakistani/Punjabi society, where a condition of women could be improved in a comprehensive manner. Consequently, in many fields they still lagged behind, even according to minimum standards.

\(^{319}\) Ultimately, Maulana Moudoodi was released by the supreme court of Pakistan stating that mere opposition to the government is not enough reason for imprisonment. Subsequently, the ban was also lifted by the court. Ibid., p. 168.
\(^{320}\) The Federal Shariat Court has started hearing petitions against the 1961 Muslim Family Law Ordinance in Lahore. Three judges, led by Chief Justice Mian Mahboob Ahmad, are hearing objections put forward by three Islamic scholars: Dr. Nooruddin Jami of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Naib Amir of Jamia Ashrafiya, Lahore, and Dr Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qadri of Jamia Rizvia, Lahore. The plea before the Court is that sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 12 of the Muslim Family Law Ordinance (1961) be declared repugnant to Islam.” Posted August 12, 2013, http://www.mwlusa.org/topics/marriage&divorce/muslim_family_law_pakistan.html
4.3: Conclusion

By exploring the political development in Pakistan from 1947 to 1976, with its impact on the socio-cultural placement of Pakistani/Punjabi women, the foundation has been laid to examine the political discourse and its socio-cultural implications, on the placement of women in the next chapter. This particular chapter has highlighted the under-developed political structures with minimum representation of women in legislative chambers, gradual awareness among women about their basic rights and the conventional reaction of orthodoxy over the demand of women rights. The study of these elements reveals certain observations. First is that the voice for women rights from 1947 to 1976 was basically raised by the elite women, no matter they represented women population by being in legislative assemblies or they were administrating a women rights organizations to pressurize the rulers for certain safeguards. These elite class women by sitting in their urban base set-ups were unable to understand the issues common women were confronting. Secondly, the strong influence of orthodoxy, with their rigid interpretation of Quran and Sunnah, remained a challenge for even the state, to ensure women their equal status. Third, patriarchal mind-set of an over-all society always supported the dominance of male over the female population, which ultimately stressed on indoor presence of women, devoid of their participation in economic and political activity.

These three elements remained so powerful in determining the socio-cultural placement of women to an extent that few legislative measures in the shape of MFLO in 1961 and comprehensive acknowledgement of women right in constitution of 1973 could not bring any trickle down impact on the status of Pakistani/Punjabi women. Consequently, their basic issues remained unaddressed.
Chapter 5: Legislation on Pakistani/Punjabi Women 
and Responses: 1977-1999

In the previous chapter, I analyzed of the political discourse in Pakistan from 1947 to 
1976, with its impact on the socio-cultural placement on Pakistani/Punjabi women. It 
provided a background for the research in this particular chapter, which is divided into 
two parts. The first part examines women related legislative and executive measures by 
Zia-ul-Haq’s regime (1977 -1988), under the guise of Islamisation. While analyzing these 
measures, the role of women legislators in National as well as Punjab Assembly will also 
be taken into consideration, not to be ignored is the reaction of civil society 
organizations, in the province of Punjab. It is important to point out that the federal laws 
are applicable for entire Pakistan, including Punjab, unless specified otherwise. Our 
research will also take into account women related federal as well as provincial 
legislations. This in-depth study of the related processes and strategies would not only 
enable us to understand the state policy on women issues, during this dictatorial rule but 
would also help us to trace its immediate impact on women of Punjab.

The second part of this chapter would discuss the apparent negligence of democratic 
governments (1988-1999) on women issues. This decade was shared by two political 
parties (Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim league), with different ideologies 
and capacity to rule. In this context, the rationale of the lack of initiative and interest by 
the respective democratic governments, for the betterment of women would also be taken 
into account, with an identification of the reasons of their respective inaction. However, it 
is essential to point out that an analysis of the stated legislative behavior in this time-
period is not the sole contributing factor to fathom the placement of Punjabi women.

In both eras, apart from legislative and executive measures, there are number of other 
societal and environmental motivators, which influence the empowerment of women. 
These factors would be comprehensively debated in Chapter 7 and 8. This synthesis 
would provide a viable opportunity to understand the dynamics of Punjabi women 
placement.
5.1: Dictatorial Rule and Islamisation

As already discussed in previous chapter, the 1961 MFLO of Ayub Khan and 1973 constitution included safeguards for women, providing them some hope for an equal socio-political status. Although, it could not bring any meaningful change for the betterment of women across the board, especially those belonging to the low economic part of the society. The suspension of the constitution in 1977, as a result of July military coup d’etat by General Zia-ul-Haq, introduced a different political order with a ‘label’ of *Nizam-i-Mustafa/Nizam-i-Islam* (The order of the Prophet/Islamic system). However, this new system did not alter or withdraw the safeguards provided to female population under MFLO, thus whatever women gained under this law remained intact. Soon after assuming powers as Chief Martial Law Administrator on 2nd December 1978, in his first address to the Nation, he revealed his intention to Islamize various state laws. According to K.M. Arif, who served Zia as a Chief of Staff for 7 years, while explaining his intentions behind the Islamisation program, writes in his auto-biography, “For him, politics and theology went together: in an Islamic country, the mosque was as inseparable from the state as the soul from the human body. Zia considered that he had a God sent opportunity to serve the cause of Islam. The ruler of a Muslim country, he felt, had a moral and divine obligation to establish an Islamic polity as enunciated in the Holy Quran.”

No matter, what Arif says about Zia’s convictions, a number of scholars and analysts have dealt with the intentions of Zia-ul-Haq’s emphasis on the introduction of Islamic laws. They believe that he took this action in order to go along with the tide, acquiring the slogans raised by the religious element against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s rule. There is a near consensus that Zia’s actions came as a result of expediency rather than conviction. While commenting on the intentions of Zia behind Islamisation, Imran Khan writes in his autobiography, “Zia cashed in on the opposition to Bhutto from the religious parties, which equated secularism with anti-Islamism. He was prepared to go much further than Bhutto, pledging

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on coming to power in 1977 to make Pakistan an Islamic state.\textsuperscript{322} No matter, what was the case, the net result came in the shape of discrimination against women in various ways. In other words, his plan had a particular objective to appease the orthodox section of the society, in order to consolidate and legitimize his illegal rule. He stated:

For the establishment of an Islamic society, we have to erase un-Islamic traces from our way of life and economy. Legal system and judiciary, education system and culture, and mould them in accordance with the dictates of Islam. By the grace of Allah, a conducive atmosphere had now been created in which every step would be in the direction of Nizam-i-Islam and every government would continue to march towards this goal. Because Nizam-i-Islam was our destination and will remain our destination.\textsuperscript{323}

His above policy projections later proved as an intrusion in the private matters of the citizens and it would be his government to decide that what was proper and right for them and he would be the principle guardian and enforcer of these values. Another important aspect to be noted is that Zia-ul-Haq’s long dictatorial tenure undermined the provincial autonomy, as previously guaranteed by 1973 constitution and hence turned Pakistan in to a unitary state for all practical purposes, under which the federal laws had preference over the provincial legislation, where all provincial appointees were by the President. While explaining the centrifugal characteristic of Zia-ul-Haq’s policies, C. G. P. Rakisits explains that Zia’s programs made sure that the central government maintains its autonomy over the provincial affairs and this objective was achieved through the promulgation of Revival of Constitutional Order (RCO) in 1985.\textsuperscript{324} Therefore, it can be asserted that apart from ‘Islamisation program’, the over-all impact of Zia’s centralized policies left such a far-reaching impact on the socio-cultural structures of society that even the forthcoming democratic spells could not reverse or modify them. The immediate impact of these ‘centralized Islamisation of laws’ promoted the “institutionalized gender inequality based on the concept of distinct social roles for each

\textsuperscript{323} \textit{Dawn}, December 03, 1978.
\textsuperscript{324} The fundamental alterations in the constitution, which made significant departure from its original promises and concepts was known as Revival of Constitutional Order (RCO). Under RCO, 65 articles were amended/ substituted/ added/ modified/ varied/ deleted/ omitted” C. G. P. Rakisits, “Centre-Province Relations in Pakistan Under President Zia: The Government’s and the Opposition’s Approaches,” \textit{Pacific Affairs}, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988), p.96.
gender (men's roles include both public and private dimensions while women's roles are primarily in the home). They also promote the segregation of public activities by gender-purdah norms.”

There is a good number of literature as hinted in Chapter 4, which consider that military is a modern institution with its lineage towards change and transformation. The best example which is often cited in the Pakistani context is of Ayub Khan, who being a military ruler introduced a number of socio-economic reforms and some of them were directly related to the welfare of the female population, as discussed in the previous chapter. The re-structuring and performance of military as an institution, during Ayub Khan’s rule is well-explained by Moore as he states that “it(army) acted as an important vehicle of social change by maintaining a modern, capable, well-equipped organization amid stultifying tradition, poverty and disunity. In spite of being a traditional army, it was a radical innovator of social, economic and political change.”

Near similar views are presented by Samuel Huntington, whose main emphasize is on the stability and order in society. While describing the level of socio-political development, Huntington selected Ayub Khan’s era as a model and states that “the achievements of Ayub khan in Pakistan… show that military leaders can be effective builders of political institutions. Experience suggests, however, that they can play this role most effectively in a society where social forces are not fully articulated.”

I might not agree with the mentioned two authors on their views regarding the military’s contribution in the development of political institutions but their focus towards the uplift of the social set-up can be accepted and appreciated. However, in case of Zia’s military regime, those, who believe that army is a modern institution with liberal leaning, would be disappointed. Zia-ul-Haq rule became an exception as he became a symbol and sole spokes-person of the orthodoxy, thus promoted conservative environment in which women suffered the most. Along with that the political institutions as well as the social fabric of the Punjabi society underwent a spell of decay.

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5.1.1: Legislation Affecting Women

Zia-ul-Haq’s first executive order of 10th February 1979 comprised of series of reforms dealing with Islamisation by making state laws in ‘conformity with the Islamic doctrines’ as interpreted by Zia. This was followed by the legislative reforms known as Hudood ordinance effecting the female population. These, contained punishments for the offenders of the Islamic laws, under specific circumstances. The cluster of Islamic laws were enforced through four Presidential orders; drinking, adultery, theft and false allegation. The punishments prescribed under these four mentioned orders were brutal in nature like chopping of hands for theft, stoning to death for adultery and lashes and strips for different crimes, especially under conditions where the police and administrative machinery were corrupt and could easily manipulate these punishments for a bribe.328 In the forthcoming paragraphs, I would exclusively debate over those parts of the Hudood laws, which affected the placement of women in Pakistan/Punjab.

First legislation was the Zina (adultery) Ordinance, without distinguishing between adultery (Zina-bil-Raza) and rape (Zina-bil-Jabar). For details of this ordinance, see Appendix C. Thus, rape and adultery were considered as a same crime and the law prescribed equal punishment in both cases.329 This aspect of Zina ordinance was criticized on two legal grounds. First, the victims of rape were punished as offenders, which provided a shelter to the real perpetrators. Second the procedural lacunas to investigate such cases in law further made the women victims vulnerable. Therefore, the law was considered offensive, as reflected by Anita M. Weiss and she writes that the “punishments (under this law) have been meted out in a highly discriminatory fashion. Women have been proven guilty of zina-bil-jabr through medical examinations following

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329 In this case, the punishment of death by stoning was prescribed for a married person, while the punishment for un-married was hundred lashes. However, it was made impossible to prove through the law of evidence as four highly dependable witnesses were required to report in detail.
the rape, or because they became pregnant and were unmarried." These loopholes in this law made this legislation arbitral and therefore it became subject to criticism by civil society. While supporting these views, a noted lawyer and a critic of *Hudood* laws, Asma Jahangir, added that the “evidence of *Hadd* punishment did not include expert opinion, medical evidence or documentary proof.”

Apart from the mentioned weaknesses, the *Zina* law had its societal dimension, when it came to application in patriarchal society like Punjab, where the possibility of harassment can also be expected from the male police staff, as pointed out in Shahnaz Khan’s book, based on sufficient number of interviews of the effected women, under *Zina* law. Khan derived from her respondents views that the Police, which is an ‘agent of state’ instead of helping women victims of *Zina* aggravated their miseries and, thus “at the hands of the police, they face sexual, physical, and emotional violence and extortion.” Khan further states that the impact of such kind of treatment by a law enforcement agency was more damaging for those middle/low class poor women victims, who have meager financial resources to defend themselves and they were not in a position to bribe them. This argument is also supported by Imran khan in his writing, where he states, “the *Hudood* Ordinance imposed strict punishments for crimes, including adultery, and its abuse by a corrupt police and judicial system undermined the legal status of women, especially in the lower strata of society.” Secondly, the trail of middle/low class women under this law brought the consciousness of the already present class division in the society, accompanied by a strong feeling of suspicion and hostility towards low-middle class by elite as she states, “the moral regulation of women through the *Zina* Ordinance reveals the extent to which docile middle-class women are considered moral, while agentive, impoverished women are deemed immoral.” This division implied that the low-middle class of Pakistan is morally degenerated, resulted in their social boycott. Third, this legislation provided an excuse to the parents to discipline their daughters according to

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333 Imran Khan, op.cit., p.69.
334 Shahnaz Khan, op.cit., p.72.
their wishes, which was most of the time based on patriarchal mind-set as remarked by Khan that, “Women’s narratives suggest that applying zina charges helps to provide families with docile daughters, mothers, and wives.”

Thus, in the presence of biased, uncooperative and hostile socio-cultural environment, it became a daunting task for poor women victims to prove their innocence. Moreover, the punishments under this law were severe in nature, accompanied by the difficulties the women had to confront. Thus, this law made them defensive, losing their capacity to initiate, having a bearing on their minds as if they were inferior to their male members of the same family.

*Qanun-e-Shahadat (Law of evidence) Order 1984,* became the second legislation, undermining the judgment and wisdom of a woman by converting her testimony to half, citing religious injunctions (which are not accepted by a large section of Pakistani people). The most objectionable part of this legislation was that a woman’s testimony was not even considered, in *Hudood* related cases. The threat of being prosecuted became a cause of discouragement for those rape women victims, from filing complaints, who had only women witnesses to prove their innocence. There are number of scholars and commentators, who are convinced that this particular law mis-interpreted the injunctions of Quran and thereby created ambiguities to harm the under trailed women. In this regard, a professor at the Lahore University of Management and Sciences (LUMS), Zaheer Khalid agrees with the others that the incorrect interpretation of Zia’s laws became a basic reason of gender discrimination, while the real spirit of the Quranic verses were over-looked in this legislation. Presenting Khalid’s opinion in a report on the impact of this legislation, a journalist and a researcher on gender issues, Shehar Bano Khan writes, “These laws are not reflective of the true spirit of Islam (and Khalid) differ with the Islamic scholars (those supporting the ordinance) on the interpretation of the Hudood Laws. They (Hudood laws) were never intended to differentiate between men and women. In the instance of two women’s testimony equalling one man’s, the Quran is very
clear. This law was introduced to strengthen the evidence of women, not to be flouted by men.”

Zia’s evidence law caused a widespread criticism by civil society organizations (details would be discussed in Chapter 8). One of such protest in Lahore, was resented by the orthodoxy, which supported Zia’s interpretation of Qanun-e-Shahadat and in one of their meeting chaired by Maulana Latifur Rehman, around 100 renowned Ulemas considered the women protest against the Evidence Law ‘a proclamation of war against the God’s commands.’ In this meeting, two resolutions were passed. One was against women Protestants, who were considered by Ulemas as ‘westernized’ and ‘champion of secularism’. Second was against the women lawyers, who according to the Ulemas, were supporting women’s agitation. Despite of protest and notes of dissent by various section of Pakistani society, against the discriminatory Evidence Law, Zia government failed to take notice of the opposition and continued with the already proclaimed ordinance. This was in spite of the fact that leading Ulemas belonging to different interpretation of Islamic injunction, representing the Brainvi School of thought like Tahir-ul-Qadri, categorically explains in his writings that women have a special status in the Muslim society and according to Allama Qadri that in those areas where women have more information than men, their sole evidence is preferred.

The third legislation of 1984 dealt with retaliation and blood money in the case of murder or injury, known as Qanun-e-Qisas and Diyat. For the purpose of research, I am concerned with the second part of this law. In case of murder, the law “fixed 10,000 dirhams or 30.63 kilogram of silver as the diyat for men and half that amount for females,” as compensation through which the convict could be pardoned and escape punishment. This particular law was considered by critics from civil society, jurists and

339 Under the Islamic law, the concept of Qisas based on the principle of “limb for limb”, while under Diyat, the relatives of a murdered person can give “blood money”, in order to escape from punishment, and same applies in case of injury.
340 Dawn, March 06, 1984; Today, its value in Pakistani Ruppee is 276237.44 Rs.
women right activist, as an ‘institutionalized discrimination’ against women, which by setting aside the principle of parity in Islam, has presented its own interpretation of Quranic versus, based on gender discrimination. While highlighting the distinction, Justice Changez wrote in his article, “I have not come across any Hadith regarding the payment of half of Diyat as compared to that of a man. On the contrary, the Holy Prophet in his Farman for the people of Yemen, had fixed Diyat of 100 camels or 100 Dinars for the killing of a believer, making no distinction whatsoever of a male or a female believer. How can I proceed to make a distinction?”

Changez further stressed that to fix the amount of Diyat is discretion of the heir of murdered woman and while fixing this amount there are various considerations like the paying capacity of the culprit and all relevant circumstances, which play important role. Thus the amount differs from case to case. It was similarly criticized by women right organizations like the Women's Action Forum which along with other women groups protested and considered the Diyat Law, “one further step in their loss of freedom and status in contemporary Pakistan (by misinterpreting the real spirit of the Islamic law).”

Here, it is important to clear that this law was omitted from promulgation under a malafide intention of Zia as he was fearful of the possibility of the use of this law to save Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto from the murder trial, under which he was hanged later. Though, Qisas and Diyat law was a significant part of Hudood Laws, formulated and presented by Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) in its report of 1978 but was enforced in 1990 under the interim government of Prime Minster, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, entitled ‘Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance’, through which Qisas and Diyat was inducted in Pakistan Penal Court (PPC). By using this law, in the name of honor, many women were killed by their own family members under the practice of ‘Honour Killing’ (Karo-Kari) in all provinces of Pakistan. In this regard, the tribal justice courts known as Jirga and Punchayat in tribal/rural community has played vital role which by keeping in view the


343 Karo-Kari is a tribal custom, prevailed mostly in Sindh, under which man and woman is punished in case they are in sexual relations, outside marriage. The word ‘Karo’ stands for man and ‘Kari’ for woman.
centuries old criminal cultural practices, did not question such sensitive matter in fact in most cases supported and reinforced them. While writing about the implications of this law on women position and the role of these local courts in tribal/rural set-up, Tahira S. Khan mentions:

The local customary legal system is a centuries-old mixture of cultural, economic, social, and religious beliefs. Crimes committed in the name of honour and legal decisions made about them vary from village to village tribe to tribe, and province to province…. In Punjab, it is considered an insult to the family to let anyone know their woman was immoral or had a bad character. The local lord does not question her murder unless the ‘victims’ family approaches him.\(^{344}\)

In this situation, this law instead of restricting these anti-women practices further provided a space to the culprits through which they were exempted from the punishment under *Qisas* and *Diyat* law. Time and again, a number of amendments, altered this law, however, a major breakthrough took place in 1997, which would be discussed in the proceeding pages.

Apart from three above mentioned legislations, the Federal Shariat Courts (FSC) were established in 1979, which besides proposing and reviewing the laws in conformity with *Quran* and *Sunnah*, had a special prerogative to hear the cases registered under *Hudood laws*. With that, the Shariat benches at Provincial high court level were abolished and all such related issues came under the jurisdiction of FSC, comprising of five members, appointed by the President.\(^{345}\) Later on, in these courts, the *Ulemas* inducted by Zia-ul-Haqandin turn these *ulema* interpreted the laws as according to the desire of the President.\(^{346}\) The agenda of this parallel court system has been presented earlier in Zia-ul-


\(^{345}\)FSC comprising of five members, 2 judges and 3 Chief Justice all appointed, by the President. The tenure for the office of chairman was three years. The headquarter of FSC was in Islamabad. The qualification for the chairman was the same as required for the judge of Supreme Court and for the members of FSC, the conditions were the same as required for the high court judge. The tenure of the chairman’s office was three years but to extend his tenure was at the discretion of President.

Haq’s address to the nation’, in which he explained the structure and jurisdiction of these courts as:

The Shariat benches at the high court level and an appellate Shariat benches at the supreme court level will decide whether a particular law is partly or wholly Islamic or un-Islamic and the government will be bound to amend that law in accordance with the bench’s decision within a specified period. Besides the federal and provincial government, every citizen of the country would have the right to take any law to a Shariat bench for decision whether the law is partially or totally Islamic or un-Islamic. Every Shariat bench would have power to examine any law even without any application. There would be no court fee for filing such an application before a Shariat bench. No decision of a Shariat bench or the Sharait appeal bench would be challengeable before the Supreme Court, a high court or any other court or tribunal. 347

The decisions of FSC in Hudood related cases were criticized by the civil society organizations, for being gender biased because in most of the cases, only women were penalized. The Human Rights activist regarded the punishments awarded by FSC under Zina law, inhuman and most vulnerable were those women who belonged to low-middle class. While writing about the plight of these women prisoners in 3399 appeals of Zina, from 1980 to 1987, one of the activist further states that “this is only the tip of the iceberg, given the number of women arrested and released before reaching the appeal stage. Once a woman is accused of Zina she stands stigmatised regardless of subsequent acquittals. Apart from a couple of isolated women prisoners, the majority of them come from extremely disadvantaged sections of society. In many cases, women alleging rape have been arrested and convicted of Zina. The accused men are given benefit of the doubt and acquitted by the Federal Shariat Court.”348

There were some glaring cases of acquisition under the Hudood ordinance like Fehmida/Allah Bux, Safia Bibi and Shahida Perveen, which made the decisions of FSC under the Hudood ordinance more questionable. The details of these cases are provided in Appendix D. The suffering of women in such cases raised eyebrows among the civil

society organizations like Women Action Forum (WAF) and All Pakistan Women’s Association (APWA), over the miss-interpreted addicts of Quran and Sunnah, with a fall-out of discrimination against women. These decisions are a clear example of discrimination against the women. It was neither near the principle of justice as prescribed by Islamic laws nor was it based on even common sense. There were scores of decisions under this law, which provided an opportunity to harass and penalized the defenseless women for reason other than an actual crime committed. Although, there is no systematic data compiled to see the level of injustice done to these women but various writers confirm one aspect that because of its ambiguity, this law terrorized women. While criticizing the biased law, with reference to these cases, Farzana Bari writes:

The Hadd punishment is awarded in cases of Zina and the majority of people who are tried so far under Hudood laws are primarily women. With the exception of two cases (Fahmida-Alla Bukhsh, Shahida Parveen and Mohamad Sarwar) whereby men along with women were awarded Hadd (stoning to death) punishment, only women have been awarded the maximum punishment of adultery by the male judiciary. This includes Safia Bibi who was a blind woman, raped by her landlord and his sons and was sentenced stoning to death because she was not able to provide male witnesses.

As it is mentioned above, the severe criticism came from the civil society on the biased laws, which only targeted the women as hinted above, especially those who belonged to low and low-middle class. In order to remove this objection, the government appointed women as Qazis, where at least one of the parties was a woman, so that in the presence of female judges, women victims could clearly defend their stance. This demand was approved after some hesitation. In addition to this, exclusive courts for family affairs were constituted with a single objective of hearing the cases of haq-mehr (dowry money).

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349 Details to be discussed in Chapter 7.
351 Haqmehr is a God-given right of a wife on his husband in a shape of a money or property and this rights is also written in a marriage contract (Nikah Nama).
An interesting encounter was witnessed which reflected a conflicting measures of the Zia regime, when women’s appointment as Qazis was challenged by a petitioner Ansar Burney. Burney moved this petition in Federal Shariat Court (comprised of Chief Justice Aftab Hussain, Justice Zahoor ul Haq and Justice Malik Ghulam Ali), by stating that women under Islamic law are not allowed to become Qazis and there is no precedent, as such. Secondly, it was further argued that since under the law of evidence, a woman testimony is half of a man and her share in inheritance is also half of her brother, then how could they become qazis like men. The clarification of the Attorney General from CII was that a woman can become Qazi in all family matters but she has to be over 40 years of age and she must observe veil. After these deliberations, FSC gave a judgment declaring that a woman can be appointed as a Qazi without any limit of age and attire. FSC also mentioned in its detailed judgment that women evidence is not half of a man and there is no restriction on women to hear only family related cases.\textsuperscript{352}

From the above, I can deduct that on one side the Islamisation program of Zia curtailed freedom of women, while on the other it jeopardized their self-respect and independence. Such policies ranged from enactment of laws to their enforcement, involving judiciary. These measures however were resisted and challenged by civil society presenting strong arguments refuting the interpretation of Islam as envisioned by Zia’s regime, which would be discussed in Chapter 8.

\textbf{5.1.2: Executive Directives Affecting Women}

Both as a Chief Martial Law Administrator and later as a President, Zia-ul-Haq’s legislation seriously affected the rightful status of women in Punjab, as well as in other parts of Pakistan. Along with these measures, numerous executive directives were issued which established a code of conduct, providing a peculiar religious justification, unfamiliar with the existing socio-cultural setting of Punjab. These executive orders were issued under the pretext of ‘Chadar aur Chardevari’ (the veil and the four walls). Although, an impression was given that the measures were to protect the privacy of

\textsuperscript{352}The Pakistan Times, August 10, 1982.
women, but in fact the concept was stretched too far where the women were became more secluded in the society and their movement was further curtailed, especially in urban centers. The affected areas of women activities were in the realm of education, sports and workplace. It demonstrates that under the pretense of Islamisation, the government restricted the routine activities of women, regulating even their routine healthy activities. Such kind of restrictions over women’s daily lives were supported by the orthodoxy especially, Jamat-i-Islami and Majlis-e-Ahrar. Dr. Israr Ahmed (a religious scholar) became a principal supporter of Zia-ul-Haq’s policies. He was however opposed by such Ulemas as Allama Syed Mahmud Ahmed Elahi Zaheer and Maulana Syed Hamid Mian, who demanded that a correct interpretation of religion should be provided. Zia-ul-Haq’s emphasize to seclude women by confining them to a particular role, was not a product of his own exclusive philosophical thinking but it was the codification of already existing socio-cultural norms, prevalent in Punjabi society, thus, making the women participation even more confined. However, the only difference was that he linked the cultural practices with religious obligations and often used both terms as interchangeable, confusing the society about its distinctive position and role. Therefore, making it difficult to discriminate between the two. This situation worsened, when Zia-ul-Haq included Ulemas in legislative and executive bodies as ‘inspectors’ on people’s conduct.

One example can be given of an extreme case, relating to a television program ‘Al-Huda’, in which the principle proponent of Zia’s policy, Dr. Israr Ahmed viewed that women should be barred from the television programs, but when he was challenged on this account, arguing that the same principal of appearance should be applied to men, he had no satisfactory answer. This action promoted arbitrary division between genders, thus generated an environment of hostility and resentment amongst the women. This program faced a severe reaction from civil society, which resulted in imposing a ban on Dr Ahmad’s program with a demand of replacing it. The main factor, which prompted this, was his pronouncement in a TV interview, that the women employment should be restricted to the field of medicine and teaching. While writing about the replacement of

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353 Jang, 21 March 21, 1982.
this program, the rightwing Urdu newspaper, supported Zia’s Islamisation program in its editorial by writing that, “the most popular among the broadcasted religious programs on TV, with a distinction of receiving a direct appreciation from President Zia-ul-Haq’s banned by the TV administrators, who are admirers of Bhutto rule and uncontrolled women conspirator of APWA, headed by Begum Asghari Raheem Ahmad (wife of the Governor of Sindh).” Newspaper further quoted the protesting women saying that since they are well-aware of Islamic principles and the rights granted to them therefore they should not be miss-guided by such programs, which are presenting a miss-interpretation of the Islamic values, although endorsed by Zia’s government.

Similar views were voiced by Maulana Maudoodi in one of his interview to the correspondent of BBC, William Crawley, before the ban on Dr. Ahmad’s T.V program, where he said that women should be restricted to some selected fields. Maudoodi stressed that women can become doctors and teachers to treat female patients and to teach female student, respectively. While replying to another question over women employment, he explicitly answered that whatever field women choose, their domain of interaction should be limited to only their own gender and they should not forget that their prime responsibility is towards their husband and children. The views of orthodoxy reflect that they did not recognize any individual position and status of women and the education and job both were assessed through the exclusive family related prism. Such twisted acknowledgement of women rights, civil society opposed those TV programs, which instead of educating the general masses were imbibing the conservative pattern of thinking, encouraged by the government. However, some religious scholars like Secretary General of Ahl-e-Sunat Jamat, Sahabzada Fazal Kareem along with others (Maulana Abdul-Qahar Salfi, Maulnana Qari Abdul Hakeem Dehalvi, Maulana Muhammad Younas Dehalvi, Syed Shaukat Hussan Fatmi, etc.) passed a resolution against complainant women by calling them ‘Westernized’ and their act ‘un-Islamic’, which according to them required an immediate legal action and restoration of the banned

354.”Bismillah!TV Par Tashreef Layee (Bismillah! Come on T.V),” Jasarat(Editorial), March 20, 1982.
355.Ibid.
356.”Islami Muashrey main Aurat ka mokam (Status of woman in an Islamic State)”, Interview of Maulana Maudoodi, to the correspondent of BBC, William Crawley, Jasarat, March 05, 1982.
Nevertheless, there were a number of religious scholars, who did not own Zia-ul-Haq’s policy of excluding women from the mainstream and confining them to a specified role. In this regard, Allama Syed Mahmood Ahmed Razavi a noted scholar and president of Ruyet-e-Hilal Committee, at that time, in his press interview asserted, that “in human rights men and women had the same status.” He further went on to say:

Islam was totally against keeping women shut in the four walls of home (and) as far as women’s advancement and taking up jobs in various fields was concerned, Islam did not oppose them. In the days of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) women attended the injured during the wars and served water to thirsty. It explained that women could serve even in a battle field if needed. What was required was that women keeping themselves within the bounds of shariah worked in those professions that were necessary for them and adhered to Islamic values and modesty.

More enlightened religious scholars like Allama Razavi, however, believed that although the women should work and go out of their homes but at the same time they should observe the cultural sensitivities of the society.

For the purpose of this study, the executive orders during Zia’s rule can be classified in two general categories; attire and education; sports and employment. As far as first category is concerned, there were two directives. The first related to the implementation of new dress code in government institutions, including schools and colleges, along with that a separate women university was announced. The new dress code became mandatory for women, wearing a duppata, specifying that the head and the upper part of the body should be covered. A similar circular to the federal government colleges warned that a

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357 Jasarat, March 25, 1982.
358 Islamic Calendar is determined by sighting the moon. The committee which ratify the sighting of the moon is Ruyet-e-Hilal (Moon Sighted Committee).
359 The Muslim, March 22, 1982.
360 Ibid.
361 Ibid.
362 A long Scarf.
prescribed size of a covering cloth must be wore by the girls. A daily newspaper, *The Muslim* gave a detail of this particular order:

The students have been asked to cover their heads with a proper “DOPATTA” and not a then strip of cloth presently in use. However, the staff members have been advised to be modestly dressed and cover themselves in *chadar* (a cloth covering at least 3/4 th of the body). The order says: “the federal government has decided that in all institutions under its control, girls from class IX upwards will henceforth wear a proper DOPATTA as head-cover, rather than the thin strip of cloth which is generally in use at present”. “It has further been decided that all female staff in schools and colleges will be modestly dressed and will wear a *chadar* over their dress”, the order added.

Similarly, special directions were sent to the news channels for women newscasters and announcers, asserting that they must follow the prescribed dress code, which included covering of their heads and wearing full-sleeves shirt. The state-controlled media strictly abided by Zia’s directives, no matter it was controversial and taken as a forced prescription in a regimental manner. We would like to clarify that wearing a *duppata* and other similar attire, in the Pakistani cultural context is not a new phenomenon. However, to redefine its length and making it a conditioned code of conduct was considered as a daunting directive. Secondly, the governmental monitoring exclusively for women, created an atmosphere of discrimination, enforcement and coercion, limiting the choices of women regarding their personal preferences.

Another directive dealt with the new syllabi up to Intermediate school level, with an emphasize on religious education, by utilizing the services of *Ulema’s*, whom I understand had an orthodox views regarding gender equality. In Islam as a religion is

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363 This circular was served on March 15th on the educational institutions with two month’s time for implementation. According to a survey conducted by this correspondent, staff members in all major colleges Federal government college for women, government college satellite Town, Sir Syed College and Viqarun Nisa Collegen were dressed as directed and were either covered in a *chadar* or wearing a gown over their dress. However, the girls do not seem to have taken this directive seriously. Hardly three to five percent girls were dressed as directed while the rest were wearing the usual shape “DOPATTA”. Most of the girls were of the view that wearing a *chadar* or the new “DOPATTA” outside the college was more important as observing “purdah” inside the college did not make much sense. They maintained that they needed the “purdah” most when they were outside the premises.”*The Muslim*, May 16, 1982.

364 *The Pakistan Times*, February 16, 1983.
already followed by 98 percent of Muslim population of the country; the forced study of already imbibed religious values and principles seemed irrelevant especially when since the birth of a child, Muslim parents prefer to train their children, in accordance with religious obligations as per with their beliefs. Although, it was not women specific directive but it had more implications for the female students, still further restricting their mobility and efforts to attain suitable status. Through this order, the society was to become more conservative. Another aspect is that within Islam, there are various interpretations, which were not kept in consideration while designing the syllabi, as Zia and his Ulemas belonged to a certain sect, which amounted to enforcement of a particular mind-set in a generalized way-not acceptable to a large number of Sunni as well as Shia population.\(^{365}\) The Shia protest forced Zia government to accommodate their demands by including a separate syllabus for these students in public schools.

Similarly, the demand of religious elements in Zia’s government to establish a separate women university was apparently of no harm, as the conservative section of the population was hesitant to send their daughters for higher education, in co-institutions but this directive was strongly opposed by civil society, with strong reservations and valid arguments. For example, the President of Tehreek-e-Nazria-e-Pakistan, Allama Muhammad Razi Mujtahid, who was also a member of Zia’s handpicked Majlis-e-Shura, opposed a separate women university. Allama Mujtahid further considered the order of a separate women university, a total wastage of money and stressed on equal treatment of women according to Islam.\(^{366}\)

Thus, the long-term consequences of this action could further increase gender segregation in the society; in which women underwent disadvantage in two ways. First, the proposed women university, restricting to female faculty could not get the services of the expertise

\(^{365}\) The Shia population in particular protested vigorously to safeguard their rights along with an objective to restrain that particular Sunni sect which was supported by Zia-ul-Haq “protect their rights and prevent the Sunni majority (a particular sect promoted by Zia-ul-Haq) and the government from imposing an interpretation of the shariah,” Mariam Abou Zahab, “The Regional Dimension of Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan”, in Pakistan Nationalism without a Nation?, ed., Christophe Jaffrelot, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), p.117; Riaz Hassan, “Islamization: An Analysis of Religious, Political and Social Change in Pakistan,” Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 21, No. 3 (July, 1985), p.279.

\(^{366}\) Jasarat, March 21, 1982.
disrespect of gender differentiation, which is required for higher education. Moreover, restricting them in all female environments, the graduated women could face problems of adjustment, if they opted to work with prestigious institutions, including Multinational Corporations, where the salaries are much higher than the exclusive women institutions. In other words, the government plan to segregate genders in higher education could affect the women’s intellectual pursuits as well as chances of employment of their choice.

The second directive of Zia was a ban on women to participate in sports events, held outside Pakistan. The stated directions were not officially issued, in a shape of any written notice, rather it was verbal and without any lawful authority. This order was not only in contradiction to the universal principle of gender equality but it was also a negation of a precedent set by Mr. Jinnah, who inaugurated the First Pakistan Olympic Games in April 1948, where women athletes also participated. In that event, Mr. Jinnah “could not have failed to note their (women) presence when he declared the games open and exhorted the athletes (including the females) to build physical strength ‘not for aggression, not for militarism but for becoming fighting fit’.”367 Now because of Zia’s order, the women athletes became handicapped and could not participate in a competitive atmosphere, lacking the techniques and procedures of international sports, which could “provide the opportunity to improve their standards by competing with sportsmen and sportswomen of international caliber.”368 That is the reason that Pakistani women athletes lagged behind the international standards and were forced to remain within the substandard level of performance. This order even restricted women athletes in enclosed arenas, excluding men spectators. Nevertheless, Zia-ul-Haq had his own justification behind this order, which he expressed in an address to the gathering of officials of National Sports Federation and Organization at Ali Technical Institute in Lahore. His address was reported as:

There was no ban on women playing hockey, but he (Zia-ul-Haq) would not allow Pakistan women team to play abroad. He said women hockey teams should be composed

368 Ibid.
to play within the country, and they could even invite foreign teams to Pakistan. The foreign teams, he said, would play under arrangements where the spectators would only be women.\footnote{The Muslim, April 20, 1982.}

To legitimize the above mentioned directions, the government invited special fatwas from orthodox Mullahs. They responded by issuing fatwas that said that the women should not play even in front of men, who are not close blood relations. The women members of Jamat-i-Islami especially the President Majlis-i-Khwateen-i-Pakistan, Begum Nisar Fatima Zehra, who was not only a part of Majlis-e-Shura but also a member of Islamic Ideology Council along with being a head of Women Commission supported Zia’s restrictions on women. Encouraged Zia’s pronouncements, even the pictures of women athletes in newspapers were resented by conservative section, which created an adverse environment, making hard for the women athletes to explore their full potential. Table 5.1 below explicitly demonstrates the kinds of ban imposed on the women athletes from 1980 to 1984.

Table 5.1: Kinds of Ban on Women Athletes: 1980-1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ban on Women Athletes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 1980</td>
<td>The trip of Pakistani women athletes to Sri Lanka was cancelled five days before and the training camps was closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1981</td>
<td>Pakistani women athletes were not allowed to participate in First Asian Games, held in Japan. On 14 August the female athletes were asked to disband and go home without specifying any reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1981</td>
<td>First time since 1947, women were excluded from the 16th National Games held in Peshawar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1982</td>
<td>Women players were excluded from the ‘Pakistan ASIAD team’ (ASIAD is known as for Asian Games).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1983</td>
<td>Sixth Women National Championship was held in closed doors, excluding male spectators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 1984</td>
<td>Women’s hockey team was not allowed to go to Malaysia for a reciprocal match.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Khawer Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan, Two Steps Forward, One Step Back?* (Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 1987), PP.90-95, see also, Dawn, 24\textsuperscript{th}August, 1981 and Dawn, 26\textsuperscript{th} August 1981
During the peak rule of Zia-ul-Haq from 1980 to 1984, the women athletes and sport teams suffered considerably as demonstrated by table 5.1. We gather from the table that on number of occasions, the women could not participate in international and national games and at least on one occasion their performance was restricted to exclusive enclosures. Although, the young girls had participated in 1978 Bangkok Asian games.³⁷⁰ If the women’s teams had been allowed to visit such regional countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia and in international level games like held in Japan; these athletes would have been exposed to highly competent competitors, making them more experienced and skillful, in a variety of ways. A surprising aspect is observed from the table 5.1 is in April 1981, women were excluded even in domestic and national level games, being held for the first time since the inception of Pakistan. Apart from sports, the women appointment on various government jobs and their participation in academic related pursuits were also restricted during Zia’s rule as they were restrained from bank related jobs as well as foreign office postings and scholarships outside Pakistan.

In addition to this, Zia-ul-Haq also barred the appointment of un-married females to Foreign Service, subjecting their appointments, promotions and postings on gender considerations and not on merit. These all directives of Zia government to marginalize women in various fields is well-explained in a research document, which states that “the state moved on to take over the lives of women, to control their bodies, their space, to decide what they should wear, how they should conduct themselves, the jobs they could take, the sports they could play, and took it upon itself to define and regulate women’s morality. It is state’s own interpretation of Islam, the one that suits its power interests that is popularized.”³⁷¹ The above-mentioned actions against women created hurdles for them, at a stage when they were already struggling to make their presence felt in the Punjabi society of mixed socio-cultural practices with religious obligations.

³⁷⁰ "Women and the Asian Games", op.cit.
Apart from the above mentioned gender biased legislative and executive measures by Zia regime, there were some trivial steps taken by his government with positive intentions in socio-economic and political realms of women lives. However, even these policies over-shadowed the because of half-hearted efforts. The first step in this regard was to induct 20 women members in, in the ‘hand-picked’ 1981 Majlis-e-Shoora. In 1985, women’s reserved quota in National Assembly was doubled to 20 percent in non-party elections. In these elections, total 22 women joined National legislature (1 directly elected, 21 on reserved seats), whereas in Punjab Assembly, 14 women became in the provincial legislature (1 directly elected, 12 on reserved seats and 1 on the quota of minority seats).\(^{372}\) However, as usual the selected women members belonged to the elite class, devoid of any knowledge about the sufferings of low-middle class women. These women legislators understandably owned a silent allegiance to Zia-ul-Haq’s policies. During, the tenure of 1985 Assembly, not a single legislation was introduced for the empowerment of women, by these women legislators, when two women out of 14 served as Ministers. For all practical purposes, the presence of women legislators was not more than symbolic, both in the National and Punjab Assemblies. The second step was to make the Women’s Division, a part of Cabinet Secretariat, which brought this body directly under the command of President. The functions of this Division ranged from making policies for women issues and to assist women organizations through effective research, so that the opportunities of education and employment could be provided to female population. This Division could have served well, if it provided a chance to work autonomously, as it efficiently organized conferences and trainings for rural and urban women. While writing about the ineffectiveness of Women’s Division, Michelle Maskiell, mentions in her working paper, “the women’s Division has channeled money into research and development schemes for women and has sponsored public forums for the discussion of women’s issues. Still, for all its modest achievements, the Women’s Division has been neither bold nor very successful in its representation of women’s needs within the Zia government.”\(^{373}\) Therefore, despite of the appointment of another

\(^{372}\) For details, see Appendix E.

Commission on the Status of Women\textsuperscript{374} and the inclusion of a chapter entitled ‘Women in Development’ for the first time in the Sixth Plan, not much was offered in practical terms for the female population, accept exhibiting some concerns of Zia’s government over the women distress. Third, the 1988 budget facilitated the widows in two ways. First, the budget announced full pension for the widows of government employees, which was 60% before this. Secondly, the relaxation was also provided to widows in property tax.\textsuperscript{375} Another, significant step in this budget was the announcement of \textit{National Dowry Fund} with two hundred million (20 Cror) rupee, in which the financially sound and privileged people and institutions will also contribute annually, so that the daughters of poor families could get married with the help of this fund.\textsuperscript{376}

When I balance Zia-ul-Haq policies, adversely affecting the progress and placement of women in the Punjabi society with those symbolic measures, taken apparently for the benefit of women; I can assess that the damage done to the growth and empowerment of women was much greater and long-lasting than gestures like increasing the representation in legislative bodies or establishing some kind of forums to look after women issues.

5.2: Democratic Eras and Women Rights

From 1988 to 1999, Pakistan witnessed a rare experience of democracy. Pakistan Peoples’ Party under Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990: 1993-1996) and Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993:1996-1999) changed hands and became Prime Ministers, for two terms each. It was expected, at least from Benazir Bhutto, who became the first woman Prime-Minister of Pakistan after notorious anti-women laws during Zia’s rule that she would introduce drastic reforms for the uplift of women, by either repealing or emending the discriminatory laws. This expectation was further reinforced by the fact that she represented a liberal party with an agenda to safeguard the rights of under-

\textsuperscript{374} The Commission was headed by Begum ZariSarfraz and it consisted of 19 members, three of them were men and the commission had to continue for one year.


privileged and oppressed section of the population. In comparative terms, the Punjab based Prime Minister; Nawaz Sharif had a weak agenda for women related issues. A point to remember here is that Nawaz Sharif was a product of Zia-ul-Haq as he was appointed as Finance Minister in the Punjab government during the Martial law regime and later as Chief Minister under the second half of Zia’s rule. Nevertheless, this party was a successor of Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, who had upheld the equal status of women in explicit terms, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

In these ten years of democratic rule, neither Benazir Bhutto nor Nawaz Sharif’s government, due to various reasons (which are explained in the proceeding pages), could not make any serious effort to introduce a meaningful legislation, or to chalk-out any concrete step, for the up-gradation of the female population of the Punjab. Though, both rulers were compelled to revisit Zia-ul-Haq’s Hudood ordinance by establishing review bodies, but their reports were ignored and consequently no concrete steps were taken, either for the repeal or amendment in the Hudood laws. Even during the election campaigns of both parties, only a passing reference was made regarding the controversial laws of Zia, when there was a lot of pressure by the human and women rights organizations for the repeal or amendment of such laws.

5.2.1: Benazir Governments and Women’s Issues

As a result of 1988 elections, Benazir became the Prime-Minister of Pakistan after her party received 38.52 percent of the total votes and secured 93 seats out of 207, in the National Assembly. The Islami Jamhuri Ittehad (IJI) followed with 30.16 percent of the votes with 55 seats. PPP formed a coalition government at the centre but in Punjab Provincial Assembly, due to insufficient seats, it failed to form a government. Thus, in Punjab, IJI emerged as a single largest party, electing Nawaz Sharif (leader of IJI), as a Chief Minister of the Province. Punjab being the largest province has an effective bearing

377IslamiJamhoorIttehad (IJI), a nine-party alliance of right-wing parties in 1988. These parties included the Pakistan Muslim League (PML); Jamiat-e-Mashaikh; Jamaat-e-Islami (JI); Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam; Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Darkhwaati Group); Jamiat Ahle Hadith; An independent group led by Fakhr Imam; Nizam-e-Mustafa and Hizb-e-Jihad.
in an overall Pakistani situation, when it comes to changing of the socio-economic conditions of the country.

There is an assessment that 1988 elections were a landmark in Pakistan’s political history, which provided a hope for the female population, in the shape of Benazir Bhutto, the first elected woman Prime Minister of Pakistan. Nevertheless, it is a wrong conception to believe that if a woman becomes a leader of a country, the female population as such will gain in stature and be empowered. The reality is that unless comprehensive measures are not in place for the uplift of women, it cannot become a rule and remain an exception. No doubt, Benazir gained the highest executive position in the country but it was not re-enforced by other dynamics. First, the women representation in the National Assembly was negligible as only 24 women total members (4 directly elected, 20 on reserved seats) could manage to come. Similarly, in Punjab Assembly, the number of total women members was 14 (1 directly elected, 12 on reserved seat and 1 on minority). Second, during Benazir’s rule, I do not see any conscious effort by the women representatives in the Punjab Assembly to legislate laws for the uplift of women or a minimum effort to increase the dismal ratio of female literacy, poor health facilities and high mortality rate during child birth. Third, it was expected that Benazir government would repeal or at least amend those laws of Zia-ul-Haq, which was considered harmful for the development of female population in various ways, but no concrete effort was made in this direction. Same situation existed at the national level and as already mentioned that federal laws are applicable on the province of Punjab, unless stated otherwise. Additionally, to the disappointment of the Punjabi women organizations and pressure groups, her government adopted a rather different approach. While assessing the direction of her policies, Charles H. Kennedy, an expert on South Asian Politics, remarks:

… once Benazir came to power the focus of her interest shifted from gaining political advantage vis-a'-vis the government in regard to the reforms to dealing with the complexities of implementing the reforms (i.e., from gaining to exercising power). Accordingly, Benazir's government has done little to hinder the operation of the Nizam-i-Mustapha as implemented by Zia. Her administration has not dismantled the Federal
Shariat Court nor the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court. Neither has it rescinded the hudood ordinance, nor challenged the implementation of the Ramazan Ordinance, nor curbed the activities of the Council of Islamic Ideology.\textsuperscript{378}

A number of reasons are cited which impeded the government as well as the National Assembly to repeal the mentioned laws and the Provincial Assembly to enact new pro-women legislation and executive measures. The absence of 2/3\textsuperscript{rd} majority of Benazir’s government in the Federal legislature was the first impediment to repeal any constitutional law.\textsuperscript{379} Therefore, her proponents claim that she was not in a position to amend or repeal Zia-ul-Haq’s laws. Nevertheless, the ‘excuse’ of weak coalition government of Peoples Party, resulted in inability of government to emend such laws, is not accepted by some experts of socio-political affairs like Shahnaz Rouse, as she states, “this is too simple an explanation. Her regime did not even take a symbolic public position against that amendment. Further, by undertaking an arranged marriage, by covering her head with a dupatta in public, Ms. Bhutto conceded the ideological battle to the Islamists insignificant ways. These are not trivial issues in the context of a Muslim country where Islamists seek to control every aspect of women’s bodies and lives.”\textsuperscript{380} Rouse might be overstretched her argument by linking the attire of Benazir, which is regarded as a cultural-religious norm and does not reflect a certain mind-set towards a much bigger and real issue like the women related unjust laws. The reality remains that no serious efforts were made to address the Punjabi women’s status in the society. Here, another observation can be mentioned, where criticism against Benazir being a woman, by ‘religious-political’ rivals was not taken seriously by the people at large. This factor alone in fact strengthened Benazir’s position, as a national leader, and she could have used this advantage to move ahead, addressing the draconian women related laws of Zia’s rule. Supporting this contention, a British base Pakistani Professor writes that her rivals “tried to use her gender against her but that turned out to be a non-issue for most Pakistanis across the country. Indeed, Bhutto’s ascent to power may be a symbol of

change for Pakistani women suffering from marginalization and numerous socio-political disadvantages; for many though, her rise to power is seen as largely due to her dynastic privileges and elitist background.”

Second obstacle, which she confronted throughout her short rule, was unbalanced civil-military relationship. Most of her energies were directed towards this quandary that limited her abilities to take actions, reflecting her convictions. She had to compromise and could not take bold steps, challenging the well-established institutions, created by a long spell of Zia’s dictatorial rule. Some commentators attribute the third reason for Benazir’s inaction as the effective opposition by PML and IJI in Punjab, which made her government defensive, both at National and Provincial levels. These factors indicate that though 1988 elections clearly exhibited the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, but the polarized political environment in the country created multiple problems for the new government to implement its agenda, even when she might have desired to fulfill her commitments. The cleavages and marked differences between the ideologies of these two political parties created a continuous conflicting situation for the federal leadership, as described by the editor of a newspaper, during Benazir’s first tenure:

Another dilemma for the PPP government is its failure to evolve a viable Punjab strategy. The virtual state of confrontation between the party in power at the centre and the one in the biggest province of the country has virtually bogged down the whole system. The term ‘broad based government’ can only have a real meaning if some kind of a genuine

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382 Maleeha Lodhi indicated two basic reasons. One was the difference between civil and military leadership over the operation against the antagonist Mohajir supporters of MQM in Sindh Province and second was the interference of Benazir Bhutto in the recruitment of military personals. Lodhi further indicated that the President and General Aslam Baid, both believed that Benazir Butto by interfering in their affairs is deceiving them. She further states that only in one condition the military coup of 1990 could be avoided, if Benazir had a full support by her political allies and strengthen her political grounds, which would have been a guarantee to avoid the military coup but unfortunately she could not make good relations with her allies and worked in isolation which provided a space to the military. Moreover, the allegations of corruption on her government was an additional factor, which weakened the position of her government, therefore, no resentment came from public over her dismissal by the military. Maleeha Lodhi, “Hakumatki bar-tarfiakyAsbab (Reasons of the Dismissal of Government),” Jang, August 16, 1991.
effort is made to have an understanding with the opposition parties, especially with those which are in power in the provinces.  

A verified fact as deducted from the above quote and elsewhere, it can be stating that Prime Minister Benazir could not implement her plan of action because of her pre-occupation with the opposition, which had formed the government at the Punjab provincial level. Because of the population and vast resources as hinted above, it had the capacity to create obstacles for the normal functioning of the federal government.

The Peoples’ Party manifesto in 1988 had mentioned its resolve to repeal the discriminatory laws of Zia-ul-Haq and to provide equal opportunities for education and employment for women, as spelled in Chapter 9 of the party’s manifesto, entitled ‘Rights of Women Elimination of Discrimination’. The important characteristics of the mentioned chapter indicated the firm intention of PPP to reform the personal laws against women and make efforts to implement it through administrative machinery. Second, it also promised to educate women and provide them equal opportunities for employment. However, on the contrary, after becoming premier, some trivial measures were taken to address women related issues, which were incapable and under-equipped to bring any kind of meaningful transformation in the comprehensive condition of women in the society.

The critics of Benazir government like Lawrence Ziring is of the view that the above-mentioned obstacles were responsible for not making necessary amendments and that her government “was too weak politically to seek the repeal of the fundamentalist-inspired laws considered degrading to women, she could not attack the causes for a slumping

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384 The Chapter states, “1) Pakistan will sign the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women. 2) Women will have the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for work of equal value, and payment of maternity leave. 3) All discriminatory laws against women will be repealed. 4) Personal law will be reformed and brought in line with the demands of contemporary socio-economic realities. 5) The law-enforcing machinery will be made effective to protect modesty of women. 6) The government will take special measures to promote the literacy of women. 7) The curse of Jahez is a pernicious evil in our society, which will be eradicated by enlarging social consciousness and enforcing strictly the relevant laws and Dowry Act.
economy, and she was unable to address the problem of Pakistan's poor. In reality, the political challenges were accompanied by lack of sensitivity and serious commitment to resolve the plight of the Punjabi women. A main reason can be subscribed to the fact that she along with the members of the party came from the privileged class, whose interests and sensitivities were not focused towards the unjust laws of previous government but rather to enjoy the facilities and privileges of their offices. It is important to mention here that no matter how non-committed she was towards the women issues, the under-privileged Punjabi women saw in her a hope for themselves in a number of ways. Being a woman, Ms. Bhutto inspired the female population, who expected that she could take extraordinary steps at some stage of her rule, to make dents in the socio-cultural mind-set of the said society. On the contrary, during Benazir premiership, her lack of enthusiasm to include more women as legislators and administrators is reflected in Weiss’s observation:

Aside from herself and her mother, only one other woman was given a PPP ticket to run for a National Assembly seat and few women were given provincial assembly tickets. No women were initially given ministerial portfolios, although this was reversed on March 23, 1989, when Benazir expanded the federal cabinet to 43 members, including five women. Of the 24 ministers, only one—her mother who is a minister without portfolio—is a woman. Of the 19 ministers of state, four are women.

Regardless of ignoring the women population in various ways, the female population as mentioned before continued to hope for some kind of relief from her premiership. The poorest section of Pakistani society had always considered her father as a voice of the poor and had voted for PPP, whenever an opportunity arose. She could have exploited Bhutto’s charisma, especially in the Punjab province, where he was a popular leader. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his part, recognizing the significance of Punjab remarked that,

386 Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali (Minister of State for Education); Begum Rehana Sarwar (initially appointed as Minister of State for the Women's Division, now heading the Ministry for Women's Development); Dr. Mahmooda Shah (Minister of State for Special Education and Social Welfare); and Begum Khakwani (Minister of State for Population Welfare); Anita. Weiss, “Benazir Bhutto and the Future of Women in Pakistan,” Asian Survey, Vol. 30, No. 5 (May, 1990), p. 437.
“Punjab has to be kept on the right side of the government at all cost”\textsuperscript{387}. It is believed that Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister was presented with multiple opportunities to challenge the generations old taboo, where men are considered superior to women, denying them the basic right of inheritance, equal opportunities, right to marriage and even choosing profession of their choice.

On her part, Benazir had insisted that she took a series of steps for the women empowerment, during her tenure. In her autobiography, she stresses on this point by writing that:

I appointed several women to my cabinet and established a Ministry of Women’s Development. We created women’s studies programs in universities. We established a Women’s Development Bank to give credit only to enterprising women. We created institutions to help in training women in family planning, nutritional counseling, child care, and birth control. And we legalized and encouraged women’s participation in international sports, which had been banned in the years of the Zia military dictatorship. It was a solid start in a society where Islam had been exploited to repress the position of women in society for a bitter generation.\textsuperscript{388}

One instance, where she took some trivial steps for the improvement of women was the up-gradation of Zia’s Women Division to a level of a Ministry of Women’s Development, which had two important functions. First, to identify the women related discriminatory laws under Zia’s government. Second, to design a strategy, providing better opportunities for employment, both in private and public sector.\textsuperscript{389} Ultimately, the ministry prepared a report, recommending an immediate reversal of gender biased laws, however there was no follow up by her government. Similarly, a Women’s Development Bank was established, which was considered by her as an important opportunity for women, providing them financial resources and to empower them economically. In this regard, she stated that “the setting of this Bank will encourage mobilization of resources by

\textsuperscript{389} Anita . Weiss, op.cit., pp.443-444.
women even at the grass-root level. Further, the Bank will create awareness and enlightenment of our women with regard to financial transactions and mobilization of savings. The bank will also act as a source of encouragement for women to find job in other fields. Nevertheless, this bank was limited in nature as it was confined to limited urban centres, thus a large percentage of rural Punjabi women could not take advantage of the facilities, provided by the bank. Secondly, without providing any infrastructure of entrepreneurship for the women, the functions of bank by themselves remained confined. It would have been better, if the bank provided loan facilities for the poor women, to start their own business with easy installments, on the pattern of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

In addition to this, during her first term as Prime Minister, she relaxed the prison sentences of the under-privileged female prisoners. She further encouraged women to become member of trade unions after their revival during her term, which could affect positively on the status of women in Punjabi society. These efforts are perceived as “a symbolic gesture of releasing women-most of them very poor-from the "social prisons" that had been built up during the previous government. The new government allowed for the revival of trade unions, which soon seemed to be including a sizeable number of women in their ranks and lifted press censorship, resulting in a marked difference in the media's portrayal of women.” However, by keeping in view the unchanged situation of Punjabi women and lack of changes in the patriarchal mind-set, these measures were not enough to bring even a small impact on the conditions of low-middle class and poor women.

The style and sensitivities for addressing the women issues was nearly the same, when Benazir became Prime Minster for second time (1993-1996). Her commitment towards resolving the plight of the Punjabi women was as disappointing as before. It fell far

392 Although, the Labour laws were announced in 1972 but they could not achieve much during the military rule of Zia-ul-Haq from 1977 to 1988. However, the trade unions revived themselves under this law during Benazir’s first term as Primer.
below the continuous expectations of the women. Unlike 1988 elections, PPP could not get an absolute majority in National Assembly and secured 37.85 percent votes, securing 89 out of 217 seats in the National Assembly and formed a coalition government with the splinter group of PML (Junejo group), with a narrow majority. In the national legislature, only 4 women were directly elected, namely, Benazir Bhutto (PPP), Nusrat Bhutto (PPP), Shahnaz Javed (PPP) and Tehmina Daultana (PMLN). As mentioned before, no additional woman could become member of the legislatures, as the deferred quota was not yet restored. In the Punjab Assembly, PML(N) emerged as a single largest party with 106 out of 248 seats, whereas PPP won 98 seats. In this Assembly, there were 2 women members: one Musarrat Sultan of PML(N) was directly elected while Begum Raj Gill was from the minority quota. The women quota was not restored, thus they had no representation on reserved seats. During this period Peoples Party established an alliance with a splinter group, and was able to establish a weak coalition government. Because of politicking and delicate coalition, attention on women issues could not be addressed.

Like her previous premiership, this time also she faced various challenges for example “domestic political strife, an economic recession described by some economists as the worst in 30 years, international terrorism, and international flashpoints on both its eastern and western border.” In this situation, Benazir government was unable to spare any time and energy to focus women related issues, with an exception of an allocation of meager amount for women in health/education sector, under the program of Primary Health Care and Family Planning. The budget allocation was increased “for health from Rs. 1.539 million in 1993-94 to Rs.2,430 billion in 1994-95, representing an over-all increase of 58%. The important fact is that the development allocation has been enhanced by about 15%.” As expected, such measures could not bring even minimum alterations, what to say of changing the landscape for the benefit of the Punjabi female population. The already insignificant progress of Benazir government, in socio-economic sector

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further faced serious set-back, when the “absence of an agreement on power-sharing between the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the PPP, internecine civil war between the two factions of the MQM further fueled by the covert role of civil and military intelligence agencies, and sectarian conflict between extremist Shia and Sunni organizations worked together to create a proverbial Hobbesian condition of ‘war of all against all’ in Karachi.” \(^{397}\) Political instability of Benazir government, compounded by a civil strife in her own province of Sindh as mentioned above, absorbed considerable resources and energies of her government.

These internal and external hindrances put together, during her second term in office, provided once again an excuse to ignore important assignment of the reversal of *Hudood* laws, which as already mentioned were expected by the Punjabi women. This continuous neglect on the part of Benazir’s government dissuaded the women voters during 1993 elections. Unlike the 1988 elections in which women over-whelming voted for Benazir Bhutto, according to the study of Andrew R. Wilder, this time “women voted in higher percentages than men for the PML (N) than for the PPP in 1993, which also indicates that many voted independently of their male family member (and) the failure of the PPP government between 1988 and 1990 to take any concrete steps to improve the status of women in Pakistan” \(^{398}\), led towards the decline of PPP popularity. This study further indicates that the “PML (N) strongholds in 1993 were in northern Punjab, in urban areas, among female voters, among voters living in middle and upper class neighborhoods, and with government employees” \(^{399}\).

Once again, during 1993 elections, the PPP manifesto talked about the uplift for the women population of Pakistan, including that of the Punjab. The first promise in the manifesto was to reserve 5% quota for women, in all government and semi-government organizations, with the restoration of special seats for women in National and Provincial Assemblies. Second commitment was to construct a special women police force, along


\(^{399}\) Ibid., p. 393.
with the appointment of women lawyers in superior judiciary. Third, once again the party committed to repeal all discriminatory laws against women.\textsuperscript{400} However, the absence of any practical steps to full-fill the promises was seen by the Punjabi women as an act of insensitivity on the part of PPP government, towards women issues, which caused lack of trust of Pakistani/Punjabi women towards her party. After becoming Prime Minister for the second term, likewise, she neither addressed the controversial Hudood ordinance, nor introduced any alternate measures for the improvement of socio-economic status of Punjabi women. Kashmali Khan examines her deficiencies as follows:

Her presence as a political leader in a patriarchal society appeared both as a paradox and as denotative of a psychological revolution…. (but) Bhutto could not challenge many laws that existed under the name of Islam. Apologists have argued that her regime had no choices since it governed through fragile coalition…. Despite the fact that women’s issues found a place in the manifesto of the PPP, gender issues did not become a priority for the new government, in the absence of a broadly based alliance between women’s organisations as well as due to political currents that derived strength from the support of the marginalised strata of society.\textsuperscript{401}

However, former Prime Minster provides same rational for her performance in second term in her autobiography, stating that she took a number of steps to improve the status of women. The first step she took was the endorsement of the United Nations’ \textit{Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women’}. The second effort as she mentioned was the establishment of \textit{Women’s Development Ministry}. Moreover, she boosts to have hosted \textit{Muslim Women’s Olympics} in Pakistan. Fourth was to establish special women’s police stations and fifth was to induct women judges in high court, which was first time in Pakistan’s history, accompanied by the establishment of family

\textsuperscript{400}The relevant portion of the manifesto read as: 1) Women’s rights shall be protected and they will be given equal status in shall walks of life. 2)5% quota of employment for women shall be reserved in all government and semi government organizations. 3)Special seats for women in the National and Provincial Assemblies shall be restored. 4)Welfare organizations shall be created for the poor / destitute women; widows & abandoned families will be looked after. 5) A special Federal Women’s police force would be set up for security duties. 6)Pakistan would pioneer an Islamic Women’s Parliamentary Group so that Muslim women gain from each others experience. 7) An academy shall be set up of women scholars to research, publish and publicize role of Muslim women. 8) Discriminatory laws against women shall be reviewed and reformed. 9) Distinguished women lawyers shall be appointed to the superior judiciary.

\textsuperscript{401}Kashmali Khan, “What Benazir did (not do) for women,” \textit{The Express Tribune}, June 30, 2010.
courts led by women judges. She further explains that she set-up separate police stations for women. In her own words, “(Her) …government established special women’s police stations to give confidence to women to report crimes committed against them, as well as appointed women judges for the first time to the high courts of the country, we established family courts headed by women judges to hear issues related to child custody and family issues.”

Benazir’s claims that she made efforts for the improvement of women were minor in nature and hardly helped to remove the societal attitudes toward female population. Her mentioned steps were more defensive in nature than to create conditions where the women could operate on equal basis with men. In other words, she was expected to make a dent in the mindset of the male population, so that their attitude towards female education and employment opportunities, as well as choice of marriage becomes more reasonable and accommodating.

The biggest flaw of her two governments is that she failed to even eliminate those cruel customs like vani, watta/satta, and marriage with Quran. In this regard, there was not even a single legislative initiative taken by her party. All this could have been done, even if a government was unstable and faced instability. Another reason of the least impact of her policies on women population was the shallowness of these measures, which were unable to challenge the orthodoxy. Therefore, her proclamation to enforce social action program, effecting women education and health by training “100,000 women to work in the towns and villages of Pakistan in Health and family planning… (building) 30,000 new primary and secondary schools”, could not bring any far-reaching impact on women status, especially those belonging to low-middle and poor classes. Moreover, by not repealing unabated and discriminatory legislation against women, Ms. Bhutto confirmed the continuity of unjust laws against women of Punjab.

While concluding the efforts of Benazir Bhutto during her two terms, as the Prime Minister, it can be assessed that not much was done to implement her manifesto,

regarding the women of Punjab, let alone making a breakthrough for the uplift of the women status, by challenging the traditional mind-set and orthodoxy on this account. A real contribution of Benazir could have been to make attempts to at least bring change in the attitude of patriarchal society, by introducing new syllabus in the schools and setting personal examples and also by her party members. The defenders of Benazir’s inaction argued that she was limited in her action by the circumstances and secondly a strong opposition, both at federal and Punjab level created obstacles to implement her promises. The crux of the matter remains that she was unable to provide adequate incentives to women, so that they could get some relief from the socio-cultural biases in the society, and could improve their placement within the Punjabi context. Though, through her speeches and statements on various occasions, she indicated that she was aware of the problems of women in general and had a definite agenda in her mind to address them. For example, during one of her speech to 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, where CEADAW was also signed, she stated:

Women have become the victims of a culture of exclusion poverty, deprivation, and discrimination. Half a billion women are illiterate. Seventy per cent of the children who are denied elementary education are girls….It is my firm conviction that a woman cannot ultimately control her own life and make her own choices unless she has financial independence….When I visit poverty stricken villages with no access to lean drinking water, it gladdens my heart to see a lady health visitor, to see a working woman amidst the unfortunate surroundings. For it is my conviction that we can only conquer poverty, squalor, illiteracy and superstition when we invest in our women and when our women begin working. Begin working in our far flung villages where time seems to have stood still and where the bullock not the tractor is still used for cultivation.404

Though in general, Benazir recognized the commonality of women challenges, during the Beijing Conference, however when it came to her own country, she was unable to translate theory into practice. She even could not attempt to address a variety of such societal issues, which were not though exclusively women related, but might have

benefitted them as part of larger society. The biggest flaw being that she was “…slow to devise a systematic privatization policy. Unemployment, inflation, and stagnation in the industrial enterprises, particularly in the public sector, demanded immediate attention and policy action, which the Bhutto government did not seem able to provide.”

Therefore, by the time her government was dismissed in 1997, a large number of people welcomed the decision, as they were disillusioned by her performance. According to an opinion, she proved to be a bad manager of the statecraft and prone to flattery and she was conscious that she belonged more to the landed aristocracy, than to her poor voters, who have been supporting her party with enthusiasm. *The New York Times* states:

> Ms. Bhutto's defeat came after voters grew increasingly disappointed over her Government's performance. Educated at Harvard and Oxford and highly articulate and impassioned in her advocacy of democratic values and the needs of the poor, she came to be seen as a chaotic manager, reliant on a coterie of sycophants and tolerant of corruption in her entourage and family. Pakistan has had difficulty establishing civilian institutions because of the tremendous power wielded by the army and intelligence services, the clergy and the wealthy feudal landlord families, of which the Bhuttos were one of the most powerful.

Although, the above editorial recognizes that the civilian institutions were weak and the army and its intelligence agencies were well entrenched, as rival institutions, the main factor however remained that her lack of initiative was due to her deficiency in convictions rather on institutional realities.

### 5.2.2: Nawaz Government and Women’s Issues

Like Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif also became Prime Minister twice. In 1990 elections, PML(N) led coalition Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (1JI) won 105 out of 217 seats in the National Assembly, fairly ahead of PPP and its partners Pakistan Democratic Alliance.

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In the National Legislature, only 2 women were able to elect themselves on general seats, namely Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat Bhutto. In the Punjab Assembly, PML (N) was able to form a government with comfortable majority. In this assembly, there were 2 women, 1 on general seats and 1 on minority quota named, Fauzia Bahram and Begum Raj Gill, respectively. There was no woman on reserved seats for National and Provincial Assemblies, as the women quota was not restored in these elections. These results provided Nawaz Sharif a comfortable majority to form governments, both at the center and the province of Punjab. The composition of turnout demonstrates that Benazir had lost the confidence of Punjab, including the women voter due to bad performance in her tenure. A sketch of these elections is provided by an American expert on Pakistan, Lawrence Ziring, “The PPP lost ground in every province but its greatest defeat was in Punjab….The IJI won an overwhelming 208 of the 234 seats in the Punjab assembly.”

These elections further determined two important factors; first it proved that people voted on the basis of performance and the fulfillment of agenda, as promised during election campaign. Second, the representation of the Islamic parties in the main-stream politics, after 1990 elections brought a new dimension in the governance meaning that Nawaz Sharif had to carry the burden of orthodoxy. Nawaz Sharif was a product of Zia’s Martial law, as he was appointed on various important positions during Zia’s regime. Thus, an impression was created from the beginning that there was a meager possibility that Zia’s women related laws in particular would be either amended or repealed, as they undermined the status of women and arrested their development and placement, dampening all chances of attaining their rightful place in the society. In other words, Nawaz Sharif’s coalition partners remained indifferent to the idea of change and transformation, hence status quo and conservative policies continued.

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407 In response to the grand IJI alliance of PML(N) in 1988 elections, the PPP decided to contest the 1990 election under the Pakistan Democratic Alliance with Tehreek-e-Istiqlaal, Tehreek Nifaaq Fiqaah-e-Jafria and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan. The PPP did not enter this alliance for significant electoral gain in the form of seats but to prevent itself from appearing isolated and without any political allies.

Though, since the formation of IJI in 1988, their manifesto stressed on providing equal rights to women but some political parties like Jamat-i-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam had their own exclusive interpretation, which did not coincided with the requirements and expectations of the large majority of Punjabi women. In the past, these parties have been a driving force behind the Islamisation program of Zia-ul-Haq’s military government. The IJI manifesto in 1988 included a portion, containing the socio-economic and political women rights under Chapter VIII, entitled ‘Women’. This manifesto promised the right of inheritance for women, as provided by Islamic laws, but it was never put in practice. Second, the manifesto ensured the provision of education and training for women, to get better chances of employment. This manifesto not only ignored the demand of civil society, to repeal the Hudood laws. This omission was conceived as an endorsement of the orthodox part of the coalition. This was further confirmed in 1992, when during the Senate proceeding to mark the ‘Women Day’, Senator Dr. Muhammad Rehan showed concern over the discriminatory laws against women which was refuted by a members of religious parties, who “drew on often repeated arguments to claim that the existing laws did not discriminate against the women folk.” This stance of religious parties was not endorsed by many Senators like Yahya Bakhtiar (Leader of Opposition in Senate), Fasih Iqbal (from Baluchistan) and Zafar ul Haq (former Information Minister). However, the debate in this session revealed the lack of sensitivity of the religious elements in Nawaz Sharif’s government towards women issues, which remained a reason of the low socio-economic condition of female population. This apprehension was confirmed when Nawaz Sharif’s government tabled the “Enforcement of Shariah bill” in 1991. This bill in the name of Quran and Sunnah, aimed to establish a theocratic system, in which the authority of Premier would have been


410 The manifesto stated: 1) Women will be given full opportunity to participate in the family and in all walks of life. The personal, family, social, economic and political rights of the women will be fully protected. 2) The education and training of women will be given top priority so that they can make a significant contribution to family and society and society can benefit from their ability and talents. 3) Proper arrangements will be made for the training of women in specialized fields and polytechnics and vocational institutes will be set up for this purpose. 4) Widows and orphans will receive their rightful inheritance according to the Shariat. Social taboos on marriage of widows will be discouraged. 5) Women’s parks, clubs and similar facilities especially reserved for women will be established. 6) Special plans will be made for the social, economic and educational uplift of the women.

Some political scientists consider that Nawaz Sharif went along with the religious parties in the Parliament to compensate his weakening position by supporting such bills, which could satisfy the religious part of IJI. Rais Ahmad Khan, while commenting on this situation writes:

In 1992, however, Sharif's fortunes declined. The IJI coalition, a shot-gun marriage solemnized by the military's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, began to disintegrate. The National People's Party (NPP) of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) of Qazi Hussain Ahmad, and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) of Altaf Hussain, at different times and for different reasons, broke ranks with the alliance…. These desertions did not pose a threat to Sharifs government but he did lose the two-thirds Assembly majority needed for any constitutional amendment. The formation of a Conscience Group in the Senate by some IJI senators weakened Sharif's hold over the upper house as well.\textsuperscript{413}

Therefore, even an attempt of Nawaz government to satisfy IJI through Shariah bill, could not produce any visible result. Apart from coalition partners, the bill received strong criticism from the opposition alliance of PDA and women rights activists. While considering this bill a cause of ‘dispute and division’, PDA states in one of its resolution that, “the 1973 constitution…guarantees that no laws repugnant to Quran and Sunnah can be enacted, has once for all settled the question of enforcement of Shariah in the country.

As such, the present scheme amounts to undermining the revolutionary spirit of our golden religion.”\textsuperscript{414} Supporting the same idea, a Professor of Law, while discussing the various clauses of this bill, when it was in committee stage, writes that “the Shariat bill in its present form, however, cannot be taken to better Islamise the systems and institutions than they are now as it brings no novel ideas or proposals…. (And the) contents of the proposed Bill are rhetorical, redundant, repetitive and declaratory in nature.”\textsuperscript{415}

this bill was not women specific but the past experience of Punjabi women after Zia’s Islamisation, once again raised suspicion and questions over this proposed legislation, fearing that it could indirectly undermine the status of women still further. A commentator is of the view that there is nothing wrong with the law as such, rather when it comes to its application stage, the condition of a particular society has to be considered. If the society has been inducted a number of variables, which were not present during the time of its inception, this particular law would not contribute in letter and spirit. Ultimately, both houses of Parliament adopted the bill, with a simple majority. The intention of Nawaz government in supporting this bill was not by conviction but rather to prolong his rule. However, soon Nawaz government was dismissed by the President on charges of corruption and misuse of power, therefore the full implications of this particular bill cannot be assessed in its entirety. The comprehensive analysis of Nawaz Sharif’s politics depicts that he and his party men were engaged in business interest and had little sensitivity towards the uplift of the Punjabi women. At times, he casually mentioned the problems faced by the Punjabi women and made comments that the women should be provided with their due rights, as according to the injunctions of the Quran. Acknowledging his short-comings, reflected in the message on Women’s Day 1992, he admitted that his government had fail to provide much deserved and required facilities and opportunities for women by stating, “My government, … remains conscious of the fact that women’s potential for the self-enhancement has not been fully exploited. Many of them continue to suffer from illiteracy, malnutrition, unemployment and inadequate housing.” However, this realization of Nawaz government remained restricted to words and no practical steps were taken to solve the problems of women.

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417 While finding the similarities of the dismissal of Benazir government in 1990 and Nawaz Sharif government in 1993 by the same President, a Brig Bashir writes that “GIK in a similar manner dismissed PPP government in August 1990, paralyzing its top leadership by sending large cases of corruption, murder, loot and plunder to courts.” Brig (Retd) Bashir, “Constitutional Crisis Drama Replayed”, Pakistan Observer, 26th April 1993. To explore further reasons of the dismissal of Nawaz government, see The observers also writes that “the ex-Prime Minster, Nawaz Sharif annoyed President Ishaq, following opposition’s persistent demand to abolish the controversial amendment. When the equable between GIK and Nawaz surfaced many opposition leaders including Qazi Hussain Ahmad and other heaved a sigh of relief. They thought in best time to settle their scores with Nawaz.”; “King as Pawn,” Pakistan Observer, April 23, 1993.
418 The Muslim, March 09, 1992.
even as recognized by him. Weiss discussed some incomplete measures of his government during his first term:

The PML government also tried to build up support among former adversaries and show that it too championed change in the society. For example, in its deliberations for the Eight Five Year Plan (1993-1998), the government enlisted representatives from women’s groups for feedback on a range of important areas affecting women; its commission the well-known feminist Khawer Mumtaz to write a prescriptive paper on women in development for its momentous “National Conservation Strategy Report” (Government of Pakistan, 1992). However, the political crisis of 1992-1993 intervened and the Eighth Plan was not released. We can only speculate as to the extent to which the PML government would have both included and followed through on the solicited recommendations.\footnote{Anita M. Weiss, “The Slow yet Steady Path to Women’s Empowerment in Pakistan”, in Islam, Gender and Social Change, ed., Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.137.}

I can gather from the above quote of Weiss that insignificant attempts of Nawaz government were more of investigative nature then solid measures to address the women issues. Moreover, I do not see any evidence that his government was even aware of the urgency and seriousness of the social injustices that experienced by the Punjabi women. Along with this, the women legislators of his party, both at National and Punjab Assembly, posed themselves more as representatives of their elite class then that of the disadvantaged women of the Punjab.

Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister for the second time in 1997, as his party Pakistan Muslim League “took nearly two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly, three-fourths of the seats in the Punjab assembly.”\footnote{Anwar H. Syed, “Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif’s Second Chance to Govern,” Asian Survey, Vol. 38, No. 2 (February, 1998), p.117.} There were total 6 women on general seats in National Assembly and women quota was not restored as yet. In Punjab Assembly, only one woman and that also on minority quota was able to become a member. A disappointing factor is that not a single woman won on general seat and because of quota lapse, there was no woman on reserved seats. The results of this election
manifest a declining position of religious parties, which in the past had a fairly strong representation in the National legislative bodies. For example, this time Jamat-e-Islami boycotted the elections and other significant orthodox party like Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) could get only 2 seats in the National Assembly. However, the reason provided by the religious parties for acquiring fewer seats was that they were not serious to operate in the present representative system and would rather strive for a ‘genuine Islamic government’. It is mentioned that these “Islamic parties have not been willing to accept the people's verdict. Maulana Hussain Ahmad, head of the Jamat-e-Islami, and Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, head of the JUI, declared that they would launch mass movements to overthrow the present parliamentary system and replace it with a true Islamic government.” These threats and demands along with various other factors exerted a pressure on Nawaz government. It was further compounded by the tensions of his government with higher judiciary and military leadership. Commenting on this situation, an expert of civil-military relations remarks:

The Sharif government's narrow-based and personalized decision making and political and economic mismanagement led to strains in civil-military relations. The military high command was perturbed by civilian government decisions that caused alienation in the smaller provinces. The bitter confrontation between the government and the opposition especially the controversies about the accountability process and ethnic and sectarian violence were additional causes of concern.

In the prevalent tensions towards all stakeholders, the social issues especially those of women were not even on the agenda of Nawaz government, and it “appears to have blocked all opportunities for the advancement of women’s rights.” Once again continuing his pending agenda from his first term, in 1998, Nawaz Sharif introduced Sharia bill through constitutional 15th amendment in the constitution, which aimed to delegate maximum powers to the Prime Minister. A senior journalist, M. Ziauddin comments over bill:

421 Ibid., p.118.
This bill empowered the prime minister to enforce what he thought was right and to prohibit what he considered was wrong in Islam and Shariah, irrespective of what the Constitution or any judgment of the court said. The amendment also added a new article (2B) in the Constitution, which said that the federal government shall be under an obligation to take steps to enforce the Shariah, to establish Salat, to administer Zakat, to promote Amerbilma’roof and Nahianilmunkar (to prescribe what is right and to forbid what is wrong), to eradicate corruption at all levels and to provide substantial socio-economic justice in accordance with the principles of Islam, as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.\textsuperscript{424}

Although, the above bill is silent on women issues, however, it gave an impression that Nawaz Sharif was following the strategy of Zia’s Islamisation program. It was assumed that women under the pretext of religion could suffer in a self-proclaimed ‘bigoted’ Zia’s style era. The bill was passed by the National Assembly with 2/3\textsuperscript{rd} majority, however, due to weak party position of PML (N) in Senate, the bill could not get enough votes to be passed. Despite of 2/3 majority in the National Assembly, during his second term as Prime Minister, no serious effort was made to recognize and resolve scores of obstacles which the Punjabi women faced. We do not find any concrete evidence, where a clear state policy was even chalked out to motivate the Punjabi girls and women, making them an equal partner. Moreover, belonging to the province of Punjab, his policies as Premier were conceived unfriendly by the Punjab base civil society. Nevertheless, I find instances, where Sharif made passing references at times, mentioning about the protection of women rights but such commitments were restricted to just statements. For example, while addressing the Parliament on 9\textsuperscript{th} October 1998, after the acceptance of Shariah Bill, his statement was reported as, “women’s rights were also fully protected and he (Nawaz Sharif) wanted to see the society where women were free to move without any fear.”\textsuperscript{425}

\textsuperscript{424}M Ziauddin, “Nawaz Sharif’s Shariat Bill,” \textit{The Express Tribune}, March 05, 2013.

\textsuperscript{425}Dawn, October 10, 1998.
During his two terms as Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif could not chalk out any effective long-term policy to bring social harmony, economic development and political stability in the country. His first term concentrated on issues of “coalition building with ANP and particularly MQM, privatization, and economic management, relations with the military and the president- was not very effective or skillful.”\textsuperscript{426} Similarly, during second term, his occupation with the tensions created by the military institutions shaped a hostile environment for an over-all development towards certain areas, including gender issues. This particular aspect of his rule is further explained in Sohail Warrich’s book on Nawaz Sharif, where the latter blamed the military and its Intelligence agencies for not letting him work as according to his agenda.\textsuperscript{427} The ten years of democracy, shared by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto is marked with a same excuse for not executing their promises, for the betterment of the Pakistani/Punjabi women.

\textbf{5.3: Conclusion:}

A comprehensive analysis of the legislative and executive measures, by dictatorial rule as well as democratic governments, in Pakistan (1977 to 1999) displays the anti-women laws by the former and lack of interest by the latter on women issues. In these 20 years, the dwindling status of women in Pakistanis determined by various factors. First were the draconian ordinances and executive decrees, affecting the women during Zia’s rule, which not only decreased women legal status in various ways, but also engendered an environment of suspicion and fear in the society, causing re-enforcement/redefinition of some socio-cultural prejudices against the female population. Thus the gender biased policies of Zia left two strong impacts on the Punjabi society. First, it created confusion about the location of religion in daily life, leading to hazardous tensions between different Muslim sects, with far-reaching and unbalanced impact. Secondly, it shaped a conducive environment for the conservative elements, to interpret the Islamic laws


\textsuperscript{427} Due to the rule of military for a long period in Pakistani politics, the role of ISI has tremendously increased to the level that they don’t work under civil government. Benazir Bhutto has the same grievance. ISI has handicapped the political system of the whole country. The Chief of Staff of Army after assuming his office considers himself a King or super Prime Minister. They consider themselves so powerful that they don’t like to salute the Prime Minister.”SohailWarraich, \textit{Ghadar Kon- Nawaz Sharif ki Kahaani Unki Zubani} (Who is the Traitor: Story of Nawaz Sharif by Himself) (Lahore: Sagar Publishers, 2006), p. 173.
according to their biases, thus encouraging *fatwas* for gender related issues in particular, setting aside the popular understanding of the religion, as such.

The victims of these newly self-appointed custodians of Islamic laws were none other than the women. Here, it is relevant to mention that on the contrary during the military rule of Zia, due to the societal change on its own momentum, there was an increased trend among women for education and employment. According to 1981 census, the “employment of women reflected relatively active participation of women in the work force of the country. It was reported that 5.6% of all women were employed, as opposed to 72.4% of men; less than 4% of all urban women were engaged in some form of salaried work. By 1988, this figure had increased significantly, but still only 10.2% of women were reported as participating in the labor force.”

The above-mentioned fact demonstrates that at times women related societal changes, in which the government has little control, balances the negativity of governmental actions. While arguing about this imbalance, Weiss, a keen observer of Zia-u-l Haq’s era, states that though the women related policies of Zia had minimal impact on their employment related options but the “social values (promoted by his rule) often constrain women from waning to mix with men at the workplace while economic and political priorities tend to make unions exclude women from membership in their ranks.” Therefore, the increased number of the employed women could not make a difference to eradicate discrimination but it paved the way for resentment amongst urban based educated female population. These divergent developments nonetheless could not restrict the mushroomed growth of vibrant civil society organizations, which is considered as a ‘blessing in disguise’ by various writers like Ruhi Khalid who states that "it was due to this oppression that female academics and social workers came out in great numbers and protested against the antifeminist policies. This gave rise to women’s activism. Many new nongovernmental organizations (NGO)

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were formed in order to resist the oppression faced by women,"\textsuperscript{430} but according to Khalid the women activists were confined to an educated urban class, though small in number but they represented the ‘passive majority’ of deprived women with full vigor and activeness.\textsuperscript{431}

Second were the insensitive and non-serious responses of democratic governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, devoid of any solid agenda to solve women issues, which was compounded by civil strife and political instability. Consequently, the minute chances for the better placement and empowerment of the Punjabi women were dampened. Moreover, I witnessed in this chapter that those civil society organizations and women associations, which were visibly active in Zia-ul-Haq’s rule became ‘inactive’ during Sharif and Bhutto tenures. They neither made any serious efforts, nor the women members played any significant role to exert enough pressure on these governments, to repeal or at least emend the unjust women related laws of Zia-ul-Haq. The question that emerges is that whether the orthodoxy, strengthened by Zia-ul-Haq maintained its aura to an extent that any challenge to the draconian laws during the democratic rule could have generated a backlash, challenging the already feeble governments. Even if that was the case, governments have ways and means to further their agendas and convictions. What I gather from research is that in this particular instance, there was neither a conviction, nor sufficient sympathy for the under-privileged Punjabi women.

Concluding, it can be said that from 1977 to 1999, women were trapped in stagnation and could not improve their status according to the pace generated by other relative societies, as observed in second chapter. I am aware that apart from the efforts of government related institutions; there are other non-governmental variables, which are instrumental defining the place of women in Punjabi society. In this chapter, I observed in greater length the legislative and executive performances, while the agents of change, which largely emerged from non-societal factors, would be discussed in certain segments of Chapter 7 and 8.

\textsuperscript{430}Ruhi Khalid, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{431}Ibid.

In the previous chapter, I studied women related legislative/executive measures of the dictatorial as well as democratic governments, with an impact on the women placement in Pakistani/Punjabi society. This analysis provided sufficient information about women issues and the initiatives along with responses of various governments, in shape of laws, ordinances and acts. Keeping in view the findings from 1977 to 1999, I would trace in this chapter, those legislative and executive measures, which affected the women status, from 2000 to 2012.

This chapter is divided in two parts. The first would examine the governmental measures during ten years of dictatorial rule of Musharraf from 1998-2008. The in-depth study of the related processes and strategies would enable us to understand the state policy on women issues, during the military rule, which was different from Zia-ul-Haq, although they both had a commonality of representing the same institution. The second part of this chapter would deal with a democratic era from 2008 to 2012. Likewise, it would take into account the initiatives of respective government, in shape of laws, ordinances and bills, effecting women.

6.1: ‘Enlightened Moderation’ and Punjabi Women

As a result of military coup, Nawaz Sharif’s government was replaced by the Army Chief General Pervaiz Musharraf on 12th October 1999. His period of governance stretching to nearly a decade, presented a façade of a modern out-look, especially when it came to the social sector. He frequently used the term ‘enlightened moderation’, portraying his policies and liberal pretentions towards various socio-cultural issues, which effected the women population of Punjab in particular and Pakistan in general. In Musharaff’s memoir, he highlights that ‘the emancipation of women’ was part of his seven agenda.
program. After assuming the powers of Chief Executive, the first step in this direction was to increase the presence of women in representative bodies, like National and Provincial Assemblies along with the local government set-up. In this regard, he clearly spelled out the gender imbalance in the Pakistani society and vowed to remove this injustice through various means; the first being a reasonable representation of women in the representative bodies. This conviction was materialized through Legal Frame Work Order (LFO), reserving 60 seats for women out of 342 National Assembly seats; 17 out of 100 seats of Senate and 66 out of 371-member Punjab Assembly. Thus after 2002 elections, in 12th National Assembly of Pakistan, 74 women (60 on reserved seats and 14 on general seats) and in Punjab Assembly 73 women managed to be a part of legislative process (66 on reserved seats and 6 on general seats, 1 on minority seats). This was the highest number of women presence ever in the representative bodies of Pakistan, with a probability of setting a stage for Punjabi women improvement. This development was expected to bring a trickledown effect on the Punjabi society, especially in the shape of women’s recognition as a part of workforce in private and public sectors, along with encouragement from families, for higher education. Recognizing the gender biases and challenges faced by women in Pakistan, General Musharaff in his Memoir, while sharing his planning to socially empower women by increasing their political representation, writes:

Women, I have always believed, suffer special discrimination in the male chauvinist world, especially in developing countries. Redressing this problem at its core would require political empowerment. We created sixty reserved seats for women to mitigate the acute gender imbalance in the National Assembly, knowing that women would be their own best advocates to remove gender bias and societal inequities. This arrangement does not exclude them from contesting the other seats in the Assembly. When elections were held in October 2002, a total of seventy-two women were elected to the National Assembly, twelve from general seats. This has set the stage for the irreversible process of the empowerment of women.432

Musharaff’s narration as quoted above has certain drawbacks, especially when he mentions that the increase of women seats in the assembly could become a catalyst for

the ‘irreversible’ empowerment of women. I have observed in this research that women representation in legislative bodies by itself does not correspond to the empowerment of women in general, resulting in gender equality. The transformation of culturally biased societal attitude of an over-all population towards women is required to materialize such dream. Nevertheless, I do agree with General Musharaff that at least there existed a possibility to weaken gender biases, if the women legislators group together and introduce bills, facilitating women in all walks of life.

The second step taken during Musharaff rule was the “Family Court Amendment Ordinance in 2002”, which amended some clauses of MFLO 1961. These amendments dealt with three basic areas, Khula, maintenance and guardianship. The women right organization had pushed hard for the mentioned amendments, which “came after years of struggle from the women’s movement and include a number of recommendations forwarded by Aurat Foundation in 2000 and years of advocacy, especially in collaboration with the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.” The amended ordinance provided safeguards to women, by making the procedure of Khula, maintenance and guardianship, simple and easy. Facilitating these matters, courts have been asked to decide cases within a specified time-period of six months. These amendments by providing a speedy justice to women, aimed to rescue them from the agony, they faced during the process of divorce, enabling them to timely decide about their future life. When inquired from a noted women advocate, Lahore High Court and an office bearer of Women Rights Committee of Lahore High Court Bar, Humaira Qaiser, she acknowledges that the mentioned law has facilitated effected women and the judges have become more liberal in interpreting the law, with an intention to provide relief to the women. Qaiser further added that amended Khula law has some lacunas in its implementation, which curtailed its effectiveness in letter and spirit. She went on to say that the time restriction to finalize Khula cases is not strictly followed by the judges, citing various reasons.
In 2004, the third attempt by Mushraff was to introduce amendments in the Criminal law, known as the ‘Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 (on 'honour' crimes’), like Karo-Kari and Siyah Kari, enforced from 4th January 2005. This act is also known as the ‘Honour Killings Act’ because it was the first time that the honour crimes were recognized and defined. The amendment act challenged those customary practices, which in the name of ‘honour’ victimized women, resulting in gross violation of constitutionally guaranteed human rights. These amendments also dealt with the Qisas and Diyat provisions of PPC and CRPC, which was previously being used by the perpetrators to avoid the punishments for the crimes, committed under the name of ‘honour’. This act declared the state as a victim’s wali (guardian), instead of blood relations. The intention was to penalize the murderer, who previously by being wali of the victim was often released from the punishment. While pointing out about the consequences of these changes, Hifza Shah Jillani writes that “the legal system in Pakistan allows the choice to the family or heirs of the deceased to apply Qisas or Diyat laws in a way that the culprit ends up being forgiven. But through Section 311, there is a way out. The 311 amendment was specially formulated to fight the menace of criminals going free in honour killings.”  

In another words, according to section 311 of PPC, in case of murder including honour killing, a judge can award punishment, regardless of a compromise between the parties. The main omission of this amendment however is a fact that “judicial discretion” remained intact. As judges are part of the society, therefore it means that since most of the victims of honour killing are women, their “husbands, brothers, fathers and other male relatives…will still manage to evade punishments”.

Jillani, while quoting the views of a personal from Sukkur police, Shaukat Abbasi, who has dealt with many such cases writes, “Whenever we come across a crime that has even a hint of being an honour crime, we register the state as the wali [guardian].” After that, the decision to entertain the pardon of the victim’s family is on the discretion of the

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437 Hifza Shah Jillani, op.cit.
judge. Moreover, this Act also made it mandatory that the high-ranking police officer should conduct the investigation of the cases registered under honour killing and zina, so that police could play its impartial role. Despite of this law, a High Court advocate, Muhammad Aqeel Chaudhary estimated that the honour killing continues to take place at a ratio of 1/100 cases on daily basis, as shown from the records of the Punjab province courts.\(^{438}\) Chaudhary further states that the number of unreported cases would be much higher.\(^{439}\)

The fourth step taken by Musharraff to empower women was the enactment of the *Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment), 2006 (VI of 2006)*, with an objective to repeal the discriminatory clauses dealing with offence of zina, including rape under zina (*Enforcement of Hudood*) Ordinance, 1979 (*Ordinance No. VII of 1979*).\(^{440}\) This, like the previous bills intended to “stop the momentous wheel of customary civil practices which are neither Islamic nor having support of any moral court and are being practiced due to ignorance and illiteracy.”\(^{441}\) The draft of this bill had the approval of *Parliamentary Select Committee*, as suggested by religious scholars.\(^{442}\) Despite of this, the bill faced criticism from the coalition of religious parties known as Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)\(^{443}\) and PML (N), who termed the bill “unIslamic”, which was openly challenged by President of PML(Q), Shujaat Hussain. In this regard, the General Secretary of MMA and opposition leader in National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, stated that the bill would “make Pakistan a free sex zone”.\(^{444}\) A similar reaction, though milder came from other leaders of MMA, especially Liaqat Baloch and Dr. Fareeda Ahmed Siddiqui. They considered that the bill did not address the core issues

\(^{438}\) Interview of Muhammad Aqeel Chaudhary, Advocate Lahore High Court. June 08, 2014. Translated from Urdu by the researcher.

\(^{439}\) Ibid.

\(^{440}\) Yet another act known as *Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Ordinance, 2006*, and the *Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment), 2006 (XXXV of 2006)* was enacted to make the procedure of bail for women easier except for some heinous crimes.


\(^{442}\) *Daily Times*, November 16, 2006.

\(^{443}\) It comprised Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), JamiatUlema-e-Islam’s Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Maulana Samiul Haq factions (JUI-F and JUI-S), Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith (JAH) and the now-banned Tehreek-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP, currently known as the Pakistani IslamiTehreek).

\(^{444}\) *Daily Times*, op.cit.
confronted by women and paved the way for ‘vulgaritv’ in society.\textsuperscript{445} However, the women right activists and opposition party PPPP\textsuperscript{446} and MQM, along with the ruling party PML(Q) welcomed this bill with some recommendations. While endorsing the pro-women leanings of his government, President General Pervaiz Musharraf in his address to the nation, did not only supported the bill but also condemn the negative criticism of religious parties, as reported by \textit{Daily Times} as:

\begin{quote}
\ldotsonly one of the Hudood Ordinances, the one relating to zina-bil-jabr (rape) and zina-bil-raza (adultery), had been amended through the bill. He said that according to the old law, women victims of rape needed to produce four male eyewitnesses to the offence, failing which they were thrown into prison and charged with adultery. Under the new law, rape has been made an offence under the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). He said women had also been victims of abuse of the adultery law, as women accused of zina were imprisoned under tazirr even when there were not four witnesses to the alleged offence.

He said this was clearly unjust, and that was why the government had decided to change the laws. He said when he analyzed the plight of women under the Hudood laws, he felt not just sad, but embarrassed at the cruelties inflicted on women by Pakistani society.\textsuperscript{447}
\end{quote}

It was generally believed that the WPB was a total reversal of \textit{Hudood} laws, which might provide more protection to the women as visualized by General Musharraf. However, the reality lies in the fact that the Protection bill could not completely repeal the \textit{Hudood} ordinance and targeted only the elementary clauses, which had victimized women in the past. First, in order to avoid the unclear and confusing clauses of the \textit{Hudood} ordinance, the rape cases were included in PPC, which deals with purely criminal law. Second, instead of police (which is considered to be prone to corruption and unreliable), the courts were given the responsibility to take up the offences of extra-marital sex, based on

\textsuperscript{445}Liaqat Baloch of the MMA said real women’s rights issues were being ignored. “We will protest against this bill here and outside. We will resign. You get it passed and face the consequences,” he said. Dr. Fareeda Ahmed Siddiqui of the MMA said the bill would “promote vulgarity among young girls”, as well as the sex workers’ industry: \textit{Daily Times}, op.cit.

\textsuperscript{446}In 2002, Pakistan Peoples Party was divided in to factions, which led the party to change and it was also necessary to comply with electoral rules governing Pakistani parties. Therefore, the new name given to the party was ‘Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP)’.

\textsuperscript{447}\textit{Daily Times}, op.cit.,Tazir is an offense, which is subject to interpretation and does not adhere to the binding principles of Islamic law.
suspicion. In this case, the judges were to decide on the basis of criminal law, instead of the Islamic provisions as spelled out in the Hudood Ordinance. By this, the condition of four witnesses was done away, with an option of forensic and optional circumstantial evidence. Referring to the weaknesses of WPB, a legal expert, Dr. Farooq Hassan writes:

It does not repeal the Zina (rape) Ordinance designed for rape victims. The new law, when it comes into effect after it has been duly enacted, would only alter the procedural formalities of handling such cases….The second major amendment is to change the procedure for registering a *zina* case. The offense is no longer cognizable and only a court can decide whether the case has any merit; even if it does, the offense is bailable…. The "protection" aspects of the bill for women are exaggerated or misplaced…. Another provision in this bill makes lewdness (later changed to fornication, defined as consenting sex between unmarried couples) punishable under the PPC. In this provision, there is the opening of the door again to the norms and philosophy of the Hudood Ordinance, which incidentally remains, even after these amendments, the superior law to the amending bill.  

Thus, the bill could not facilitate women victims to make the culprits accountable under this legislation and rather, the old practice continued. In spite of being incomprehensive, the consequent events proved the fact that this bill was a stepping stone for future women related legislative and executive measures that have been neglected before. Confirming the fact, editorial of a newspaper, *Dawn* writes that the bill “does not strike down the odious Zina Ordinance, but it is expected to bring noticeable relief to women, especially the under-privileged ones who usually were the victim.”

In this regard, a number of civil society organizations (*Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Action Aid, Women’s Action Forum, Pattan Development Organisation, Sungi Development Organisation, Aurat Foundation, Rozan, Bedari, Network, Christian Study Centre, Sachet and Progressive Women Association*), through their statements supported this bill. The vibrant supporters and opponents of the bill

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demonstrate that the Pakistani society is sharply divided between those elements, who would like to curtail the role of the women in all spheres of life, outside their homes and making them dependent on wishes and sometimes whims of the male members of the society. While on the other, there are those who believe that women should be provided with more opportunities and such laws should be enacted which guarantee their equal role and rights in the society, making them empowered to an extent that the Pakistani society can operate on the basis of equal participation.

Apart from four above mentioned major steps, there were trivial initiatives taken by Mushraff’s government in this direction. These could not however bring a far-reaching impact and rather provided a supportive platform for further enhancement of women status. The first among them was the establishment of an independent Ministry of Women Development on 2nd September 2004, which was previously a part of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Education. The second measure was the ‘Ordinance to Free Women Prisoners’ on 7th July 2006, which was through a symbolic bail release of 1300 women prisoners, charged under various crimes, other than terrorism and murder. The third step was the increase of reserved quota for women in Central Superior Services, from five to ten percent.

Some social scientists consider that it was the ‘universal value system’, created after the ‘New World Order’ (1990-1991), which prompted Musharaff’s liberal attitude, including that of women, contrary to his predecessor Zia-ul-Haq. Thus, the countries like Pakistan, deviating from newly defined socio-economic and political values, faced universal criticism. This negative image of Pakistan further aggravated, after 9/11, where it was branded as a hub of terrorist activities. Musharaff by taking steps like

\[450\] George Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit,” The public papers of the president (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 11, 1990), Posted October 17, 2012, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18820&st=&st1= ; The ‘New World Order’, after the disintegration of Soviet Union introduced a new value system to the world based on democracy, economic liberation and human rights as the United States President, George Bush once defined it as “a new era-freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony... a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle...where the strong respect the rights of the weak.”
emancipation of women designed to repel this negative impression. While writing about the pressure on Pakistan after 2001, Iftikhar H. Malik states:

Since the 1999 coup, Western countries had shunned Pakistan because of its negative image as a fragmented society, now vulnerable to Islamic fundamentalist or Jihadi elements. The rest of the world snubbed Pakistan and severed military and other high-profile linkages with it. However, this world that had turned up its nose at Pakistan rediscovered the country following the brutal terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and Musharraf suddenly was catapulted from being a pariah on the international scene to an active partner in it.\(^{451}\)

In this changed global environment, Pakistan was expected to create its softer image, by negating the previous discriminatory laws against women, children and minorities. Thus, the pro-women legislation was considered an easy target to start with because the national and international scholars have been repeatedly condemning the Hudood Laws. This notion is also stressed in one of the articles published in *The New York Times*, which states, “President Pervez Musharraf has sought to use the measure, the Women’s Protection Bill, to burnish his credentials as a modern and moderate Islamic leader before his visit to the United States this month. But the opposition has, temporarily at least, disrupted his well-orchestrated campaign.”\(^ {452}\) Similar kind of transformation, under the pressure of new value system was witnessed in the Middle Eastern societies, where women placement underwent a change in late nineteenth and twentieth century. Though, this process was slow in its pace. While referring to these changes in the context of the Middle Eastern societies, Professor Nikki Kiddie states that “changes in economy and society in the past two centuries, along with the western cultural impact, brought forces within Middle Eastern societies favoring changes in the conditions of women.”\(^ {453}\) This trend of change is further stressed by Nesta Ramazani in her writing, where she pointed out the spheres in which the Gulf countries women got opportunities, as she states, “educational and professional opportunities continue to grow, largely unaffected by the

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rise of fundamentalism and the insistence on piety….in that sense, there has been a fundamental change in attitude of the populations of the Gulf, where only a few decades ago such unquestioned acceptance of female education would have been non-existent.”

Coming back to Pakistan’s geographic environment, which had reshaped the social value system, as described above, I can assert that the liberal strategy adopted by Pervaiz Musharaff towards women related issues was the response of this regional and globally changed setting. A Pakistani women right activist, Farzana Bari has reservations on the genuine conviction of General Musharaff and comments that “the government wants to present a liberal face to the West, but we feel all steps taken by the government are politically motivated and it is not serious.”

6.2: Restoration of Democracy and Punjabi Women

As a result of 2008 general elections, conducted after nine years of military rule, a democratic government was restored and once again the PPPP formed a government at the Federal level and became a junior coalition partner of PML (N) for the initial period in Punjab. According to the results of these elections, total 76 women were elected in National Assembly (15 on general seats, 60 on reserved and 1 on minority). In Punjab Assembly, 74 women managed to be elected (8 on general seats, 65 on reserved seats and 1 on minority). All these elected women were not from elite class, with influential political backgrounds. However, between 2008 to 2013, a number of bills relating to the safeguard of women rights were passed at the federal level but the performance of Punjab Provincial Assembly remained unnoticeable. An argument can be built by the Punjab legislatures that as federal laws are applicable on the province of Punjab, so most of the issues regarding women were covered by the federal legislature.

455 Carlottagall and Salman Masood, op.cit.
In 2010, two laws were passed from the parliament to combat sexual harassment. First was the ‘Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2010’ and second was the ‘Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010’. Through first legislation, the amendments regarding sexual harassment at workplaces were inserted in section 509 of PPC, which included “a clear definition of sexual harassment (in the early mentioned section) and articulates that this behaviour, may it happen at workplace, markets, streets or home, is a crime and is punishable by law.”

This act led the foundation for the ‘Protection against Harassment for women at Workplace bill, 2010’ to provide working women a safe environment, so that they could comfortably pursue their professional work. This bill defined harassment as:

Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other verbal and written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature or sexually demeaning attitudes, causing interference with the work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply to such a request or is made condition for employment.

The bill specifically aimed to discourage sexual harassment of women at workplaces, where they operate in a mixed environment with male colleagues. Given the nature of segregated Punjabi society, where the men are hostile to the presence of women co-workers due to the absence of any training to operate in a mixed set-up from childhood. Thus, they could not understand the manner in which they should deal with the opposite sex, outside their homes. This reason is also endorsed by a civil society activist and Professor of History, Dr. Syeda Arifa Zahra, in an exclusive interview. Zahra shares:

The first interaction of majority of male employees with female colleagues is at workplace; therefore they feel uneasy in their company. This can be attributed to their experiences of childhood, where they are taught that the real place of female belongs to her home and her prime objective is to serve and facilitate the male members of the

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457 The Protection against Harrassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010, p.3.
family. This pre-supposed objective of a female is advocated by religious orthodoxy, while it is given a practical shape by the societal practices. Therefore, when male co-workers interact with women at workplaces, they pre-suppose an impression as if they are inferior, instead of equal. This mind-set negates the concept of gender equality.458

The bill contained certain terminologies, which were not specifically defined, and therefore, most of the terms were left for judicial review. In the Punjabi society, it becomes difficult for a women to take their complaints to the courts and therefore, the very concept of sexual harassment was left to the male supervisors, who might consider a particular act as harassment or not, as perceived by the complainant. JUI’s Senators, citing that it is in fact the inappropriate dress, which prompts the male colleagues for indecent gestures, opposed the bill. They demanded an amendment regarding ‘Islamic dress code’ for women at workplaces, with an objective of their protection. All mainstream coalition partners in the government out-rightly rejected this pretension. On this, one of JUI Senator, Ghafoor Haideri asserted that the bill is initiated the NGOs. If passed this society would become as liberal as any European society. According to the Senator, such kind of society would be against the principles of Islam.459

This bill was strongly supported by women NGOs, who formed an Alliance against Sexual Harassment (AASHA).460 One of the ardent member of AASHA and women right activist Faouzia Saeed, who worked tirelessly to get this bill passed from the parliament and had first-hand knowledge of the challenges for such kind of legislation believed that the orthodoxy was active inside and outside the legislative chambers, opposing such laws. Nevertheless, despite of opposition from the orthodox religious groups in the Parliament, the bill was passed and signed to become a law, by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2010. On this occasion he stated:

458 Interview with Professor Dr. Syeda Arifa Zahra, Professor of History at Forman Christian College University, Lahore; September 01, 2014. Translated from Urdu by Author. See Appendix F for details of the questionnaire.


460 Members of AASHA are following: Action Aid Islamabad, Bedari Islamabad, Hawwa Associates Islamabad, Interactive Resource Center Lahore, Mehergarh: A Center for Learning Islamabad, PILER Karachi, PODA Islamabad, Preview Productions, WORD Islamabad.
We have to create a Pakistan where the coming generations, my daughters, can be proud of the fact that they live as equals. We will make sure that those who wish to harm the ideology of the Quaid-i-Azam, which was for equality for men and women, shall not succeed. Let us mobilise the collective power of women to help make our country, the region and the world more tolerant and secure for all. We believe in equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women. On this occasion I urge all ministries to get going and adopt the code of conduct within a month, as laid down in this act. I also urge the private sector to cooperate in the implementation of this act, in letter and spirit.  

There are three salient features of harassment bill, which need to be mentioned here. One is that the bill amended “the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), proposing an increase in punishment for the crime to a maximum of three years in prison and a fine of up to Rs500,000 from up to one year jail and an unspecified fine provided in the PPC for a vague ‘insult (to) the modesty of a woman.’” Second, the application of this bill is not only against the harassment of working women but it extends to all those women, who operate outside their home for different purposes. Third, the bill has a proper procedure to investigate for registered cases, accordingly the punishments would be decided. While, writing in detail on the procedure, Nosheen Abbas, a *Dawn* Columnist writes:

The bill also sets out procedures for holding inquiries as well as penalties for minor and major offences, ranging from mild reprimands to firing the accused. It addresses appeals against penalties and provides for an ombudsman, who is to be appointed by the law ministry at the provincial level. This person is tasked with ensuring that the entire process is being carried out fairly, especially when the head of an organisation is the accused. Both the victim and the accused have direct access to the ombudsman. The bill makes it clear that the committee has 30 days to come up with the verdict as well as the penalty, if any.  

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463 “After this, the organisation’s management is given a week to implement the penalty, such as, for example, firing or demoting the guilty party. Within a month, any aggrieved party can also appeal to the ombudsman, who has a month to decide the case. As an added protection, any employee can take their company to court for not following the formal procedure laid out in the bill and a fine of up to 100,000 rupees can be imposed on the organization.” Nosheen Abbas, “Sexual Harassment in Pakistan,” *Dawn,*
While sharing her views, an experienced and knowledgeable Lahore based Provincial Manager of Aurat Foundation, Mumtaz Mughal comments on the reasons of sexual harassment and the lacunas of the related law, by stating that “one of the reasons of sexual harassment at a workplace is that majority of the workers are males and the second is the fear of competition, which prompts male colleagues to harass female co-workers. The most unfortunate part of this law is in its interpretation, giving a leverage to the male offenders, because the majority of the final decision making bodies are dominated by males, who while operating in a patriarchal environment are biased in their views, when it comes to female versus a male co-worker.”

The third legislative measure was the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) bill, passed in 2011 to eradicate the un-Islamic social practices against women like Wanni, Swara and marriage with Quran, by specifying strong punishments for the offenders. Moreover, the bill also ensured the women right of inheritance by declaring a legal action against those, who deny. This was the first legislation of its type, directly targeted the age-old social taboos, which was ignored in the past, although it had strong financial bearing on the lives of under-privileged Punjabi women. Though federal assembly passed the legislation but as mentioned earlier, it is also applicable on the province of Punjab. Out of three mentioned social taboos, the first two are practiced in the rural communities of South Punjab, in particular. The third however is confined to the adjoining province of Sindh. Most of these practices are enforced by the local Punchayets, which are not recognized by any Pakistani law. An intriguing aspect about this bill is that unlike previous women related legislation; this faced not only severe criticism from the religious orthodoxy but also from some members belonging to traditional families, who had joined hands. Consequently, since 2008, twice the National Assembly, when first presented rejected it. While evaluating the deliberations of parliamentarians over the bill, a renowned newspaper writes in its editorial:

464 Interview of Mumtaz Mughal, Provincial Manager of Aurat Foundation. Translated from Urdu by the Researcher, June 22, 2014.
A bill that could have gone a long way in empowering women mainly by granting them rights over inheritance was blocked by male legislators for the second time in two weeks, using what can only be termed as the most flimsy of excuses. What is obvious is that our law-makers do not wish to see the women who make up 50 per cent of the population move to a more equal status and are willing to go to virtually any length to prevent this. What was especially saddening was the sight of members of the PPP — a party led through some of its toughest years by a woman — join ranks with those blocking the bill.465

It was expected that at least the members from Peoples Party, which has liberal credentials and claim to represent the unprivileged and down trodden section of the Pakistani society, could not have opposed the bill and could rather facilitated its enactment, with an awareness that the bill was intended to discourage and do away with cruel practices, based on humiliation of a human being. Most of the members of PPPP belongs to the rural Sindh, where these practices are wide-spread and have become part of the local culture, therefore with an eye on the next elections they could not “afford” to alienate their vote-bank.

These obstructions lingered the bill for three years. It was first drafted and presented by Pakistan Muslim League (Q) MNA Dr. Donya Aziz. It was a joint effort of the political parties present in the parliament, to eradicate such anti-women socio-cultural practices against women. In addition to this, the bill also “proposed prohibition of depriving woman from inheriting property, prohibition of forced marriage and prohibition of marriage with the Holy Quran. The violators will be handed over either imprisonment or a fine of five hundred thousand rupees for each crime.”466 While explaining the salient features of this bill, a renowned newspaper, explains clearly as:

• Forcing a woman into marriage for settling a dispute to be a non-bailable offence
• Bartering a woman in such a way to be punishable by three to five years imprisonment and a fine of Rs.0.5 million

466Dawn, November 15, 2011.
• Depriving a woman of her inheritance can lead to imprisonment of between five and 10 years or a fine of Rs1 million or both
• Forced marriages (other than those for settling disputes) to be punishable by between three and 10 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 0.5 million.
• Forcing a woman to “marry” the Holy Quran to result in a jail term of three to seven years and a fine of Rs0.5 million.\footnote{The Express Tribune, November 16th, 2011.}

The bill was landmark legislation to safeguard women from adverse socio-cultural practices, therefore supported by civil society organizations. The question arises is that whether the Punjabi women as such are even aware of this bill or not? I presume that at least educated women might have become aware of their inheritance right as provided in the new legislation. The results presented in Figure 1 are derived from the responses of the educated University girls of three institutions of Lahore, representing various social cases and rural/urban localities.\footnote{University of the Punjab, Lahore women University and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore. The detail questionnaire and response are in Appendix G.}

Figure 6.1: Are you aware of new inheritance law?

Source: Survey through questionnaire by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

Figure 6.1 shows that 43.1% respondents are aware about the new inheritance law, whereas, 56.1% are yet estranged from this legislative development. When these percentages were compared with the response of the female students of the Punjab
University and Lahore College Women University, nearly similar responses were gathered with a difference that girl’s supplemented their responses by narrating examples from their families as well as friends. Interesting to note is that these respondents are educated university going girls, who by residing in Lahore are well-equipped to inform themselves from newspaper, television and peer groups about such laws. Assuming from these results, I believe that the un-educated rural women would be unaware of this law in considerable large number.

The fourth legislative measure was Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill known as *Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill, 2010*. A number of female members of the National Assembly had initiated this bill in 2010, which was passed in 2011, without any debate where the female members of the Assembly crossed the party affiliations to praise this bill. The initiator of the bill, Marvi Memon wrote on *Twitter* that it was an occasion where “all clean people from all parties together for good policies for one purpose — to fix Pakistan. Don’t worry about which party we are in. The goal is Pakistan.” This amendment was to discourage a heinous act of acid throwing which not only can kill the victim but also inflict grave injuries and disfigurement, which becomes a life-long torture, leading towards loss of identity. The legislation further recommended that the provincial assemblies must pass a law, forbidding the buying and selling of acid. Given the gravity of the crime, 14 years life sentence and a fine up to Rs.one million was prescribed in the bill. In this regard, different civil society organizations and electronic media also played a significant role to bring this serious issue in the limelight. To name a few, the Acid Survivors Foundation, Depilex Smile Again Foundation and the Bakhtawar Amin Memorial Trust Hospital are among those devoted and concerned organizations, who not only helped the victims by providing them treatment but through various seminars and conferences, encouraged women to live a normal life, once recovered from this physical and emotional abuse. Moreover, the documentary programs and special reports which different television channels telecasted further sensitized the society about this accelerating social evil. The contribution of the Oscar Award winner, Sharmeen

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469 Marvi Memon, Begum Shahnaz Sheikh and Advocate Anusha Rehman were the members to introduce this bill.
470 *Dawn*, May 26, 2011.
Obaid Chinoy cannot be ignored, who worked hard with her team to highlight this issue on national and international media, so that a possible solutions could prevent this growing social problem in Pakistan. The weakness of this bill however lies in the fact that the law does not provide any compensation for the victim.

Fifth legislation was proposed in the National Assembly by Syed Bokhari, entitled *Women in Distress and Detention Funds (amendment) Act, 2011*. This amendment was made to facilitate prisoned women, undergoing different sentences, in terms of financial and legal help, so that their sufferings could be reduced as a number of them had no means to defend themselves. Thus, their deplorable financial economic condition forced them to stay in jail. While talking to the media, an official of Ministry of Human Rights categorically mentioned:

> This law, would assist Women in detention, disabled women, deserving women suffering from serious ailments including mental ailments or those who are in distress and need medical aid, burn cases, distressed women and their minor children in need of shelter, women seriously maltreated by their husbands, similar cases of grave distress and legal help to women in detention or distress.\(^{471}\)

At the beginning, the Human Rights wings, of Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, managed the funds under this Act but later after the formation of the *Ministry of Human Rights*, this responsibility was transferred.

Apart from the above mentioned passed bills on women issues, there were some other bills which despite of their effectiveness could not be passed from the parliament under one pretext or another. One of the examples of such effective but un-passed bill is the *Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill of 2009*, which was proposed by Yasmeen Rehman of the Pakistan People’s Party (also an advisor to Prime Minister on Women Development), in the same year. The reason to introduce this legislation was the growing number of reported domestic abuse cases. Advocate of Lahore High Court, Humaira identified its various reasons by stating that “most important of them being the

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\(^{471}\) “Strategy urged to implement women rights laws,” The Nation, December 07, 2013.
economic pressures on the low middle class and poorer families, where wives become the scapegoat of the economic crunch. Secondly, more women are reporting domestic abuse due to the awareness created by the media, highlighting the definition of an abuse and procedures of reporting such crimes.”

Under the pretext of growing abuse within the domestic environment (previously authored bill by Sherry Rehman in 2004), this time in 2009, it got passed unanimously in National Assembly, but lapsed in the Senate, as it failed to give assent within the three months period, as required under the constitution. This bill defined domestic violence as “intentional acts of gender-based or other physical or psychological abuse committed by an accused against women, children or other vulnerable persons, with whom the accused person was or had been in a domestic relationship.”

The bill aimed to empower the victim by conditioning the court to commence a hearing within three days from the date of the application filed and the decision to be announced within 30 days. To discourage the misuse of this bill, it is further mentioned in the act that in case of any false complaint, the complainant would be punished with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to Rs50,000, or both. The law further aimed to empower “provincial governments to constitute protection committees in every Tehsil consisting of one police officer of the rank of sub-divisional police officer, a female station house officer (SHO) and two women councilors, from Tehsil council concerned. And the perpetrators can be now subjected to punishment under criminal code.”

While commenting on the features of this bill, a senior researcher in Human Rights Watch, Ali Dayan Hasan, stated that this bill could play a vital role to control the violence against women and children with the support of a quick and responsive administrative machinery, taking note that the “victims of domestic violence have long faced a double injustice - abuse at home and then no protection from the government.” However, despite of all these positive aspects of the proposed legislation, the domestic bill faced

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472 Interview of Humaira Qaiser, Advocate Lahore High Court and an office bearer of Women Rights Committee of Lahore High Court Bar. Translated from Urdu by the researcher. June 08, 2014.
serious criticism from orthodoxy, represented by the CII, under the chairmanship of Maulana Muhammad Sherani of Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam – Fazl-ur-Rehman Group (JUI-F). By tagging the bill ‘male un-friendly’, Maulana Sherani opined in the Senate proceeding that the implementation of this bill would increase the rate of divorce in the country.\footnote{Aroosa Masroor, “Two Women abused every hour in Pakistan,” The Express Tribune, August 02, 2010.} While reflecting the views of Sherani, the Council by declaring this legislation ‘unnecessary’, raised three major objections. First, it considered this legislation against the principle of gender equality, as it ignored the plight of aged, weak and indispensable men in domestic environment, by focusing only on women and children victims of domestic abuse. Second objection was that he bill provided immense powers to the police, through which they would be able to intervene unnecessarily in the family affairs of people, which will go against the principle of privacy. Third, the council objected that the mentioned penalties for domestic abuse are those, which are already a part of the Qisas and Diyat law and the Family Law.\footnote{Dawn, August 25, 2009.}

In 2012, once again this bill was tabled but faced criticism from opposition parties, especially from JUI-F and PML(N). The JUI-F Chief Fazlur Rehman claimed that the ‘bill undermines Islamic values’ and his party would fight ‘tooth and nail’ against it. He further states, “we cannot adopt a bill which is a ditto copy of a bill on women passed by India’s parliament. NGOs continue to promote the culture which keeps women away from Islam and that is not acceptable to us. We know women’s rights better than the PPP… Western culture cannot be promoted under the pretext of protection in Islamic states.”\footnote{The Express Tribune, April 07, 2012.} The civil society and media refuted these views. A known Pakistani writer on women issues mentioned in her article:

“I’ve read through the Bill in its entirety and honestly can see nothing ‘un-Islamic’ or ‘anti-Pakistan’ or ‘anti-Eastern culture’ in it. At the most, it provides technical and legal procedures and due process under legal guidelines for how to stop domestic violence, harassment, and emotional and mental abuse (such as the withholding of money from a spouse in order to manipulate or control her). If anything, this Bill strengthens Pakistani
families, and is completely in line with what Islam outlines as proper behavior between spouses in the sacred space of the home.\textsuperscript{479}

Apart from these legislative measures, there were some other steps taken by the government between the years 2008 to 2012. The first is the establishment of an independence \textit{Human Rights Commission} under the \textit{National Commission for Human Rights Act 2012}. The Act discussed the structure and functions of \textit{Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)} in detail, with broad objectives. While explaining the major clauses of this Commission, Senator of the ruling party PPPP, Farhatullah Babar\textsuperscript{480} in a media briefing explained:

This Commission, headquartered in Islamabad, would consist of ten members including a Chairperson and a member each from the four provinces, FATA and Islamabad Capital Territory, minority communities and the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women. At least two shall be the women members in this Commission. A person shall be eligible for appointment as Chairperson, who has been, or is qualified to be, a judge of the Supreme Court or a person having demonstrable knowledge of, or practical knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights. Similarly a member shall not be less than forty years of age and shall have knowledge and experience relating to human rights. The Chairperson and members shall hold the office for a term of four years that may be extended once.\textsuperscript{481}

The Act was welcomed by civil society organizations as mentioned by a Research Officer at \textit{Strategic Initiatives Programme} (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative), Jennifer Kishan,“this is a formative moment for Pakistan. A national institution is about to be created in a country where, for decades, civil society has been the sole proactive challenge to the state on human rights violations. Pakistan’s vibrant civil society has

\textsuperscript{479}Bina Shah, “Time to pass the domestic violence bill,” \textit{The Express Tribune}, April 12, 2012.
\textsuperscript{480}Farhatullah Babar is a Senator of PPPP from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from March 2012 to March 2018.
\textsuperscript{481}The related law specified in detail the procedure for the appointment for chairperson and the members. In order to have a credibility and non-partiality of the commission, a method was evolved where the opposition had an equal opportunity for such appointments. Furthermore the members could not be removed unless as specified by Article 209 of the constitution. It was given wide authority to examine human rights violations. In doing so the commission would take in to account the guarantees as provided by the constitution. In short, this commission has a wide scope of jurisdiction in co-operating nearly every aspect of human rights in the Punjab and Pakistan. For details, see also. \textit{The Nation}, August 18, 2013.
made commendable efforts in persuading the government to legislate better laws. Yet the new institution through this landmark Bill will hopefully address some of the imminent concerns of civil society.\textsuperscript{482} However, some international organizations like \textit{Human Rights watch} had strong reservations over the Act as it believed that HRCP should be allowed to investigate the rights violations of armed forces and intelligence agencies and if proven guilty then the commission should have an independent right to take action. While expressing the same views, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, Brad Adams states that “the National Human Rights Commission if given teeth can play a critical role in improving Pakistan’s dire human rights situation. But a commission that cannot take on cases involving the army and intelligence agencies would perpetuate a cruel joke on Pakistanis whose rights have been violated.”\textsuperscript{483}

The second step was the \textit{Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill 2011}, which amended \textit{Women in Distress and Detention Fund Act 1996}. The bill was moved by the leader of the Senate, Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari. The 2011 bill aimed to provide financial help and legal assistance to women facing different accusation in jail, not having enough resources to acquire appropriate legal help. \textit{A Women Resource Centre, Shirkat Gah} mentioned in its newsletter that the bill “aims to provide financial assistance to destitute women, victims of violence, up to Rs. 10,000 for bail for women unable to put up their bail bonds, and free legal aid to women prisoners.”\textsuperscript{484} The previous Act had provided administrative rights to the Human Rights wings, of \textit{Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights}, however the 2011 act transferred this exclusive right to the \textit{Ministry of Human Rights} as a newspaper states:

According to the statement of objects and reasons of the bill, the Human Rights Wing of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights was administering the fund under an act of parliament. Now, the Ministry of Human Rights has been established as a separate


entity with effect from November 3, 2008, and the subject fund was transferred to the Ministry of Human Rights. It is pointed out that Ministry of Human Rights was not in a position to operate the fund without necessary amendments in Women Distress and Detention Fund Act 1996, and the bill is aimed at the making functional the fund, as it is beneficial for all classes of women throughout the country.\textsuperscript{485}

The amended bill with other pro-women legislation was welcomed by the civil society. In this context, a Chairperson of \textit{Concerned Citizens of Pakistan (CCP)}, Nasira Iqbal praised the contribution of political leaders for respecting the guarantees provided for the protection of women.\textsuperscript{486}

Third measure was the in the shape of Benazir \textit{Income Support Programme (BISP)}, with an objective to provide economic assistance on a bi-monthly cash basis to assist the families with low income. The BISP is operating in all provinces of Pakistan, including that of Punjab. It was spelled out that the parliamentarians would be provided 8000 forms each, for the first one year, who intern would help to identify and assist to fill the forms for the genuine needy women.\textsuperscript{487} While, writing about the program, a Daily Newspaper, \textit{The Frontier Post} comments:

\begin{quote}
A comprehensive social safety net like Benazir Income Support Programme was founded for the first time in the history of Pakistan, which in a short span of time has achieved the status of being the largest social welfare program of not only Pakistan but also of South Asia. Almost 20-22 percent of the most deserving population of the country, which
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{485} \textit{Pakistan Today, December 13, 2011.}  
\textsuperscript{486} \textit{Ibid.}  
\textsuperscript{487} “Benazir Income Support Program,” \textit{Government of Pakistan,} Posted December 18, 2011, \url{http://www.bisp.gov.pk/acknowledgements.aspx}; “The involvement of parliamentarians ended after one year in April 2009 and the selection process was done by using the poverty scorecard and the eligible families are identified through a proxy test. The Poverty Scorecard has been approved by the World Bank and requires families to answer 13 questions regarding assets and expenses in a survey. Internal monitoring systems are being developed to track deliveries and payment amounts to eligible families. Another mechanism to address corruption and political favoritism is being considered that would allow a neutral third party access to the list of eligible families to verify eligibility. Recently, BISP has expanded to include several special initiatives; Waseela-e-Haq, Waseela-e-Rozgar, Waseela-e-Sehet, Waseela-e-Taleem. BISP also provides cash payments for emergency relief efforts. These payments are similar to the payments received by low-income families but are distributed to families affected by terrorism, war, and natural disasters such as earthquakes.”
comes to approximately 45 million individuals, are benefiting from the program. The BISP has been internationally acknowledged as a role-model welfare programme.\textsuperscript{488}

Despite of heavy aid from international donor agencies like Asian Development Bank, USAID and the British DFID; and support of the Parliamentarians, the BISP faced serious criticism from experts like Dr. Hafeez Sheikh, the former Finance Minister, who, counter argued that the distribution of money through such programs is not a long-term solution of the endemic poverty amongst women. While giving a reference of the views of Dr. Sheikh in Cabinet meeting, The Friday Times writes:

Dr. Sheikh said the economy would not improve when it was not going in the right direction, and when the government was offering billions of rupees in cash to the people. Dr Sheikh was not a politician and could not develop the slightest compatibility with the rest of his colleagues on the issue of BISP. Official documents reveal that by now the BISP has doled out more than Rs. 139 billion among the poor, or among potential voters.\textsuperscript{489}

Similar views have been expressed by Farakh Shahzad with a different dimension as he identified various loopholes in the BISP. First, instead of providing needy women adequate training to cope with poverty, the program inhabited the begging in people, which would ultimately restrained them from earning, by using their own capabilities and skills. Thus, this program would not help to eradicate the economic problems as it happened in case of Bangladesh, which initiated the same program but with a difference that Germeen bank of Bangladesh, which provided soft loans to the poor women not as a charity, as in the case of BISP in Pakistan. Rather, it was a financial assistance to start a local business like small shops and the healthy return of that loan was between 90 to 98 percent. Second, BISP was a politically motivated schemes under the MPAs, who used funds for political maneuvering in their respective constituencies. Farakh Shahzad

\textsuperscript{488} The Frontier Post, April 18, 2013.

assesses this program, within the context of Pakistani culture, which according to his opinion is not conducive with the objective conditions within the society, as he believes that “the dilemma of Pakistan’s socio-political culture is the arbitrary policy formulation based on personal likes and dislikes coupled with political convenience.”

Fourth measure was to inaugurate Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women by the Ministry of Women Development in 26 districts, including those of Punjab. Its main objective was to respond quickly over the complaints of violence against women, by ensuring them immediate shelter and late a remedy to improve their conditions.

While evaluating the legislations on women related issues from 2002 to 2012, I have to give credit to the effective role of women related Civil Society Organizations and some of the women members of the National and Punjab Assemblies.

6.3: Conclusion:

A comprehensive analysis of the legislative and executive measures, by dictatorial rule of Pervaiz Musharraf, as well as the democratic government led by PPPP from 1999 to 2012 exhibits pro-women legislation. The legislation on women issues during this period, comprising of thirteen years faced a tug of war between orthodox elements in parliament and women rights organizations, supported by progressive members of legislative chambers, including women. During Musharraf’s rule (1999-2008), the major focus of legislation was on the amendments in previously enforced legislation like the changes in 1961 MFLO over matters women right of divorce (Khula) in 2002 and the alteration of zina related clauses in Hudood ordinance in 2006 through WPB, which provided a relief to the effected women. Moreover, the increased seats of women in National and Provincial legislatures also enabled women representatives, to raise women voice more effectively in the legislative process.

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After the restoration of democracy in 2008, the focus of legislation remained on the new laws dealing with the regular indoor and outdoor problems, faced by women in their daily lives. While considering the indoor challenges, the legislation and debate in parliament took place on the laws against domestic abuse and anti-women practices (*Vani, Karo-kari, Sawara, Marriage with Quran*, deprivation from the right of inheritance). However, to provide protection to women from the social ills, when they operate outside the premises of their home, the laws were made to combat sexual harassment in mixed environment at workplaces and on acid throwers.

The credit of the mentioned legislation goes to galvanization of various factors in this time-period. First is the role of the vibrant and constructive civil society, which not only raised the question of legislation but also lobbied in the parliament by sensitizing the legislators on its urgency. Second, the mushroomed growth of print and electronic media, highlighted the cases of different kinds of women abuse both in private and public environment, so that the voice of victims are being heard. Third, the growing trend of education among female population, which sensitized them on the issues, they might face in domestic and public environment.

Concluding, it can be said that vocal role of working educated women, civil society and media has played a significant role in highlighting the women issues from 1999 to 2012. However, the impact of this development on women would be observed in the next chapter with detail, where apart from the legislative and executive measures, I would highlight the other above-hinted factors. This analysis would not only enable us to measure the gap between the legislation and its application but it would also help us to understand that to what extent the other agents of changes could help to grant more rights to the Punjabi women.
Chapter 7: Impact of Education on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

In previous two chapters, the complexity of women status was assessed, while keeping in view the legislative and executive measures of democratic and dictatorial governments, as an independent agent of change. This study provided us the impact of these measures on the status of female population in Punjab—though it dealt with two different time-periods. These measures have its exclusiveness because they were initiated from the state machinery—different from rest of selected agents of change, i.e. education, political process, media and civil society organizations. These agents have exclusive characteristics as they originate from the societal forces, where the government involvement remains marginal.

In this chapter, I would attempt to understand the transformation of women status in Punjabi society by keeping in view two dogmas. One, who struggles to uphold the status quo by preservation of discriminatory traditional values and norms against women. While on the other side are those, who desire a socio-economic and political transformation in century’s old biased cultural mind-set. In order to achieve their objectives, the latter part of the society uses various means for the attainment of women empowerment. Here I will particularly focus on the impact of education as an agent of change, which is one of the gauges to determine the placement of women in Punjabi society. Increasing literacy provides awareness and become a tool of women empowerment in various ways, thus enabling them to challenge the traditional attitudes. While stressing on the utility of education for women, one of the United Nations report’s projection for the year 2000 states:

Education helps women over-come social prejudice, take control of their lives and assume a status and identity beyond child bearing, thereby allowing them to participate more fully in the public life of their community. It opens wider horizons, creates new opportunities and,
most importantly, empowers women with choices. And last but not least, education is
the single most important weapon to combat sexual stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes
towards women.  

Equally, education can become a vehicle to achieve equitable socio-economic and
political rights. It is generally observed that education influence on women more
strongly than on men. Supporting this contention, Emily W. Kane, identifies a strong
correlation between education and gender. She believes that the impact of education is
stronger on women lives than on men and explains:

Education clearly affects beliefs about gender inequality….(and it) appears to play
competing roles simultaneously, encouraging a critical analysis of existing gender
inequalities while also allowing for an individualist interpretation of the social order….  
Education provides knowledge and values that foster awareness of social inequalities and
commitment to reducing them. This process could occur for both men and women,
although attention to group interests suggests that its effects might be more limited
among men. But the additional process of empowerment is also a potential source of
education effects among women.  

When, I assess Kane’s explanation about a strong impact of education on females, I
are able to understand the urgency of educated Punjabi women, as they perform multiple
societal responsibilities, ranging from household chores to workplace duties; may it be in
an office or in a field. It is generally believed that educated women can become more
useful members of the society in a variety of ways. For example, in Punjabi society,
educated women play constructive role in grooming of children than their illiterate
sisters, because till the stage of adolescence, children mostly remain in the company of
women family members.

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491 “Women-Challenges to the Year 2000,” United Nations (New York: UN Department of public
492 Emily W. Kane, “Education and Beliefs about Gender Inequality,” Social Problems, Vol. 42, No. 1
(February 1995), pp. 78, 86.
While acknowledging the comprehensive role of women in grooming of children, as already discussed in Chapter 4, the Father of Nation (Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah), strongly stressed that girls education remain essential element for the progress of the country in all its totality but subsequent statistics demonstrate that Punjab/Pakistan remain one of the most illiterate entity in female education. Although late in the Pakistani history, in 2010, a new article 25-A in 1973 constitution was inducted, which endorsed that it is the State’s responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to the children, between five to sixteen years of age, irrespective of gender. However, when it comes to the implementation stage, a large percentage of children are still left behind, especially the rural female.

A research concluded in 1997 states that an over-all male literacy of Pakistan stands around 52 %, whereas female literacy rate is well-below 20 %; irrespective of the fact that the female population is around 52 percent of the total population. According to the United Nations Development Program index for 2010, Pakistan ranked 123 in world gender inequality index, where the percentages of male/female population for secondary education (2006-2010), remained 43.1/18.3, respectively. Punjab, by sharing around 60% of the country’s population, subsequently consists of large number of female inhabitants in comparison to other provinces. Thus, in an over-all Pakistani scenario, the status of female residents in Punjab has a strong bearing in defining the placement of Pakistani women.

Before assessing the impact of education on the lives of the Punjabi women, I need to point-out the existing differences between the rural and urban female literacy. It is important to do so because the social conditions and opportunities differ considerably in these two situations. Therefore, it is a likelihood that the placement of women in both environments could vary noticeably.

I observe from Table 7.1 that the total literacy rate of the Punjabi female girls jumped five times, from 10.7% to 50.7% in 38 years, which is however lower than their male counterparts, with 29.1% to 69.0% in the same time-period. In this Table, in 1972, the women literacy rate demonstrate a lower trend, when compared with the male population (Male: 22.9, Female: 5.2); while by 2010-11, the difference narrowed down to a certain extent (Male: 64.3, Female: 42.3). It is significant that to begin with in 1972, the rural female literacy rate was negligible with 5.2%, while the male, though equally low, however provided some basis of literate population in the mentioned setting. By 2010-11, the female literacy rate amongst the rural population became comparatively reasonable with 42.3%, though the males literacy rate also increased to 64.3%. Looking at the urban population literacy rate, by 2010-11, females covered a lot of space to improve this particular condition and the gap between the male and female became narrowed. Due to the cultural constrains, as already mentioned in various chapters of this thesis, the total literacy rate however remained lower than those of opposite sex, with an encouraging tendency that the difference between the two is not as frustrating as it used to be some decade ago. Another aspect to be noted is that during Zia-ul-Haq era (1977-88), there was no decline observed in the female literacy rate, i.e, despite of his discriminatory laws, against women, as discussed in Chapter 5. According to Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy though, “in the mid 1980's, Dr. Mohammed Afzal, General Zia-ul-Haq's education minister, swore that he would build MITs and Harvards in the country. Nothing materialized, and for the next 20 years university reform went into the doldrums.”

Table 7.1: Literacy of Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Total Literacy Rate</th>
<th>Literacy Rate of Urban Population</th>
<th>Literacy Rate of Rural Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*While comparing the literacy ratios from the 1972 and 1981 census it may be pertinent to indicate that the question on literacy in two census was worded differently. In the 1972 census it was enquired whether a person can ‘read and write with understanding’. In the 1981 Census a more practical question was asked i.e., ‘Whether a person can read a newspaper and write a simple letter’.


rate did not witness a decline because of a general awareness that the girls need to be 
educated. However, the rural areas were left behind as before, thus resulting in a lopsided 
improvement for literacy.496

Among the rural Punjabi women, the awareness regarding the utility of female education 
has increased with time, which in turn has improved the quality of life and made the 
survival of low/middle class population possible. I have to keep into consideration that 
economic pressures can have a far-reaching impact on the low and middle class rural 
women, who faces two challenges. One origins from the financial side and the second is 
from the already prevalent biased orthodoxy. In the presence of these two challenges, the 
sufferings of rural women increases, when they remain uneducated and cannot contribute 
towards the financial upgrading of their families. However, the un-educated rural Punjabi 
woman apart from full-filling her house-hold responsibilities, indirectly contribute in the 
economic uplift of her family, by working in the fields, without acknowledgement and 
compensation. This kind of rural women’s contribution is explained as, “rural women, 
though less acknowledged, have worked side by side with their menfolk as unpaid family 
labour. Cotton picking, fodder cutting, storing grain, animal care and looking after the 
vegetable plots are considered feminine jobs.” 497 A Professor, Abdul Rauf, refers to a study 
that concludes, “80% of women were engaged in these operations. Usually they are not 
involved in very heavy tasks, although during cropping our harvesting seasons, they are 
expected to work on fairly strenuous chores around the farm.”498 Despite of this non- 
recognition, the rural uneducated women particularly of low strata are the backbone of rural 
economy.

496 In this particular year, the gap between rural and urban female literacy was significantly reduced to 
25.2%, lower then 1998, which was 32.2 %.
497 Abdur Rauf, “Rural Women and the Family: A Study of a Punjabi Village in Pakistan,” *Journal of 
498 Ibid.
Another aspect to be considered regarding female literacy of Punjab is their level of education, pointed out in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Primary to Degree Level Education 1977-2012

(Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree College (Art and Science)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Primary School is an Institution comprising First to five Grades (I-V) of Educational System.
* Middle School is an Institution comprising First to Eight Grades (I-VIII) of Educational System.
* High School is an Institution comprising First to Ten Grades (I-X) of Educational System.
* Degree College is an Institution comprising Four/Six Grades (XI to XVI) of Educational System.


Table 7.2 reveals that although at primary level in Punjab, girl’s enrollment increased from 34.2% (1976-77) to 45.4% (2010-11), though it remained lower than the male with 65.7% and 54.5% respectively, in the same time period. This table also demonstrate that during the given time-period, when it came to higher education, the female enrollment proportionally increased than male with 69.6% in 1976-77. \(^{499}\)

This table also reveals that there is a tendency amongst the girls to attain better education, as reflected in the above table, where according to 2011-12 figures, the percentage of primary education was 45.4, while it rose to 53.4 at degree college level. It is important to acknowledge that higher education of female is an important incentive for better job

opportunities, thus enabling them to become economically empowered. On the contrary, those less educated girls, who are forced to leave school at even lower level, are deprived of better job opportunities, thus less likely to protect their rights. Nevertheless, when compared to entirely uneducated females, the less educated are more aware of their rights, and better susceptible to societal changes, in similar conditions.

The table also shows that though the girl’s enrollment at primary level is more or less equal to the number of boys enrolled at the same level in rural and urban Punjab. However, the dropout rate of girls after primary education is higher than boys and this gap increases in rural areas. The main reason of this difference is due to the economic pressures, which in the Punjabi patriarchal setting effect the female child more, because the son is considered to be the first priority for probable ‘investment’ due to their prospective role of a future principal earner. Another reason to invest in boy’s education is that in Punjabi society, the girls are visualized as ‘temporary’ residents of the family, expected to be married and become part of another family. Therefore, the “male members of the family are given better education and are equipped with skills to compete for resources in public arena, while female members are imparted domestic skills to be good mothers and wives. They are given limited opportunities to create choices for themselves in order to change the realities of their lives.”

Apart from the financial pressures, there are other factors responsible for the lack of enthusiasm for rural women’s education. First, at various places, schools are at a distance, where it becomes difficult for the girls to access that facility in comparison with boys. Second, is the early-age marriage of girls, which is considered to be a family’s priority after reaching puberty, although the legal marriageable age is 16 years. Thus, education becomes a second priority, as they are required to under-take household responsibilities. Third reason is uneducated parents, who are unable to recognize the value of education. However, with the passage of time, as demonstrated in Tables 7.1 and

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7.2. There has been an alteration in attitudes due to changing socio-economic needs of Punjabi society, where a woman education has become a financial contributing factor to maintain a desired quality of life for a family. While supporting this contention, a demographic expert, Zeba Ayesha Sathar argues that even in 1984 the “society (including Punjab) is under-going social and economic changes and the attitude of parents towards the schooling of their daughters is likely to change as has already happened in urban areas. This change is reflected in the larger differences in female literacy across urban and rural areas.”

However, I should not forget that the mentioned change is mostly visible in the upper and middle class of rural population, where ‘enlightened’ parents support equally their daughter’s education and if they can afford, they also send them for higher education in big cities or even abroad.

After assessing the Punjabi women’s number and level of education, I would search for a correlation between female education and its impact, on at least four dimensions. The first variable to be explored would be in the health sector, where I will make an attempt to understand that how much an educated female becomes conscious of her various health issues. The second would be their induction in the workforce of the province, depending on the kind of education they were able to accomplish. More revealing aspect of our research would be in the last two variables, namely – the exercise of their right of inheritance and lastly free choices that an educated woman can make in the Punjabi society, which is hesitant to grant this religious obligation to the female members of the family. This particular aspect of our research would take into account the obstacles that are created, even for a conscious educated female. However, I would equally explore those areas where the educated Punjabi women are able to make progress, leading to some sort of empowerment.

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7.1: Education and Health

The growing awareness through education among Punjabi women can be reflected in their desire to look after their health and utilize the relevant facilities. Irrespective of rural and urban division, this health related awareness among Punjabi women has played a determining role in changing their lives. It is more so for those who have completed at least the minimum level of education, as it is presumed that educated women are more sensitive about health issues. In this regard, I also have to consider that there is a lack of medical facilities in rural areas. However, in urban centers, the private and public medical facilities are more advanced and easily accessible. A common denomination irrespective of rural/urban divide is that an educated woman tends to respond favorably to their health issues. Supporting these views, the research by demographers opined:

The significance of the use of health care services in urban areas raises many questions. It may be argued that it is not only the concentration of the facilities but more educated women are located in the urban areas….Education plays an important role and creates general awareness about the matters which affect the quality of life, therefore, female education is of crucial significance as it affects the family's health acquisition.  

From the above, I gather that education by itself is not enough for women to attain medical attention. The important factor as mentioned above is also the availability of such services. Therefore, both the mentioned factors when taken together become effective. Nevertheless in case of rural Punjab, the low literacy rate of women, accompanied by lack of medical facilities is the dominant factor responsible for their feeble health conditions, particularly in comparison with their urban fellows. Nonetheless, I cannot over-look the fact that the utilization of available health facilities for Punjabi women also depends on their financial conditions, because government

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provided health facilities are inadequate, particularly in rural areas and private clinics and hospitals are enormously expensive, if available. Thus, it can be assumed that if cheap and qualitative medical facilities are provided to rural and urban centres equally, only then the female education becomes an important factor to determine the effective use of health measures.\textsuperscript{503}

Considering another aspect, which is closely related to women health, is their fertility rate. The bigger families put tremendous burden on especially low class women’s health as they cannot afford an extra help in a shape of a nany, not they can afford require medicines. The situation is further aggravated by the fading structure of joint families, in which the children were considered common and taken care by aunts, grandmothers and other close relatives, living in the same compound, thus putting minimum pressure on the mother. There is an observation that educated woman are more in favour of smaller families, realizing that less children and adequate gap in birth can ensure their good health. It is only because of this realization that women can convince their husbands for smaller families, notwithstanding tremendous social pressure from the peculiar mind-set from the female close-relatives for a larger family. However, a correlation does exist between the literacy level and fertility rate in Pakistan/Punjab.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7_1.png}
\caption{Trend in Fertility Rate: 2006-2012 (\%)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{503}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{503}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{503}Ibid.
Figure 7.1 indicates the declining trend in fertility, from the year 2006 to 2008 in an overall Pakistani situation. It can be assumed that one of the reasons for this downward trend is the rising female literacy as well as the Musharraf’s liberal family planning facilities and awareness through government machinery. This fact is further supplemented through quote of renowned researchers on the same page. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the female literacy combined with male education effectively help to reduce fertility, as the educated couples are more conscious to have small size of families, so that they could provide them best health and education facilities. This notion is supported by Hakim and Mahmood, who believes that the, “educational attainment alters parents' perceptions of the advantages of small families, brings changes in the status of women, changes the social and economic aspirations, and affects both attitude towards contraception and ability to understand and make use of particular method.”\(^{504}\) Thus, the educated urban class couples have become more independent in their decision of reproduction, unlike rural fellows, who usually operate under the pressure of traditional culture that involves elders and in-laws in their private matter. Additionally, lack of knowledge about contraceptive methods is another hindrance for planning their families. In Punjab based survey analysis, Casterline, Sathar and Haq identify that the changing socio-economic needs are instrumental in weakening the traditional patterns and “a further change that respondents perceive is a withdrawal of elders and in-laws from the decision making process, with the result that decisions about contraception are increasingly the exclusive province of the wife and husband.”\(^{505}\) I might not fully agree with this assumption that a change has occurred where the elders and in-laws have lost their position as influencing factors. I believe that in a number of cases the old patterns still exist and the elders have a say in the family size. I cannot neglect the fact that contrary to the rural uneducated couples, the literate especially belonging to urban strata are in a better position to resist this traditional pressure. The trend determined by Hakim and Mehmood through the data gathered from the year 1984-85, in their research indicates:


Women with no education have a higher mean number of children ever born compared to those with some education. The mean number of children ever born to women with no education is 4.5, with primary education 3.6, with secondary education 3.2 and with tertiary education 2.3. In all age groups, an increase in the level of education is associated with a decline in the number of children ever born. Even the age standardised mean number of children ever born reveals that fertility is lower for those women who have attained a higher level of education, compared to those who have less education or no education.\textsuperscript{506}

Summing up, we assume that there is a reasonable strong correlation between education and various aspects of women health, including the management of family size. I also gather that the number of children is related to a level of female education, which determines their fertility rate. Therefore, I find that education becomes one of the factors in women development, when it comes to their health related issues.

### 7.2: Education and Work Force

Generally, in Punjab, better education of women is perceived as a vehicle for better jobs and thus more empowerment. Apart from the existing gap between the rural and urban women workforce, an over-all ratio of working women in Pakistan in general and Punjab in particular has increased. Although, table 7.4 deals with Pakistan’s age specific labor force participation from 1998 to 2011 but it could help us to draw assumptions as Punjab’s literacy rate is higher than the other provinces. Thus, an over-all trend of gradual increase in female workforce as demonstrated in the mentioned table would enable us to draw some clues regarding the situation of female workforce in Punjab.

Observing this table, I can identify that in 1998-99, the percentage of most productive female age group (20-24) labour force in Pakistan, increased from 15.16 percent to 24.20 in 2010-11. The discouraging aspect remains that these figures are significantly low, when compared to the male population. To supplement our arguments, I can trace the existing gaps between the percentage of working and house-keeping male and female population, living in rural and urban Punjab, as shown in Table 7.4.

\textsuperscript{506}Abdul Hakim and Naushin Mahmood, op.cit., p. 694.
Table 7.3: A Comparison of Male and Female Working and Housekeeping Population in Punjab 2005-2011 (10 Years and Above)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR(S)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>URBAN</th>
<th>RURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both Sexes</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>30281</td>
<td>22635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>16388</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>29132</td>
<td>21666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>16522</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>28968</td>
<td>22062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>17488</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>29946</td>
<td>22673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>16527</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>31950</td>
<td>23620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>16604</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>32265</td>
<td>23595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House-Keeping</td>
<td>17251</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minor improvement is witnessed in the percentage of Punjabi working women in Table 7.4, from the year 2005-6 to 2010-11, which demonstrate that over a period of time, the trend to join job-market among women has been slightly upgraded. This slow increase can be attributed to a rapid population growth, accompanied by a near collapse of the industrial sector and shying away of foreign investors, due to terrorism and insurgencies.\textsuperscript{507} This difference can be due to the fact that there is a difference between urban and rural Punjab in terms of educational facilities and related employment. Recognizing this factor, Hafeez and Ahmad in their sampled study of Mandi Bahauadin, a district of Central Punjab, which can reflects an over Punjabi situation, believes that rural married women seldom acquire any formal job like in health and education sector and “this is so because in rural areas education and formal employment opportunities are not available for women. At first it is very difficult for rural women to acquire education. Secondly, even if they are able to acquire some education, they find it very difficult to get some formal job. This implies that rural residence is likely to have negative effect on the labour market participation of educated married women.” \textsuperscript{508} However, the informal contribution of illiterate rural women is higher than their educated urban fellows. This un-recognized and non-calculated labour workforce of rural women is highlighted by Mahmood and Nayab as they state that “it is generally known that women's activities are not counted as work, especially in rural areas where large number of women work on farms in various agricultural activities and in non-formal employment.”\textsuperscript{509}

Apart from rural/urban division, while confining the case-study to Bahawalpur district in South Punjab, Faridi, Chaudhary and Anwar believes that financial needs, family set-up (joint or nuclear family), house-hold size, education of other family members and availability of jobs also determine women workforce. However, the dominant factor to delineate their job prospects is the level of education, because the literate women with advance qualifications are more independent in their decisions, including

\textsuperscript{507}Pakistan Economic Survey 2010-11 stated that the war against terrorism “affected the country's exports, prevented the inflows of foreign investment, affected the pace of privatization programme and slowed down the overall economic activity.” \textit{Dawn}, June 19, 2011.
employment. From the above two case studies, I derive that apart from various factors, education remains dominant variable for the attainment of jobs by the Punjabi women. While sharing their views, the Punjab University hostel resident female university students belonging to various discipline and mostly from small towns, in a focus group discussion shared that the educated women are not entirely free in selection of their jobs. According to them, the best and approved jobs are in teaching and medical professions. There are numbers of environmental factors when it comes to other then these two. For example, working condition and number of female employees at workplaces. They are of the opinion that education along with a job brings awareness and open-mindedness amongst the females. Most of them express that highly educated female are not desirable as wives for those males, who are less qualified. Continuing, they mention that such men develop complexes that in the traditional socio-cultural set-up of Punjab, if a wife is more empowered and aware of her rights then she might resist to the traditional role as a female member of the household.

While adding, in another target group of the graduate female students of Lahore College for Women University believe that in some cases, the married working women is expected by the husband and in-laws to bear the financial burden of the whole family, apart from other house-hold chores. One of the participants in this discussion ironically described the expectations of a husband from a working wife by saying, “Husband want a wife, who is a maid at home and Cleopatra outside”.

The female students further believed that on one side, this multiplicity of tasks put enough pressure on them, while on the other it enables the male members of family to ignore their financial responsibilities by solely depending on the earning of their wives.


511 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel No 8 (Hazrat Hafza Hall) on September 19, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.

512 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
Our above discussion regarding the flexibility of an educated girl to seek a job of her choice with little hindrance is verified by the response of the educated university girls, in a survey through questionnaire in three institutions of Lahore. These Punjabi girls of respective institutions represent a wide range of spectrum as they come from various social classes and areas.

Figure 7.2: Relationship of Education with Employment Opportunities

Source: Survey through questionnaire by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

Figure 7.2 shows that nearly all segment of girls (96.6%) agree that they have attained more independence in selection of a job because of higher education. As expected, a larger number of girls that is 75.6% are of the view that it is the society, instead of their family which create hindrances for attainment of their chosen job, rather only 22.3% students believe that these obstructions come from their families. While comparing with their mothers and grandmothers regarding the options for a job, again a large number of educated girls (85.2%) are of the view that they have more opportunities to take-up a job than their mothers and grand-mothers; while only a small percentage of 14 consider that their freedom to get a job remains stagnant.

University of the Punjab, Lahore women University and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore.)
Setting aside the views expressed in above mentioned two group interviews and the trends determined through survey, it cannot be neglected that due to the changing socio-cultural environment, necessitated by financial requirements, the rural as well as urban Punjabi women after getting adequate education opt for jobs, corresponding to their level of education and in these cases, they confront little resistance from even their traditional families. However, such kind of support sometimes decline, when these educated working daughters and sisters decide to exercise their rights in other matters.

### 7.3: Education and Inheritance

As the over-whelming population of Punjab follows Islam and its injunctions, therefore, I will investigate the ability of both educated and uneducated women to receive a fair share as an heir in their ancestral property- along with the hindrances created by the socio-cultural norms of the society. A number of legislation as mentioned in Chapter 5 and 6 has strengthened women’s claim over their ancestral property. Despite of the legal cover, I observe that the majority of Punjabi women are deprived of this law-full and religious right, under various socio-cultural pretentions. There is a general societal belief, confirmed by two sampled studies that the denial of sister’s and daughter’s share in their ancestral property is justified under an argument that as they receive dowry at the time of their marriage and later throughout the life, they keep on receiving various gifts and pecuniary help from their brothers; therefore, the girls should withdraw their inheritance claim in favor of their brothers. This concession is strongly supported and appreciated by mothers and other members of families. By this action, an impression is acquired by sisters and daughters that this particular act would be considered as a sign of benevolence for the brothers, who in the long run might become their potential support, in such situations as (a) divorced, (b) widowed and (c) in need of financial help. There is yet another dimension is that at times, if women are able to obtain their legal share even then for all practical purposes, it is handled and controlled by their brothers under an excuse of legal and logistic complications, which is reinforced by their unawareness regarding property matters and restricted mobility issues, especially if they are un-educated. In this
situation, the dependability of educated/uneducated women, both living in rural or urban areas, increases on their male members of family, as they are on their dispense; who may or may not provide them profit from their own share of property. Thus, despite of being a legal custodian of their inherited land and property, these women are culturally bound to accept the money provided by their bothers, without any questions. While sharing their views, the Punjab University female students shared that though in recent times the daughters and sisters are able to get their share in inheritance, however there is a culturally oriented pressure upon them to surrender their due share to the brothers, in particular. One of the participants shared a real life experience, where a sister surrendered her share in favour of her brothers, as a gesture of good will. However, when her husband died and she was in need of financial support, the brothers who had benefited did not return the share to the rightful female heir. These interviewees are convinced that the female members of a family should not surrender their right of inheritance, even under pressure, as it is a legal and Islamic right of a girl. These views of educated girls were further confirmed by a survey from university students of three institutions in Lahore in a figure 2 below.

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515 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel No 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall) on September 19, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author. For details of the guideline of the discussion see Appendix H.

516 University of the Punjab, Lahore women University and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore.)
Figure 7.3: Do you believe that the girls should give their inherited property to their brothers?

Source: Survey through questionnaire by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

Figure 7.3 determines that more than half (60%) of the girls believe that they should not surrender their inherited property, in favour of their brothers, while 37 percent consider it as justifiable to gift their property share of the property to their brothers. Both diverse views are expressed by those girls, who being young exist in some kind of utopia, devoid of real life experience. When the time would arrive, it could become a challenge for these educated girls to resist those societal pressures and cultural norms, which they consider as unjust, at the present. There is sizable percentage of educated girls, who believe in receiving their inheritance, nevertheless those who opt to surrender their legal and religious right confirms that still a considerable number of Punjabi female are under the influence of gender base socio-cultural blackmailing. This might be due to a peculiar family structure, dominated by the backward and uneducated mothers and grandmothers.

When the above-mentioned survey is compared from the responses of female students during a group discussion, a major different is observed as during public discussion sessions, not a single student supported the idea to surrender their inheritance right in favour of their brothers. This difference can be due to two reasons. First, in group discussions, a fear to be labeled as orthodox and conservative by their peers might have
pushed them to support female right of inheritance. Secondly, in front of their friends, they might have felt shy to disapprove their religiously and legally accepted right of a female in ancestral property. The mentioned amalgamation of religious obligation, along with cultural biases against women has already been discussed in Chapter 3. Hence, the “resistance to the application of Islamic law with respect to inheritance of land can be clearly seen in rural areas. The authority of Biradari in Punjab through Panchayats (councils) has been instrumental in enforcing customary law where women's inheritance to landed property is concerned.”

7.4: Education and Choices

In the above mentioned portions, I exclusively discussed the impact of female education on their health, employment and right of inheritance. However, in this segment, I will evaluate the role of education in facilitating the choice of marriage, divorce and mobility of Punjabi women. As far as the choice of marriage is concerned, education has made a slight difference, with the provision that educated daughter is at least given an impression that she has been provided an opportunity for the final approval, in selection of her future husband. In reality, even this apparent right is manipulated by the family, as they are the main source of information, regarding the potential proposal. Thus, in theory such decisions are seemingly finalized by the concerned daughter, but in real the decision-maker is her family. Generally, the families exert socio-cultural pressures, where it becomes difficult for a girl to challenge the choice of her family. In already quoted focus group discussion from Punjab University students, nearly all of the interviewees shared their observation that the marriage by choice in big cities like Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi has acceptability to some extent; however in rural areas it is still considered a taboo. They further pointed out that in most of the cases, the important aspects which the parents consider in their daughters marriage is a suitor with a similar caste and stable financial status, while his other personality traits comes later. Some of the girls pointed out that in their families; education is now being considered a contributing factor but at

517 Abdur Rauf, op.cit., p. 404.
the same time they are of the opinion that when it comes to marriage, a girl has little choice and if she takes an initiative to choose her partner, she faces a social boycott. The main theme deducted from this group interview is that in such cases, the girls are blamed to challenge the societal norms because of education. Contrary to this, the respondents believe that when it comes to the son, his choice is welcomed. Lahore College University students believe that although the acceptability for girls’ marriage with her choice in society is weak but mostly educated urban base families regard the choice of their daughters. The students of both universities believe that the matter in which society interfere most is the marriage of a girl. In this societal pressure, the space of a single woman who opts not to get married is limited. She is considered odd, who often face character assassination by her own family and society.

About various types of pressures for marriage, the mentioned survey provide evidence that education ensures reasonably satisfactory freedom to the girls regarding this matter, however they do face certain challenges in this regard as depicted in a figure 7.4 below.

518 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel No 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall) on September 19, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
519 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University,” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
520 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University,” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author; Group interview held at University Hostel no 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall ) on September 19, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
The results in figure 7.4 show that better educated girls have more freedom in their marriage by choice (61.1%). Despite of this, these girls believe that in case of a hindrance, it comes more from the family (52.3%) than from the societal pressures (44.1%). Therefore, they have to rely on their families’ preference for marriages. In case a girl marries on her own, she feels that it is a society more than family which disapproves such marriage (64.8%). Similarly, these girls are of the view that in an arranged marriage, their families cooperate with them when it comes to providing information about their future husbands, and they do not hide information but a sizable number of girls which is 43.7% believe that the undesirable information is not provided to them. A point to be noted is that in matter of marriage, the girls are apprehensive even about the trust of their families, demonstrating that in a patriarchal society, no matter they have been some inroads made but the parents exercise a reasonable control over their daughters till the last movement.
The surveyed girls are equally divided in their conviction when it comes to a refusal of their parent’s choice as 48.9% said they cannot refuse a proposal approved by their parents, while 50.5% believe they can. Another fact to be noticed is that the attained freedom of these girls is higher than their mothers and grandmothers because 67.4% responded positively.

Similarly, when it comes to divorce (Khula), even the educated and professional women face multiple socio-cultural and psychological obstructions, by their own family and friends; who over-look the fact that even if they are spending a miserable life with their husband and in-laws. Thus, though the legislative measures and judicial interpretation, as discussed in chapter 6, have facilitated Punjabi women to use their legal option of divorce but it is still considered as a socio-cultural taboo, about which the societal acceptability is feeble. Punjab University girls are of the opinion that although Islam gives the females a right of divorce, in a bad marriage but even then the socio-cultural norms of the Punjabi society do not regard it as desirable. A few girls from their family experiences are of the view that a divorcee daughter is not even acceptable by her parents and this is the time, when education becomes handy for a girl to attain a position of independence and empowerment. Near similar views are shared by the Lahore College University students with a little difference as they believe that in most of the cases to stay in abusive marriage is better than taking divorce because the girl’s family hardly entertain a divorcee daughter and sister, when she is back at parents’ house. The stigma of divorce makes her life more miserable, as compared to her abusive marriage. However, if the girl is well-placed in her profession and is contributing towards the finances of her parent’s house, then she does not face such treatment.

The interviewee of both universities believe that in their house-holds, a divorced woman is generally blamed for the broken marriage, while the husband is given the benefit of the doubt. The gender biases in Punjabi society are further highlighted by the Punjab University students expressing that it is easier for a divorcee male to remarry than a

521 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University,” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
A divorcee girl. Apart from all stigmas and socio-cultural pressures attached with divorce, a mentioned survey, the results determine an interesting pattern.

Figure 7.5: Do you think, Education has empowered you to claim your right of divorce from undesirable husband?

![Pie chart showing the results of the survey](image)

Source: Survey through questionnaire by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

Figure 7.5 shows that though the choice of divorce is still remains a difficult proposition for a battered educated girl but 82.5% believe that education have empowered girls to exercise their right of divorce from an undesirable husband, with a perception that being educated the divorcee woman has a capacity to independently live her life on her own. While only 16.4% still are convinced that education do not empower them for taking such decision.

The educated university girls are aware that the marriage contract is not explained properly to the bride, especially those clauses which deal with the right of divorce, as an elder male of the concerned family manages this document. In majority of the cases, the girls pointed out that the brides are entirely unaware of the written information, provided in marriage contract. They suggested that such sensitive documents ‘should be well understood by the brides’ and for their financial guarantee, a reasonable amount of ‘Haq

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522 University of the Punjab, Lahore women University and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore.
Mehr should be guaranteed, which might ensure some compensation in case of divorce, especially if she is unemployed.

Apart from controlled choice of marriage and divorce, the rural/urban Punjabi women neither educated/uneducated, working/household, face restrictions on their mobility, outside their home and there are various factors responsible for this. The women movement is usually monitored by the elder male of the family (father, brother and husband), conformed by elder females (mother, mother in-law and sister in-law), under security, socio-cultural and religious pretentions. As far as the security pretext is concerned, though it might be genuine but over-whelming, it is assumed that females are physically weak, thus they must be accompanied by some male family member, no matter younger or elder. The easy targets of this notion are young and un-married women, who are culturally considered a responsibility of their male family members. While quoting the research of various experts on women mobility, generally in Pakistan and particularly in rural Punjab, the demographers, Ali and Haq states that “it is generally believed that an important indicator of women’s autonomy is her freedom of movement outside her home. Generally, Pakistani women have limited mobility outside their homes.” Sathar and Kazi confine their research to rural Punjab and according to their findings “over two-thirds of women require someone's permission to visit relatives in the village and 90 percent of women require someone's permission to go to the next village. Moreover, when women leave their homes, they generally are escorted by someone who is usually a close relative.”

In yet another survey by National Institute for Population Studies for the year 1996-97, it was reported that only 18% women of all localities could go to another village and only ¼ of women were able to visit a hospital or clinic without the company of any male

523 *Haq mehr* is an amount, which can be in a shape of property or money, which can be claimed at any time during a marriage, by a wife from his husband. However, at the time of divorce, it is mandatory to deliver her.

524 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” *Hostel no 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall)*, on September 16, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.


member. However, the concept and meaning of mobility differs, when it comes to the movement of those rural women, who work in fields and go to fetch water on daily basis, as by necessity their movement is less-restricted than their urban fellows. This requirement is reflected in the views of a villager, as quoted by a sociologist in his survey base research; where the respondent stated, “we are working people, we cannot shut our women within the four walls of the house. We depend on them for doing several simple chores, alongside men, in the fields where strict purdah is not possible.” Similarly, in the urban setting, women with jobs and those belonging to higher economic class do have a reasonable mobility options within the city limits.

Second restrictive aspect in this regard is the religion related socio-cultural stigma attached, where men are apprehensive about the mobility of their family women, even if they are educated and employed. These conservative families according to the World Bank source have various apprehensions about women movement outside home. It further states that such families are sensitive about their concerned about their image, in case their young female members go out for employment. This Pakistan based study further assesses:

Such activity can brand the family as low status and imply that the men cannot adequately provide for the economic needs of the household. In more unequal communities where status hierarchies are quite rigid, such actions can also make women vulnerable to loss of reputation or honor. Families thus may worry even more about the safety and honor of young women who leave the household for work than they do about girls who leave the household to attend school.

In spite of reservations on women mobility as mentioned in the above quote, particularly in low middle class families, the women movement is tolerated especially if they

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528 Abdur Rauf, op.cit.,p. 409.
contribute towards the budget of the household. In these cases, there is a conflict between the conservative attitudes and economic necessities, where the financial side prevails. It is widely felt by the Punjabi girls that there is a marked difference between them and their brothers, when it comes to leaving the house, especially in late hours. These girls attribute this dichotomy to normally uttered “reasons of security for the unaccompanied girl along with the undesirability of girls coming late at home, without ascribing a specific reason.” Apart from the two mentioned factors, the range of Punjabi women’s mobility is also influenced by their marital status and age. However, I can further divide the marital status, according to nucleus or combined households. It is observed that married women living in nucleus family set-up and the elderly women, either in rural or urban setting are freer in their mobility. While explaining the age factor as an important determinant for women mobility, in a survey base research, Sathar and Kazi states:

Age represents the life-cycle position of women in their families. It is usually a good indicator of whether a woman has just joined a new household as a bride, or has established herself as the senior daughter-in-law or is the mother-in-law with married sons. Not surprisingly, age has a strong positive association with all of the autonomy indicators. Older women are much more mobile, have greater access to resources in the family, likely to be economically autonomous, and to make decisions both in the inside and outside spheres.

However, here it is important to distinguish that to some extent in Punjabi society, though old age factor empowers women with unrestraint movement but it also enable them to have their say in family affairs like “mate selection, marriage rituals and gift exchange, {but} the final say still remains with the male head of the family. Only an exceptionally old matriarch (i.e. widow) may be able to play dominant role comparable to that of a male head of the family.” As indicated in the above quote, other than age, the marital status of women and the family structure of their in-laws, where they live, also play significant role in defining their freedom of movement. I can further explain this aspect,

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530 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel no 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall), on September 16, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.


532 Abdur Rauf, op.cit., p. 407.
while observing the Punjabi society that those women, who do not reside in a joint family system, have more flexibility to leave their residence for number of reasons. As well, they are able to exercise their options because of absence of environmental pressures. From this argument on the modalities of mobility, I deduct that even after being reasonably educated with a stable job; the choices of Punjabi women are still limited on certain matters as derived from the mentioned university girl’s survey.

Figure 7.6: Relationship of Education with Mobility

Source: Survey through questionnaire by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

I observe from the results in figure 7.6 that education does play a role in granting more empowerment to the educated girls. However, this enhancement is not unconditional and has its own downside in certain cases. In case of mobility, overwhelmingly the educated girls feel (86%), that they have acquired more mobility outside their homes after attaining

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533 University of the Punjab, Lahore women University and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University, Lahore.)
a reasonable level of education. While gauging the views of educated girls, I cannot neglect the confined meaning of mobility in Punjabi society. It can be presumed that the meaning of mobility for these girls confine to their daily commute to their academic institutions, including special occasions arranged by either their institutions or friends. However, there is a view that when it comes to acquitting their freedom in this particular manner with men, then there is a marked difference, as only 37.6 percent believe that they are equal to men in mobility. About 69.5% of the interviewed girls believe that they are handicapped to move outside their homes, mainly because of societal pressures. Here, I would like to point out that the circumstances of uneducated women are far grimmer, as understandably they are not even aware of their basic entitlements. Thus, such women are entirely subject to the dictates of the male members of their families. About mobility, the Lahore College University students after admitting the patriarchal nature of society as one of the reasons behind restricted girl mobility in comparison with boy believed that “the parents are today insecure about their daughters, which prompt them to put restrictions on their mobility. This insecurity has increased because of media reporting on murder and rape cases.”

7.5: Conclusion:

While concluding the impact of education on various aspects of women lives, I can assess from the discussion with Punjab University female students that “education has played a vital role in opinion-building and has given them confidence to register their protest against violation of their rights, although, education has not been able to change the societal norms and values regarding women role in the society.” There is more likelihood of change attitudes in an educated girl if a mother is also educated, meaning that such changes does not occur in one generation but is a continuous process, taking its roots gradually in terms of solidifying a value system. The students of Lahore College University also endorse this change and believe that “education has enabled girls to

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534 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University,” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
535 Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel no 8(Hazrat Hafza Hall), on September 16, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
express their likes and dislikes, which are well-heard today by the parents—no matter, they accept it or not.” Another aspect to be noted is that the impact of education, as hinted elsewhere in the chapter is uneven, where one sector is more affected than the other.

Our study concludes that the educated Punjabi women are though comparatively free in her mobility and job than their uneducated fellows; however this freedom is considerably linked with economic needs of the respective families. This freedom is because of their monetary input in over-all household income, as it full-fill the needs of their families. It is acknowledged that without mobility, they will be unable to get either education or a job. This ‘granted freedom’ is curtailed significantly when it comes to their socialization even with close friends or visiting places devoid of monetary benefits. Nevertheless, the chances of their mobility increase, when a male member agrees to accompany them. On the contrary, a little change has been observed, when the legal and religious right of inheritance and marriage is demanded by these educated women. In spite of the limitations, which the educated women face, at least they have been sensitized about most of their rights, which they can exercise under favorable circumstances. Supporting these arguments, a civil society activist and Professor of History, Dr Syeda Arifa Zahra in an interview states that, “education cannot play a revolutionary role with quick results. In the Punjabi society, education provides women a sense of relative competitiveness, and it has sensitized them about their rights; which has decreased intimidation. Today they are able to at least express their concerns with confidence and identification of problems.”

I may conclude that education has improved their participation in the job market and they have been sensitized about health related issues but there are other arenas in which the educated women of today are restricted—like in the choice related matters of marriage, divorce and mobility. Such constrains have also been observed, when their due right of inheritance comes in question. The freedom in latter choices can have variations, when it

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536 Group interview held at “Lahore College Women University,” on October 10, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
537 Interview with Professor Dr. Syeda Arifa Zahra, Professor of History at Forman Christian College University Lahore; September 01, 2014. Translated from Urdu by Author
comes to the level of education. The proponents of traditional values in Punjabi society continue to exercise their pressure to curtail the accomplishments of all kinds of women, desiring their confinement of activities within their homes, notwithstanding their level of education. Apart from what little empowerment educated women have gained, their progress is restricted to mere awareness about gender related injustices, at individual level. This awareness could not be translated into a collective effort to exert pressure on the forces of orthodoxy, by representing themselves, as an exponent of shared values. If accomplished, that could have helped to effectively challenge and modify the patriarchal socio-cultural mind-set.
Chapter 8: Impact of Political Process on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

After assessing the impact of education on socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women in previous chapter, here I would explore the impact of political process, in defining the status of Punjabi female population, with a recognition that increased literacy is a dominant factor to ensure participation of gender in political process. Some scholars regard that there is a direct connection between these two variables, while the others believe that they have indirect causal relationship. While supporting the direct linkage between education and political process, renowned scholars like Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry Brady are of the view that education develops a civic sense among the citizens to a degree that they are enabled to effectively participate in politics. 538 The causal relationship between education and political participation is endorsed by scholars like Cindy D. Kam and Carl L. Palmer, who believe that there is a strong linkage between political participation and education. They further explain that education becomes an instrument, causing a political action. These authors consider that higher education by itself does not alone propel political participation but rather it acts as a vehicle to inculcate experiences and influences during childhood.539 No matter what the level of education might be to inculcate inclinations towards political participation; the most noteworthy narrative is that these two have strong bearing on each other and they together could bring most viable results. The chapter would exclusively evaluate the political participation, representation and mobilization of Punjabi women in the political process, which can be considered as one of the factor, providing an opportunity to safeguard their rights, in legislative bodies by enabling them to highlight their issues.

A political system operates in a mix of structures that are prevalent in a society that is equally relevant for Punjab. These can be visualized “in terms of prevailing social and class structure, social and political mobility, ethnic and religious composition, income distribution, literacy and education, generational differences, urban-rural distribution, and a great variety of other important categories.” However, the existence of these features alone cannot determine the successful functioning of a political system. Roy C. Macridis draws certain criteria for a “functional Political System” and believes:

A political system should provide men with opportunities for employment and economic security as well as for political participation. This means that the system should provide for education and freedom in the widest possible sense of the word—freedom of association and political action. Above all, men must be treated by the government on a footing of equality. This means that they should not be differentiated on any basis other than ability and achievement; it also means that no handicaps should be placed for any reason whatsoever upon the potentiality of a man’s development.

A political Process is an important gauge to measure political system in any society, referring to participation, electioneering, processions and representation in the elected bodies and correspondingly their input in law-making process. Political Scientists have different observations regarding a political process. According to G.K. Roberts, political process is a struggle for political power through elections which further incorporate legislation and implementation of political policies and for this purpose, proper mechanism ranging from structures to objectives is required. However, Macridis defines political process as an outcome of a connection between political institutions and their performances. I can derive from the writings of the above social scientists that a political process is based on comprehensive procedures, involving following elements. First is election, which on one side determines the political participation of masses through their power of votes, while on the other side, it gauges the strength of different

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political parties, with variant agendas and objectives, which are represented by candidates through their campaigning. Second, is the structure and functions of legislature and executive, formed in the wake of elections and third are the courts, which not only ratify the legitimacy of electoral process but also determine the proper functioning of different state organs as defined by the constitution. The fourth can be the public opinion represented by civil society. In case of Punjabi society, I will be taking into account the above mentioned elements and relational mechanism as pointed out by the writers. I accept the definition of political process by David Easton, as it is relevant to our focus of research, when he believes that the continued social interaction between governmental and non-governmental groups define a political process.\textsuperscript{544} When I expand this definition in the context of Punjabi society, I recognize that the essentials of political process are political parties, their manifestos and electoral campaigns and its consequences meaning the formation of government institutions like legislature and executive. However, I cannot over-look the fact that the success of political process is not determined merely by the existence of these mentioned essentials but it is defined through its capacity to deliver. Keeping in view the definition of political process, under this heading I will focus on the participation of Pakistani/Punjabi women in the political process through various ways and its corresponding impact on their placement in socio-cultural transformation.

From 1947 to 1970, the political process in Pakistan was operated through immature political institutions, absence of a direct general election and military interventions. Thus, “Pakistan’s abject failure to institute even a formal democracy with regular elections at the national and provincial levels provides the obverse side of the British colonial legacy to the subcontinent. It took no less than twenty-four years to hold the first general election on the basis of universal adult franchise in Pakistan.”\textsuperscript{545} During this time period, three assemblies were dissolved (1954, 1955 and 1969); which further aggravated the country’s under-developed political process, thus hampering growth of a participatory


political culture. The most serious effectees of this situtaion were women, as since independence their political participation was confined to few urbanized educated elite women. These qualified upper class women like Jahan Ara Shahnawaz from Punjab and Begum Shaista Ikramullah from Bengal, were selected to represent women in legislative assemblies. These women despite of facing various handicaps in legislative assemblies like insignificant numerical strength of women, prevailed patriarchal culture and entrenched orthodoxy; raised women voice with the support of civil society and women right groups. Thus as discussed in Chapter 4 in detail, these women members managed to get the Shariah Bill 1948 and MFLO 1961 passed, which safeguarded the social and economic rights of women to a certain extent. Apart from this legislation, during the process of making of 1956 constitution, they advocated for the reservation of 10 percent seats for women in National and Provincial legislatures, for next two elections. Their contention was not accepted as only 3% of the quota for women seats were reserved for ten years. Whereas, in 1962 constitution, 6 seats in National Assembly and 5 seats each in Provincial Assemblies were reserved for women. The women representation in the formative phase of Pakistan’s legislative history was insignificant and was not more than a symbolic formality.

The impact of mentioned women related legislative measures and reserved seats in both constitutions was inconsequential for their social, economic and political uplift. Although, there were benefits from social and economic safeguards as ensured by the laws, but they could not be effectively implemented, as the middle and low class uneducated women were not even aware of their basic rights. Therefore, a larger female section remained alien to whatever little protection and facilities were provided through pro-women legislations. This was further compounded by certain societal realities as hinted above. Being uneducated and semi-educated, the women in general were unable to comprehend the legal intricacies and procedures related to marriage, divorce and property. One reason of their alienation remains the patriarchal nature of society, which is steadfast to maintain a status quo and is hostile towards women participation in procedural legalities, regarding personal matters and prefer male members of a family to handle these issues on their behalf. The second reason of their neglect towards legislative and constitutional safeguards was the absence of an extensive print and electronic media at
that time, due to which even urbanized female population, were not exposed to the developments of relevant laws.

Similarly, on political front, female population could participate in a limited manner, due to various reasons. First during this phase, over-all weak political institutions, undefined political system and fragile political structures as hinted above, provided even upper and middle class women a little chance to raise voice through political participation. Thus, only women from established political families could manage to become members of the legislative assemblies, and that also on reserved seats. Second, during this time-period the women had neither the knack, neither were they encouraged to be a political activist. The main political party Pakistan Muslim league and Jamaat-i-Islami formed had sufficient women members. Thus the absence of political platform through the women wings of political parties discouraged women from politics. I can perceive is that due to the other compelling issues, not much attention could be paid for the uplift of women and consequently they were not encouraged to take part in the political process. Third, the strong opposition of religious and political orthodoxy also discouraged women political participation. This was demonstrated during legislative discussions, reflecting that women political empowerment would remain a challenge. These conservative elements visualize women's role confined in four walls of their residence, where their responsibility is rearing and bearing of their families. If at all women had to work outside their home, the orthodoxy believe that it should be only for the girls schools and hospitals. It is obvious that unless a political process has a wider representation from the female population, including the lower middle and upper class, the progress can not be made towards the betterment and activation of the half of the society.

Two main political parties, Pakistan Peoples Party under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and her daughter, Benazir Bhutto (1970-1977: 1988-1990:1993-1996: 2008-2012) and Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993:1997-1999), formed democratic governments. It was expected from these two major political parties that more political participation would take place, encouraging the women population to participate in large numbers. It was also expected that the maturity in democratic process would encourage women to take part in the elections on their own, rather than relying on the reserved seats,
in the national and provincial legislatures. There were more expectations from Peoples Party government because it was led by women leader. Enough opportunities and chances could have been provided by her government to mobilize the female population in various kinds of political participation, making them more empowered. To understand the impact of political process in the uplift of Pakistani/Punajbi women, I need to examine the role of these two major political parties, especially that aspect which deals with various measures and acts taken to encourage women political Participation, at various levels. For the purposes of clarity, I have divided the forthcoming portion in two segments. First would examine the role of Peoples Party in the realm of women political mobilization and participation, while the second would attempt to investigate the role of Nawaz led PML, regarding the women political participation.

8.1: Pakistan Peoples Party and Women Participation

In 1970, the country witnessed its first free general elections, on the basis of adult franchise, providing a chance to the newly established liberal Pakistan Peoples Party, to contest elections. In these elections, a new trend was established in Pakistani politics, where ideology and issues took preference over caste and regionalism. In this milieu, the female population of Punjab expected that they would get more space as Bhutto’s party promised new horizons to the underprivileged classes, including women. For the first time in Pakistan’s history, a political party targeted women, considering them a part of underprivileged and oppressed segment of society, recognizing their issues, with a promise in their manifesto to redress their concerns. Secondly, the involvement of huge number of female population in electoral process was due to an overwhelming turnout rate, in which women were not left behind. This particular electoral process set a precedent that women are capable to exercise their independent right of vote, though their selection of a candidate was influenced by the elder male member of a family. However, the very fact that women actively participated reflected a first step towards their increased political involvement.
The women electorates of Punjab, irrespective of class were mobilized in large number during these elections, by the charismatic leadership of Z.A Bhutto. A noted people Party member from Lahore, Begum Nasim Jahan enthusiastically motivated the Punjabi women to take part in the political process by coming out in large number for casting votes for People Party. Eventually, PPP formed a Women’s Wing for the motivation and mobilization of the women population, taking part in local, provincial and national levels of the electoral system. Khawer Mumtaz explains the women politics of 1970s as:

The dramatic change came during the 1970 elections with the widespread institutionalization of women’s inclusion within political parties through the growth of women’s wing of political parties. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML) has a long history of a women’s wing, the PPP continued with this culture, and by the mid 70s the Jamiat-i-Ulema Pakistan (JUP) and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) had also created women’s wings. With successive elections these were consolidated and played a significant role in bringing out female voters, particularly in the urban areas. The JI, whose women activists previously concentrated on educational institutions became increasingly visible in electoral politics.\textsuperscript{546}

I do agree with an analysis of Mumtaz about increased women political participation as voters from 1970, however their representation in national and provincial legislatures could not be increased even after repeated demands by the women interest groups. The women wings of political parties were confined to encourage women voters and once the election of 1970 was over, there is no evidence that these wings played any role for the introduction of women related laws or even to put pressure on leadership to advocate women friendly policies.

Professor Dushka H. Saiyid, a historian of Pakistan’s leading university, recognizes that these elections were able to politically mobilize female population. She goes on to

explain that “When the elections of 1970 took place, a large percentage of women came out to vote. They had become heavily involved with the political parties…. Women in large numbers manned the polling booths. PPP had a special appeal for women, for the manifesto of the party had specially dealt with the issues affecting them. Women voted overwhelmingly for the PPP, sometimes defying their husbands to do so.” One of the major reasons of enthusiastic involvement of female in these elections can be attributed to the liberal socialist thinking of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto towards the betterment of oppressed sections of the society. Professor Masooda Bano, acknowledges that Bhutto “accommodated women in grassroots politics as well as in senior leadership roles, gave them constitutional guarantees including reserved seats in the local government bodies (district government), and appointed women to such key positions as provincial governors, university vice-chancellor, and deputy speaker of the National Assembly.” I might not agree with Bano’s generalistic views because women representation in legislative bodies was much below than their due share and the key position women could not become a catalyst for the general improvement of a common Punjabi women. Nonetheless, I do recognize that women at key positions serve as role models and provide an inspiration for those girls, who are desirous of playing a key role in the society. This low representation of women in national legislature was despite of the fact that the province has high “density population, greater number of towns dispersed industrialization and greater facilities, (especially educational), women’s participation has always been easier. Lahore, which was an important centre for the Pakistan Movement understandably, produced the first batch of female politicians.

Nevertheless, this first group of women politicians was insignificant and consisted of only those, who were from elite class with a solid political background. Despite of marginal women representation in the Constitution Committee (3 were women out of 25

549 The detailed result of women representation in discussed in Chapter 4.
members)\textsuperscript{551} and later in National and Provincial legislatures, nonetheless despite of their small number, these women were noticed because of eager participation for various aspects of women rights. Being a part of constitution making process, they advocated for women reserved seats in National Assembly and Senate, mode of their election and women representation in CII. They also raised the legitimacy of a female becoming the head of state. There were only 10 reserved seats for women (for the period of ten years) in National and Provincial Assemblies and despite of advocacy by women members, Nasim Jahan, Shireen Wahab and Ashraf Abbasi, no seat was reserved for women in the Senate. During this time period, an amendment was moved by Maulana Abdul Haq of Jamiatul Ulama-i-Islam regarding the eligibility of the head of the state, which according to him could only be a Muslim male. This amendment was opposed by a leading woman member of Pakistan Peoples party, Begum Ashraf Abbasi, along with other members. Thus, the amendment proposed by orthodoxy was rejected. Apart from “safeguarding” the woman right to be a head of the state, Begum Abbasi served as Deputy Speaker of National Assembly twice (1973-77; 1988-90). Sharing her sentiments as an official of the assembly, Begum Abbasi writes in her auto-biography, “being a Deputy Speaker, my responsibility was to maintain the rules and regulations of the house with impartiality … I am not exaggerating but whenever I performed my function as a Deputy Speaker, after the session many members endorsed that I have the best capability to keep the house in order.”\textsuperscript{552} Apart from this, Begum Abbasi also shared her contribution in mobilizing people of Punjab in 1977 elections, on the direction of the Prime Minister. According to her, she visited various cities and towns of Punjab, including Multan, Lahore and Rawalpindi.\textsuperscript{553}

During this time-period, the demand of women members for a female representation in CII was also accepted. Till 1977, women parliamentarians served in various committees, actively participating in deliberations through resolutions, protest notes, privilege and adjournment motions. Their participation revolved around four basic concerns. First, they

\textsuperscript{551}The name of three women are; Ashraf Khatoon Abbasi, Nasim Jahan and Jennifer Jahnazeb Qazi Musa. 

\textsuperscript{553} Ibid., p. 105. Translated by the author.
were against the repeal of MFLO, which was still not accepted by the orthodoxy and they made attempts to repeal this women friendly law by making a number of arguments. In this regard, they moved a repealed bill on the floor of the house that was vehemently opposed by the women members of the National Assembly. The arguments of both sides revolved around the issue of marriage and divorce, especially restriction on the number of wives and for those Islamic injunctions was quoted. After heated discussions and various proposals, the repealed bill and its amendments could not pass in the Assembly. Second issue was about the Dowry law. In the Punjabi as well as Pakistani society, the custom of dowry and expenditure of marriage ceremonies had become a problem for the families with low income but because of the social pressure and false prestige in a number of cases, they even took loans for this purpose, which they found difficult to repay. In order to remove this hardship, in 1975, "Dowry and Bridal Restriction Bill" was moved by religious affairs Minister, restricting the amount of dowry and the wedding expenses. The women members supported the bill with great enthusiasm, arguing that a women place in a society should be judged by their role in the society and not on the amount of dowry. This bill was finally adopted in 1976 with a hope that it would uplift the position of women. Third was the 1972 administrative reforms, which provided opportunities to the women to take jobs of responsibility. Begum Rana Laiquat Ali Khan became the first woman governor of Sindh province, while Kaniz Fatima Yousaf became the Vice Chancellor of Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad. Various other women related issues were raised by the women members like equal pay for the women factory workers, which was addressed in 1972 Labour reforms by government. The fourth was the demand by the women members for a permanent women commission. Instead of a commission, in 1976, the National Assembly passed a resolution, which established Women’s Rights Committee. The Committee gave its first report to the Prime Minister in 1976, which attributed the attitudes and socio-cultural mind-set problems, instead of law for the problems and discriminations against working women. The report could not take a legal shape, nor was it implemented in any form. Although the women representation in the

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554 There were certain other women, who were appointed on important positions like Parliamentary secretary of health and social welfare division. In spite of these encouragements, the workforce of women could not increase it in terms of women members. The women members dismayed by this adverse women percentage of workforce, pleaded to invoke article 35 of the constitution.
From 1977 to 1988, the country was governed by a military dictator Zia-ul-Haq, who during his rule, through various legislative and executive measures introduced anti-women laws and policies. Apart from that, the political process received a serious setback, because of ban on political parties and activities. Although non-party elections were held in 1985 but the non-friendly women policies of Zia were over-whelmed in a way that I do not see any utility in assessing the modalities of these elections as well as the functional aspects of legislatures. After the demise of Zia-ul-Haq in 1988, general elections were conducted on party basis. In which, PPP under Benazir Bhutto was the front-runner. These elections received a massive support from the female section of the society, including women rights organizations, because of two reasons. The women population mobilized itself in a hope that through the elected representatives, they will be able to amend or repeal gender-biased laws. Consequently, a large number of female voters motivated themselves for the success of PPP, a liberal political party. They expected that being a female leader and a first time candidate for the position of Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto could bring drastic changes for women socio-economic and political empowerment.\footnote{This view is endorsed by the two time Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Begum Ashraf Abbasi who a write that because of her extra ordinary abilities, Benazir Bhutto proved that a woman Prime Minister is capable of full-filling the immense responsibility of the position of the Prime Minster; Begum Doctor Ashraf Abbasi, op.cit., p. 123.Translated by the author.}

Secondly, contrary to IJI, the PPP in its manifesto exclusively addressed the women issues with various dimensions under an exclusive chapter, where the party proclaimed an intention to repeal the Hudood laws. In these elections, PPP received 38.70% votes and won 94 out of 237 seats of National Assembly. Being the largest group in the assembly, it was able to form a coalition government. In the Punjab province, the PPP turnout to be the second largest party and therefore occupied the opposition benches. According to figure 8.1, on general seats, 38 women in total contested elections, including National and 4 Provincial Assemblies. Out of which, only 6 could succeed, which comes to a disappointing 15.7 % success rate. In National Assembly, 17 contested but only 4 won. In the Punjab Assembly elections, only 1 could
succeed, while 13 were in the race, with the success rate of 7.6%. Despite of the fact that a woman led PPP, it failed to grant tickets to reasonable women members of the party, realizing the women hostile socio-cultural landscape of the country. All those elected were from political elite families.

Figure 8.1: Women Participation in 1988 Elections


This low representation of women as depicted in figure 8.1 is attributed to the lapse of reserved seats, fixed in 1973 constitution, for a period of 10 years. A Professor of Political Science, St. Louis Mona Lena Krook explained the low women political representation and inability of democratic governments to restore seats. She states “as the final reserved seats policy expired following elections in 1988, therefore, women’s representation dropped from more than 10 percent to less than 1 percent, although all major parties pledged to restore and even extend the number of seats reserved for women. No democratic government succeeded in fulfilling this promise, however, and with rules,
practices, and norms working against the selection of female candidates, the proportion of women in parliament remained below 3 percent.”

Apart from representation, the other two dimensions of women political participation are through their voting behavior and mobilization, which depends on a number of factors. In order to comprehensively participate in the political process, the female population needs to be aware of the agendas and policies of contestant political parties. To bring this awareness, literacy is the first ladder, accompanied by media and civil society organizations. In 1988, because of the low percentage of female literacy in Punjab, as discussed in previous chapter, women were neither mobilized to highlight the women issues as participant, nor as voters. Thus, they could not build a pressure for any party to include women in their agenda with a definite program for their uplift. On the other side, political parties and their candidates realizing the construction of the Punjabi society understood that choices of women voters’ are influenced by *Baradari* system, where the decisions of family patriarch prevailed. Thus these candidates ignoring the women voters focused on male members of the community. In addition to this, one of the reasons of the lack of female political participation is the belief among male members of the family that although the women can vote but they are not competent and capable enough to occupy positions, where they have to take decisions and actively participate in the process. That is the reason that less number of women get elected on the general seats and rather rely heavily on the quotas, especially in those periods, in which it was invoked. In the mentioned patriarchal set-up, the women political representation is determined by their socio-economic status. This notion is reflected in the writing of C.L. Ridgeway, who states, “widely shared gender stereotypes are in effect the ‘genetic code’ of the gender system, since they constitute the cultural rules or schemas by which propel perceive and enact gender difference and inequality.”

While applying Ridgeway’s theory on Pakistan, Andrea Fleschenberg states, “we find a predominately feudal factor of status relief theory, as theorized by Ridgeway, which is typical for South and Southeast Asia: female mobility and agency correlate with social descent so that class trumps gender and

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opens up public agency options in a rather misogynist, segregated socio-political environment."  

In 1993 elections, as it is discussed in chapter 5 that Peoples Party made a coalition government in centre, whereas PML (N) formed its government in Punjab Assembly. A fact to be noted is that in National Assembly, on general seats, out of 41 women contestants, only 4 won. Whereas, in provincial assembly, out of 8 women contestants, only one was able to get through. A point to be noted is that a significant number of 41 women contested on general seats for the National Assembly, in comparison to only 17 in 1988 elections. A credit must be given to those women, who lost, keeping in view that they at least ventured to take part in adverse circumstances.

There are number of factors, which brought a change regarding the increased women contestants. The prominent amongst them was the realization in political parties that without targeting women, which comprises nearly half of the electorate, no party would be able to make a head way, enough to form a government. To bring this realization in political parties, the women rights groups played a pivotal role. Supporting these views, Shirkat Gah in its 1994 report mentions, “by 1993, the experience of women’s advocacy groups and political parties led both to recognize the value of greater cooperation and collaboration. After a decade of activism women’s advocacy groups (of which there are now many) are self-confident of being able to maintain their independence while establishing contacts and links with others”  

As far as political parties are concerned, from 1993 onward, the Islamic parties like Jammat-i-Islami, who previously had a staunch stance of female segregation from public domain, “promised to improve women’s conditions through such measures as jobs in the fields of health and education, mobile family courts and separate women’s universities.” This change though could not drastically increase the women representation in national and provincial legislatures.

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559 Faida Shaheed, Asma Zia and Sohail Warraich, op.cit, p. 23.

but it proved to be a one step forward towards their political participation, which has been always considered a male domain. However, the profiles of women contestants on general seats in legislative assemblies were those, who belonged to the upper strata of society, supported by prevalent and politically well-entrenched male members of the family, as already mentioned above. These women politicians are faulted by various social scientists, arguing that they do not represent the common, deprived women of the society and apparently their presence in politics is not a result of any conviction to serve the female population. One of Norwegian feminist researcher Torild Skard supported these views with reference of South Asia, including Pakistan:

The top women could be criticized because they did not stand out from their male rivals and follow a ‘different’ line of politics, or because they served the interests of the family more than the nation or women. After they were elected, the women rapidly developed into leaders in their own right and exercised power the way men did. All of the women proposed measures benefiting women, but they did not call themselves ‘feminists’, and women’s issues were rarely a chief concern.561

I partially agree with the allegation that these women parliamentarians were not the real representatives of common women but by keeping in mind the socio-economic structure of Punjabi society, I do acknowledge this fact that only an upper class women with a strong political background and support were in a position to win elections. Another reason responsible for a marginal representation and participation of women was inefficiency of women wings of various political parties; including the ruling party PPP as “they have been virtually reduced to mobilizational tools used for canvassing votes in elections. Political, economic and social issues are rarely discussed in these wings and members are singularly lacking in political knowledge as well as skills.”562 Thus these women wings could neither provide a platform to the female population, nor were they able to train them politically for any viable contribution towards the women cause.


From 1999 to 2008, once again the country was under a military dictator, General Pervaiz Musharaff for nine years. This time-period was significant in terms of women political empowerment from various ways. First was an over-all liberal outlook of Musharaff’s policies, especially on women related issues. Second was to increase the women presence in representative bodies, from national to local, which improved women political participation as discussed in Chapter 6. This enhanced women political participation was in terms of their representation, voting behaviors and mobilization; resulting in the presence of more women in legislative chambers, polling booths and in street protests. While writing about the facts attached with long awaited women representation in National and Provincial legislatures, Naeem Mirza and Wasim Wagha write in their Research report for Aurat Foundation:

Women’s representation in the 12th National Assembly was substantially increased after general elections 2002, due to two factors – firstly, because women got the 17% quota of seats in National and Provincial Assemblies and the Senate through the LFO, and secondly, and more significantly, because the highest-ever number of women contested and won elections 2002 on general seats. This took women’s overall legislative representation to almost 20% in 2002, from a meager 1.4% in the 11th National Assembly (1997-1999). 563

According to same writers, this political recognition of women through increased electorate played a vital role in the alteration of a particular ‘political culture’ in the country as well as in the Punjab province to some extent, demonstrating that the conventional impression that women are not equipped enough to take part in politics is not correct. 2002 elections, “demonstrated the growing acceptance of women’s role in politics, both among political parties and the public, as political parties gave more party tickets to women on general seats, and the electorate accorded them victory by casting more votes in their favour.” 564 The report points out that the women participation from 2002 to 2007, in four words, “pioneering, participation, persistence and purpose.” It


564 Ibid., p.18.
further stated that during this time period, “there have been altogether 3698 interventions by 58 women legislators during the five years…, if calculated on a per day average on the basis of actual days in each parliamentary year, shows that women parliamentarians have on an average made 10 interventions per day, i.e. they have made an overall 3698 interventions in five years of the National assembly, which actually met for 384 days.” The report reflects that if given a chance to the women political activists, they are motivated to take part in the political process, with more enthusiasm and effectiveness.

A similar level of contribution was observed by the women members of Punjab Assembly, which is well narrated by an active Member of Punjab Assembly, Humaira Awais Shahid in her autobiography. Apart from the efforts of women MPAs in raising women issues in Punjab Assembly, Shahid extensively discussed the resistance from within and outside assembly, towards such efforts by stating:

In the summer of 2003, as I juggled three legislative goals—an amendment to Pakistan’s penal code to outlaw and punish vani nationwide, a resolution criminalizing acid attacks, which had yet to put to a vote, and a bill to ban private moneylending—there were male colleagues who said to me, “why don’t you just enjoy the perks and privileges of your seat, like the other women do?” in other words: Sit pretty and leave the matter of legislating to them. I was incensed. Men in the House began referring to female MPAs as dessert. It had the effect of making even the most substantive among us feel that our presence was merely ornamental.

No matter, how much problems the women in legislative assemblies faced during that time but the fact remained that this period proved to be the first phase in Pakistan’s political history, in which without a distinction of class division, a substantial number of female were elected, along with increased women mobilization. An example can be taken from mobilization of a huge number of women in the movement for restoration of judiciary, which started after the dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry

in 2007, by General Pervaiz Musharaff. While supporting this, Sameera Aziz writes in *Saudi Gazette* that, “the Long March perhaps mobilized the country…, there were men, women, children and babies present which meant that overwhelming numbers from the local population”\(^{567}\) participated in this political mobilization. Likewise, the political participation of female population in terms of their voting behavior also significantly improved. Writing about this improved trend amongst Pakistani women towards electoral process, the UNDP report stated:

> There are several broad indicators to confirm the viewpoint that women’s interest in exercising their right of franchise, and even sometimes of voting for a candidate of their own choice is increasing by each election held, although no formal research findings subscribe to the notion, except for a few sample surveys of small groups of women voters conducted during the last decade. However, the increase in women’s literacy levels, their increased participation in local government elections 2000-01, and their strong showing as candidates in elections 2002, indicates some change in women’ voter behavior and preference in accordance to their own choice.\(^{568}\)

Following the same pattern of improvement, the 2008 elections showed increased women representation in all legislatures as discussed in Chapter 6. In these elections, the total vote turnout in terms of registered voters was 42.7%, whereas in Punjab, it was 46.52%. There is no data available with Election Commission, through which the voter turnout could be estimated in terms of gender. After these elections, PPPP formed government in centre, whereas in Punjab Assembly PML (N) constituted its government. While observing the proceedings of Punjab provincial assembly from 2007 to 2009, it can be noted that the women members have been taking part in the proceedings of the Assembly, raising vital as well as minor issues, concerning women as well as discussing common issues confronted by Punjabi population. This was done through asking questions, as well as taking part in the budgetary debates. For example on August 12, 2008, a woman member Amina Ulfat raised a question that there were no air-conditioning in the women ward of *Gulab Devi* Hospital Lahore, which received a

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positive response from the concerned minister, responding that this issue will be resolved soon.  

Similarly, the active participation of women parliamentarians in National Assembly during the fourth parliamentary year was measured by Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), from April 11, 2011 to February 14, 2012. According to the report “women constitute less than one-quarter (23%) of the National Assembly's current 334 members - 60 elected on reserved seats and 17 through popular vote. However, they were more active and effective voices of constituents than their male counterparts in the Lower House, which is headed by the country's first woman speaker”\textsuperscript{570}, as during only one year of their performance, they presented 3 Calling Attention Notices, 1196 Questions, 25 resolutions, 21 Private Members Bill, 259,20 Motions Under Rue and 252 Points of Order. Despite the presence and participation of these women legislators in National and Provincial Assemblies, they face serious problems not only in assemblies but also in their respective parties. The reflections of these women are mentioned in articles of Rubab Karrar, Sabina Qazi, Razeshhta Sethna and Maleeha Hamid Siddiqui, in a well-read monthly \textit{Herald}. Karrar express that female representatives “still have to fight to be heard and are often ignored in spite of their numbers in the legislature. But if there is one thing parliamentarians, activists and analysts agree on, it that women in the assemblies have shown that their legislative performance is at least on a par with-if not better than-that of their male colleagues, even if there is still a long way to go before women are accepted as politicians and administrators in their own right.”\textsuperscript{571} Sethna visualized the women representation with the perspective of reserved seats and concluded after interviewing women politicians that “the quota system for women may pose numerous challenges-women on reserved seats come in as wives and daughters of politicians, are unprepared to break into the political process, and must work twice as hard to strengthen


\textsuperscript{571}Rubab Karrar, “Increased Reservations”, The Herald, January 2011, p. 81.
their visibility—but it has opened up political space for them from the national level to district councils. Ironically it was during the tenure of a military government that women won this political space. But it is now, during a period of democracy, that they need to move towards campaigning for power through the people as well.”

Siddique after considering the views of women activists, politicians and party workers, mentioned that there are low percentages of those female political workers, who after making their mark at district level politics are able to sit in national and provincial legislatures. She further presented her assessment particularly about PPPP by stating:

Party activists, therefore, believe that PPP nominates well-connected women from the elite for the reserved seats that otherwise should be the sole prerogative of party workers who have sacrificed their family lives for the party’s cause. At least two such women in Lahore, Sajida Mir and Shahida Jabeen, are well known among the local media for struggling hard over many years to receive party nominations to become the members of the Punjab Assembly on reserved seats. Only one of them, Mir, has made it so far and she too has fallen out of favour with the party leadership for reportedly protesting, in the media, against a conspiracy to sideline the party workers and facilitate highly-connected women from important political families to entre the assemblies.

The above assessment is out rightly negated by PPPP MNA, Yasmin Rehman in a television program, when she was asked to comment on the lack of interest of elite members on reserved seats. It is alleged that these representatives do not understand nor are sensitive to the issues of the deprived low and middle class women. Responding, the women MNA said that “with an exception of few women members, the others are chosen by the party on the basis of their services. Thus they do not remain aloof from the issues of destitute women negating the perception that women reach in parliament directly without any political training.” She further desire that women quota in national and provincial legislatures should continue for another ten to fifteen years, so that women

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achieve acceptability along with economic empowerment and are able to take part in main-stream politics.\textsuperscript{575}

While concluding the women political participation during PPPP government in terms of their representation, voting pattern and mobilization, I need to keep in mind that it improved slowly. Nevertheless, this increase was not out of any conviction by the national and provincial governments but it was due to two basic reasons. First, the increased literacy, expansion of media and advocacy campaign of civil society, including women rights groups; which helped to sensitized governments on one side and female population on the other. The awareness created by these mentioned agents of change helped political parties to realize that women agenda should be included in manifestos along with their proper representation in legislative bodies. Similarly, these agents of change played prominent role in bringing realization among female population that their political participation through votes is their basic right. While writing about the trends of Asian women, including Pakistan, Professor Andrea Fleschenberg writes that “the majority of the women who rose to prominence under circumstances of political turmoil and/or transition presented themselves and campaigned as transitional agents with a political agenda for remodeling the respective political regime (or a significant policy), thus most of them can be classified as ‘transformational leaders’ in the early stage of their political career.”\textsuperscript{576} I partially agree with Fleschenberg’s analysis when I evaluate the policy dimension of Benazir Bhutto, who reached to the highest position; nevertheless, she could not become a ‘transformational leader’ as she was unable to bring any change in the socio-economic and political dimensions of women lives.

\textsuperscript{575}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{576}Andrea Fleschenberg, “Asia’s Women Politicians at the Top: Roaring Tigresses or Tame Kittens?,” in Women’s Political Participation and Representation in Asia: Obstacles and Challenges, ed., KazukiI Wanaga (Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2008), P.33.
8.2: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Women Participation

During the time-period of my research, Pakistan Muslim League came twice in power (1990-1993:1997-1999). In 1990 elections, the overall number of women contestants for National and Provincial Assemblies decreased, to 13 and 22 contestants respectively. In Punjab Assembly, out of 6 contestants, only 1 won. In comparison with these elections, the 1997 elections showed a little increase in the number of women contestants, which collectively remained 56 for National and Provincial Assemblies. In National Assembly, out of 34 contestants, 6 women could manage to win. In the Punjab Assembly, not a single woman could succeed, out of 9 contestants. As it has been mentioned earlier, the reserved seats for women in 1973 constitution lapsed after 10 years period and were not restored by any democratically elected government till 2002. Thus in 1990 and 1997 elections, there was no women on reserved seats. During these elections, “most political parties have women’s wings that mobilize women during elections. However, women’s wings appear to have little impact on a party’s interest in women as candidates... Parties like the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Tehrik-e-Istaqlal, which do not have women’s wings, are quicker to nominate women for general seats than are parties with women’s wings. Women’s representation in the upper echelons of political parties is very small.” Thus, women wings of various political parties remained insignificant in nominating women as candidates, during elections, though these wings remained a motivating force for women voters. Keeping in mind the results of 1990 and 1997 elections, a pattern can be determined that from 1970 to 2002, the policy dimension of PML (N), PPP and Islamic parties was not different from each other because of the pressure of women organizations. In their election campaigns, they made women issues as one of their main focus. Nevertheless, when it came to women political representation, these political parties only selected elite women with political family affiliations to allocate tickets. Particularly about 1997 elections, another factor to reckon was that for National and Provincial Assembly seats, women as independent candidates also contested. Thus, “this was the largest number of women to ever contest elections,

577Amrita Basu, op.cit., p. 97.
and the largest number to have been given tickets by political parties." This perception, particularly with reference to PML(N) is not endorsed by an MPA Punjab, Hina Pervaiz Butt, in a television program, when she was asked by the moderator to comment on the historic neglect of her party towards women political representation. Butt believes that now educated women are also promoted by the party leadership to participate in politics from grass-root level and are eagerly taking part in legislative proceedings. Nevertheless, when she was asked to identify such representative women from local politics, she pointed out towards those women, who either have political background or are from elite class. Disagreeing with Butt, another PML (Q) MPA Punjab, Amina Ulfat stated that PML (N) support for women political participation is symbolic in nature. Ulfat further believes that the role of PML (N) women members in legislative assemblies is merely to complete the quorum. This women representation by PML (N) is just to un-tag the gender discrimination from party, otherwise these women do not participate in the proceedings of assemblies. Apart from political representation, when the question of women political mobilization as voters and workers is concerned, I assess that in 1993 and 1997 elections, the over-all voter turn-out for National Assembly elections decreased with 40.28 and 35.42 percent respectively and likewise this trend was observed during Provincial Assemblies elections for the same years. In this deteriorated percentage, the number of women votes was further low, when compared to the male voters, which is supported by Sangh Mittra and Bachchan Kumar, who mentions in their writing:

One, based on male and female voter turnout dates collection from constituencies in Lahore (Punjab) during the 1993 elections indicated a 46.9 percent turnout of male voters, and a 40.4 percent turnout of female, a difference of almost 7 percent. Yet another, based on data collected from 3 villages of Hafizabad (Punjab) during the same election showed a male turnout of 56 percent against a female turnout of 49 percent, a difference of 8 percent; while data collected from 10 women’s urban polling stations in

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579 Assignment, op.cit.
580 Ibid.
Rawalpindi (Punjab) indicated a 43.86 percent voter turnout against an overall turnout of 46.2 percent.\footnote{581} Mittra and Kumar also discussed the hindrances responsible for the decline in women voting pattern. Apart from the delay in granting women their legal right to vote in some of the village of Punjab, another prominent hurdle was the prevalent influence of “families, tribes, clan and local and spiritual leaders”\footnote{582}, who not only barred women from polling stations but also controlled their choices to caste vote.

While concluding the role of two major political parties PPPP and PML(N) in transforming women status, I need to keep in mind that these two parties could neither play any significant role in increasing women voters, nor they could improve their representation in National and Provincial legislatures. Although, these parties showed their commitments to raise the issues confronted by female population in their election manifestos but their theoretical pledges could not manifests in any practical measure when they won and formed governments. Here, one factor need to be clear that whenever Peoples Party formed government at the federal level, Punjab was ruled by PML (N). Thus, apart from Peoples Party, the direct responsibility to empower Punjabi women by promoting their political participation and increasing representation was of PML (N). I may conclude here that apart from weak will of these two major political parties towards the problems of female population, there were other factors responsible for low political participation of Punjabi women like illiteracy, cultural restrictions, economic dependency, unsatisfactory electoral reforms and absence of political culture. As far as the female literacy is concern, “because of their low level of education and marketable skills, the majority of women become socially and economically dependent on men. They do not have an independent access to productive resources.”\footnote{583} This socio-economic dependence with an added factor of cultural gender biases, which only approves male political participation in various forms, further minimizes the prospects of female political participation.

\footnote{581}{“Women in Pakistan,” in Encyclopedia of Women in South Asia: Pakistan, eds., Sangh Mittra and Bachchan Kumar (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2004), p.234.}
\footnote{582}{Ibid.}
political involvement. Moreover, an overall absence of political culture in the society caused interrupted democracy, which hampered the way of mass political participation, including women. This argument is supported by women activists, Farzana Bari and Shahla Zia by stating that “the lack of a sufficiently developed political culture in the country has also negatively impacted women’s participation in political and public life. With several interruptions in the political processes in Pakistan since its inception, democratic norms and institutions still remain weak. Frequent elections in recent years have made some difference to the extent of getting more people informed about the electoral process, but without an accompanying democratization process, this has also led to increasing frustration and disillusionment.”

The example of increased women political participation especially through mobilization could be observe in the recent judicial movement 2007, where for the first time a large number of female population not just participated but also registered their protest with full vigor.

While expressing views on various dimensions of women political participation, the representatives of four major political parties, PML(N), PPPP, PTI and PML(Q), in an exclusive television program ‘Assignment’ supported women quota in national and provincial legislatures and identified economic dependency and social acceptability, as main hurdles. They also refuted criticism on women MPAs and MNAs that they are not true spoke persons of women problems and show lack of interest, whenever there is a debate in the house about such issues; they remain unresponsive in the house discussions. Nevertheless, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Punjab Information Secretary, Andleeb Abbas strongly believes that the women member’s in national and provincial legislatures require political training to make their participation visible in legislative bodies. Andleeb further states:

Many such women become a member of legislatures, who have no prior exposure to such bodies, thus they are unaware of the code of conduct and procedures needed to adopt. Due to the changing political culture of the country, now women from all classes and

584 Shahla Zia and Farzana Bari, op.cit., p. 102.
background are becoming part of country’s politics. To induct women from all sections of the society on reserved seats, my party has taken a decision to select only those women, who have the approval of the party members through elections. There are certain merits to this criteria. First women will get an opportunity to interact with the voters, enabling them to understand their concerns. Second, they would be trained for an effective role in decision making bodies. Third, they will reduce the gap between the representatives and the voter. I personally believe that women should have 50 percent representation in parliament, corresponding to their population proportion.

8.3: Conclusion

Although, in this chapter I have taken political process as a main focus of my investigation but I had to relate the relevance of education with it. Therefore, in the beginning of this chapter, I established a linkage between women education and political participation, though it is not a main focus of this chapter. Over the period of time, the improved female literacy and increased women participation in political process has reshaped the traditional perceptions about the role of Punjabi women, to some extent. However, this process of transformation remained slow with an imbalanced impact on an over-all condition of women, ranging from rural/urban divide to social classifications.

Apart from education, the women political participation at local, provincial and national level becomes relevant to transform the women status. In this chapter unlike a detailed analysis of women political participation at the national and provincial level; the local set-ups has not been discussed in the sub-section as the women representation before the establishment of Musharaff’s ‘devolution plane’ remained insignificant. Article 32 of 1973 constitution ensures that “the State shall encourage local Government institutions composed of elected representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation will be given to peasants, workers and women.” Despite of this constitutional requirement, the democratic governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir

585 Assignment,”op.cit.
586 Article 32 of the 1973 Constitution.
have been reluctant to establish the third tier of representative bodies, because of various reasons. Ironically, it was the dictatorial regimes of Ayub Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervaiz Musharaff, who established the local government set-up in all provinces, including Punjab, to fill a political vacuum, existed at the center, where either representative bodies did not existed or were tailor-made to full-fill the requirements of these dictators. However, as far women representation at local level is concerned, comparing with Ayub and Zia; Musharaff regime provided maximum representation to the women at this lower level with 33 % quota, under ‘Devolution of Power Plan’. Summing up the issue of women representation at local level, Shaban, Shan and Naeem write:

In Ayub era, the right of women representation was totally neglect in first local bodies elections, held in 1959 under the Basic Democracy Ordinance. Nevertheless in them following local government ordinance introduced by Zia-ul-Haque in 1979 special representation was given to women (i-e) two seats at UC and 10% for other tier under the Local Government Ordinance of Punjab,1979…. During the regime of Zulfikhar [sic] Ali Butto [sic] (1971-1977) and Benazir Butto [sic] (1988-1990), and (1994-1996), neither special seats were reserved for women nor local bodies elections were held. Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993) supported local government system by giving 10.4% representation to women and again Nawaz Sharif government (1997-1999) granted special representation to women in each province (i-e) 68.587

During Musharraf’s rule, when non-party local elections were held in 2001 and 2005588, “the unprecedented number of women elected to district, tehsil and union councils in these elections following the adoption of a 33 percent quota by government opened up not only an enormous political space but also a strategic opportunity for women to make a difference in setting and implementing the agenda of local governments. With the devolution process, this level of government is expected to have the most impact on

people's lives and offers the greatest hope for social change.\footnote{S o c o r r o L . R e y e s, “Quotas for Women for Legislative Seats at the Local Level in Pakistan”, Stockholm: International IDEA, 2002, P.3} I might not agree with the above assessment that the expectation of some significant social change would take place, changing the lives of women. However, it provided an opening for further opportunities for the women population of the Punjab. In the lowest rural unit, out of the total members of thirteen, women quota was 4 (including two representatives of the Peasants/workers). The women turnout in Punjab was 43.96 % as against 61.48% for the male.\footnote{W o m e n i n L o c a l G o v e r n m e n t, 2005 (Islamabad: Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, 2005), p.3.11.}

At union council level in rural Punjab, which is the lowest tier and even in the cities this quota was justifiable as, it is inconceivable that women on their own could be elected. Close relatives of notables of the area filled these seats. Most of the time, in the rural setting, it became difficult to nominate a woman. Even if succeeded, these women remained absent from the meetings, what to say of taking part in the deliberations. However, the exception being that women councilors in big cities like Lahore did participated in the deliberations of these bodies. Reyes in his research mentioned that being academically weak with no past experience of serving at this level, the elected women in local bodies elections faced numerous challenges. The increased women numbers in national, provincial and local level do not determine their effective representation and participation.\footnote{S o c o r r o L . R e y e s, op.cit.} A well-researched thesis on women participation at local level in Lahore district of Punjab, presents a different view from Reyes:

In 2005 local government elections in Punjab alone 44 women contested for the seats of Nazim and 13 women contested for the seats of Naib Nazim. The increase participation of women at these positions clearly indicates that women themselves and the community consider women to be capable of holding these positions. On a positive note one could also draw the conclusion that the Pakistani patriarchal society/structure is in a
transformation stage in which new leadership in the shape of women is emerging at the grassroots level.\textsuperscript{592}

I might not agree with the above researcher that there has been a considerable transformation in Pakistani patriarchal society/structure because of the induction of more women at the local government set-up. There is still a long way for the women to make themselves recognized as effective and productive members of the Punjabi society with recognition by the males that they are equal to them. Supporting this argument, Khattak concludes, “Pakistani women have been missing from the debate on decentralization in almost all contexts. They have only been included as appendages by being given a nominal quota in local government. For all practical purposes their presence is ineffective and hence reaffirms many peoples' belief that women should stay out of politics… The elements of class and patriarchal domination continue to oppress women. These practices of domination result in alienation and deresponsibilization.”\textsuperscript{593}

I can derived from this debate that increased women participation in local, national and provincial legislatures, cannot bear required results unless, it is not amplified by their political mobilization. The example can be cited from the ‘restoration of democracy movement’ during Musharraf’s rule, when women were increasingly mobilized. While commenting on this increased women numbers in the representative bodies after 2002 elections, Punjab PML(Q) MPA expressed that “in 2002 elections, first time women in a good number became member of parliament, which gave them confidence. Because of this, after 2008 elections, they also managed to be a part of legislative chambers. However to increase their political participation, political parties need to consider them as candidate (on general seats) along with the monetary help assurance as they are economically dependent on males and even they face difficulty to get their legal and religious share in inheritance.”\textsuperscript{594}

\textsuperscript{594} Ibid.
Concluding, I can say that political process has played an important role in reshaping women status in the Punjabi society. Nevertheless, this variable could not completely transform women placement, though it has managed to make a mark on the traditional mind-set. On other side, women are today better aware of their rights, making their presence felt on various forums, with a hope that their opinions would become instrumental for a better change.
Chapter 9: Impact of Media on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

In previous two chapters, I examined the role of education and political process as independent variables, in transforming the conditions of Punjabi women. Continuing on the same pattern, while taking another variable, in this chapter, I will extend our research to the impact of media in reshaping Punjabi women’s placement. This chapter is divided in three segments print, electronic and social media. The study would enable us to understand the status of Punjabi women, with an acknowledgment that these three types of media does play a role in highlighting the women issues. On one side, this study would enable us to understand the influence of media as an independent variable to transform the socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women, while on the other it would help us to understand the resistance from orthodoxy-both religious and secular.

By the time Musharraf took over in 1999, the world of information technology advanced to new heights. In a short span, the electronic media mushroomed, along with Internet technology. This expansion was so rapid that it was argued in certain circles that print media might lose its utility. Nevertheless, latter events proved that newspapers and magazines, though also began to have Internet editions, but they continued to have a considerable readership in the print form as well. Media when taken together; print, electronic and Internet related social-networking web sites, started to attract a large number of audience, including women. Pakistan’s largest province Punjab was affected by these developments, leading to an impression that this technological advancement can have a considerable effect on the women population, when it comes to not only understanding of their rights and status but also providing a forum of social connectivity. An Indian Professor of economics, Ambirajan endorses the co-relational impact of technology and globalization on mass-media development, in all societies and further believes that this progression has a deep impact on societal culture. He states that “the content of mass media-entertainment, news, educational programs, advertising and images of various kinds - have tremendous impact in both sustaining and weakening if
not destroying the fabric of social life. The more efficient the media is in communicating, the more effective it is in stabilising or destabilizing existing social, political, cultural, economic, legal, religious and moral arrangements.‖

595 The ideas promoted by Professor Ambirajan can be accepted with caveat when it comes to the developing societies like Punjab, where literacy rate is considerably low with a small educated middle class, who has no access to various instruments like social networking web-sites. In such societies, there is also a weak culture of public accountability, awareness about governmental measures and absence of various effective pressure groups, which could influence the law-makers as well as the executive branch of the government for certain policy projections. The newest of media that is the web-related information sharing is also not sufficient in place. Since these conditions are absent sufficiently in Punjabi society, therefore the media does not impart as much of a utility as mentioned by the author.

The growing significance of media is regarded as a fourth pillar of the state, along with legislature, executive and judiciary. However, before 2002, not only the expansion of media was absent, its broadcast was also monitored and permissioned by the state, especially during the military rules in Pakistan. Commenting on the control of media through various methods, an expert on media explains:

Direct or indirect government control (of) … mass media institutions cannot but be seen as extensions of the government bureaucracy and thereby lose their effectiveness as independent mirrors of society or as professional participants in the development efforts of the country. Government control over finances, licenses, newsprint, and some other benefits makes it next to impossible -for any of the media to reflect any other point of view except that which is either explicitly sanctioned by government or perceived to be "safe" or favorable in the government's view.596

The restrictions of governmental control does not mention specifically of social media as when the above commentary was written, the social media was not in the picture. I


presume that nearly same methods of control, though with different techniques are also now being applied on the social media. The difference is that since web-sites are related to technologically more complicated methods like proxies, therefore, it is not possible for a dictatorial government to completely black-out this latest means of mass-media.

Contrary to the dictatorship, during the democratic rule, the Punjabi society witnessed less of state interference and the media became more effective in its approach. While explaining, it is mentioned in the report of *Uks Center on Women and Media*, that “the rapid development of communication and infrastructure development in Pakistan during the last decade has provided the masses with access to a lot more information. In turn, media has an increased influence over the masses through which it is also to shape the ideas, values, behavior, and concepts of the general public…. Media (also) plays a very important role in shaping our concepts about male and female roles.”

In a survey conducted by Safdar Sial to understand the choices of people, acquiring information about human rights, from various sources like home, mosque, media and syllabus; he concludes that the most approached source of information remains media, which is 21%, in comparison to 10% from home, 3% from Mosque and 9% from School Syllabus. However, I should not forget that the abundance of information through media, might have some drawbacks, as pointed by a renowned Political Scientist, Lucian Pye, who states that “the tremendous volume of communications also means that single messages can easily be lost in the flood, and that the attention of a mass audience can be guaranteed only by repetition.” Thus, the mushroomed Pakistani media, by conveying all sorts of information in detail, with less repetitive contents tends to lose its effectiveness, resulting in dampening the real message, making the targets, unable to grasp a definite meaning.

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Despite of the fact that there was a considerable expansion of media of all kinds, I have to investigate in the proceeding pages that to what extent; this growth has transmitted the attitude of patriarchal Punjabi society towards female population, imparting a positive impact in reshaping their placement. Therefore, it is important to clarify that the impact of media is not only relevant for women but equally for men, with an understanding that, if an over-all change in attitudes has to takes place among the male population towards the women folk, only then a transformation in society for the benefit of the female population can be expected.

However, while assessing the impact of media on the women related Punjabi society; I need to keep in mind two important aspects; education as well as the rural/urban divide. In previous chapters, I have extensively discussed that the literate women, either living in rural or urban centers are more sensitized about their rights, and its corresponding effects on their position, inside and outside the family. Therefore, educated urban women in comparison to their illiterate rural fellows are expected to have more access and understanding about the women problems and awareness, presented by media. Thus the urbanites are better placed to comprehend the social challenges. Consequently, they not only become aware of resemblances but at times they are able to find solutions and in some cases become an advocate of the left behind females. Nevertheless, it should be registered that “mass media alone are never the causes of social change. There has been social change in which mass media were not used; and there are many instances in which despite the fact that mass media were used, social change did not occur.” Thus, media by itself cannot bring any significant change in the Punjabi society, unless it is accompanied, especially by factors like education and accessibility, supported by the state-sponsored efforts-at all stages, from legislation to implementation.

The media can be classified into three categories. First is print media, which consists of newspapers and magazines; second is electronic media, which comprises of radio and television; third is social media, which includes Internet related networking websites. According to the 2008 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) survey, in urban and

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rural centres of Pakistan, the public exposure to electronic media, included television and radio was 89/66 and 28/31 percentages, respectively. However, only 37 in urban and 18 percent in rural areas relied on newspapers, for information. The least accessed source of information remains the Internet with 8/1 percent respectively in urban and rural Pakistan. The main reason of this gap is lack of internet facility and low literacy rate in the rural areas, to be discussed in detail in proceeding pages. Consequently, the Punjabi women are least exposed to the Internet related information.

9.1: Print Media and Women

The print media, being an influencing factor as hinted above, consists of newspapers and magazines (daily, monthly, bi-weekly, weekly, fortnightly and quarterly), mostly in Urdu and English languages, reflecting societal thinking and updating its readers about various issues, including women. Urdu is widely understood and is the medium of instruction in the education system of Punjab province. Print-media is the oldest medium of information for masses, which might have lost its considerable readership with an advent of electronic media. However, among those, who can read, it still remains as an important source of information.

Among this category, the more direct, influenced and easily grasped are Urdu newspapers and magazines. Urdu is not only a national language of Pakistan but also has occupied itself as a second most used language in the province of Punjab. Writing about the impact and popularity of Urdu language amongst the Punjabi population and its receptiveness through print and electronic media, Professor, Rauf Parekh explains:

> In Pakistan, one feels, for most people Urdu has become second language, and in many cases even first language. In addition to being widely used by print and electronic media and, as a result, becoming Pakistan’s lingua franca, it has established a role at the social

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level, too. Though many upper-class Pakistani families use English as first language now, in many cases — especially in middle-class Punjabi families — Urdu is preferred over ‘mother tongue’. In fact, Urdu has become their first language and now they are the ‘native speakers’ of Urdu.

I might not fully agree with Parekh, regarding his views about English, as a first language. Although, educated families do tend to use English phrases and prefer to read English newspapers but it has not become a norm, as such. However, it is witnessed that in urbanized setting, the new generation of the upper and middle class and even to some extent the lower-middle class, school going youngsters, mostly communicate in Urdu, although at home, they speak Punjabi with the elders of their family. In rural Punjab, the situation is different as Punjabi is widely spoken by even the youngsters, inside and outside their homes. When it comes to reading, I agree with Professor Parekh, that Urdu remains the prime language. Punjabi is not generally taught, neither in the schools nor at the college level, but it is offered as an optional subject, at least till the Bachelor levels. Master and Ph.D programs in Punjabi language and literature are also offered by the universities of the province of the Punjab but all together it is unable to gain its position as a first reading language, in spite of the fact that Punjabi literature is considerably rich and has have a wide-spread attraction for centuries.

Because of less publication of Punjabi magazines and newspapers, the readership is insignificant. Therefore I will focus our attention towards the Urdu and English print media in Punjab. When compare to English publications, the Urdu newspapers and magazines are much more in number and so is their readership in the Punjab. According


603 The reason for ignoring the Punjabi language by ethnic Punjabis is that because of an erroneous impression attached with notion that it is a language of the less educated. This is due to the fact that Urdu has become lingua franca and is learned and spoken in the schools. An expert in linguistic, Abbas Zaidi states, “Quite apart from what others think, it is they, the Punjabis, who think that Punjabi is an "indecent" or "vulgar" language. Some of them say this is because of the Punjabi accent, the rude way individual words and expressions are uttered, or because Punjabi is the language of the illiterate and the uncouth; or because there are countless swear words and double entendres in Punjabi; or because Punjabi is just plain déclassé.” Quoted in Abbas Zaidi, “Linguistic Cleansing: The Sad Fate of Punjabi in Pakistan,” posted January 14, 2013, http://www.gowanusbooks.com/punjabi.htm

604 Only one Punjabi daily newspaper is published from Lahore, namely, “Khabran”. While only two quarterly magazine are published from Lahore, namely, “Saanjh” and “Punjabi”. Punjab University Punjabi department published biannual research magazine, “Khoj”. For more information see Appendix I.
to a Survey carried out by *Uks-A Research, Source and Publication Centre on Women and Media*, on Urdu and English language newspapers, it was reported that Urdu women related news far exceeded that of English print-media news from September 2000 to August 2001. In this context, the women related Urdu newspapers reporting outsourced the English print-media by 69.1 to 30.9 percent, in a selected sample of 14 newspapers. Although this report cover these trends for nearly one year but it reflects a general trend for all times. Here, it is important to mention that the women related news, editorials, articles and reports, published in English, goes un-noticed by the mainstream orthodoxy, as they are less conversant with this language. Thus, they remain ignorant from the societal changes, demanding equal status of women in socio-economic spheres.

The main source of information and analysis for this orthodox and conservative section of society however remains Urdu newspapers, which highlights the women related news and analysis with more frequency. Through this accessibility, the orthodoxy though becomes aware of women societal changes and the demands of women for better placement in changing circumstances. Nevertheless, they opt to clinch with the traditional understanding and cultural perceptions about the dominant role of male over the female, thus are little influenced by the opinion makers of Urdu media.

There are at least two factors attached with the inclination for newspaper readership; first is the literacy level of Punjab which determines the number of readers. As discussed in detail in chapter 7, referring to the *Punjab Development Statistic Report*, for the year 2011-12, the male and female literacy percentage is 77.9/67.5 in urban and 64.3/42.3 in rural areas. This difference in literacy both in gender and setting, determines the readership patterns. Thus, illiteracy decreases the women readership in the rural areas, when it comes to newspapers and magazines. On their part, the newspapers and

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607 During the one week, the percentage of male to read newspapers in urban and rural set-up is 53 and 21, while the percentage of female readership in the same setting is 30 and 5 percent, respectively. There is a huge gap between the readership, not only in terms of gender but also in terms of their setting. “Pakistan: The Urban-Rural Gender Divide and Newspaper Readership”; quoted in “Pakistan: Urban-Rural General Media Use,” op. cit.
magazines do provide news and highlight the women related issues in editorials, articles and special reports, targeting them through various dimensions. Apart from literacy, the readership pattern is also determined by the lack of resources to buy this media on regular basis. According to 2008 BBC survey, the percentage of newspaper readership among high, middle and low income population of Punjab was 37, 19 and 9, respectively.\(^6\) This glaring difference determines that the lowest newspaper readers are the low-income Punjabi rural women. Apart from the economic and literacy factor, I can assert that the rural middle and low class women are further deprived of newspaper reading because their division of work does not allow them to enjoy the ‘luxury’ of spending spare time for reading. They are occupied with cumbersome household chores, including bringing up their children. Hence, they are left with little or no time at their disposal to glance at the newspapers and magazines, even if available. In other words, these compulsions gradually becomes a cultural pattern, where women do not acquire a desire or inclination to read the print-media, even though they might be sufficiently educated to understand the issues raised in this medium. The low readership cannot become instrument enough to change the attitudes of women, including awareness of their rights on a societal landscape, as it cannot generate a sufficient force to change the over-all cultural attitude. Supporting this contention in a theoretical perspective, Abdul Matin writes that a “collective behavior as a force of change is given importance by social theory. This includes the role of social movement, in which a large number of people come together as part of an organized effort to bring about, or resist, a social change.”\(^7\) Deriving from this theory, coming back to the role of print media, I perceive that the meaningful societal changes need considerable push, in order to gain sufficient momentum, towards a definite direction in which print media can play an important role, if utilized widely.

As said earlier, that the usage of English or Urdu language depends on the level of education. Educated urban class uses English, while Urdu is understood and utilized by less educated. It is presumed that there is an impact of newspaper material on the reader

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\(^6\) Ibid.

with different magnitude. The more educated has enhanced ability to grasp and analyse the issues raised in the print media and is also able to share and advocate these ideas elsewhere. The less-educated reader has a different effect, where there is a possibility that such kind of reader might miss-interpret the message, according to his/her own convictions and mind-set, inculcated by his family and social environment. The feature of having a reasonable academic background is recognized by Shuja Nawaz, who states that the “lack of literacy has probably been a major stumbling block in the use of the written word.”

However, I should not ignore the fact that newspapers and magazines provide a reasonable space to women related issues through various ways. As a routine, they highlight women abuse cases in news section. Through, this, they not only sensitize female population but also build a pressure on state machinery, to under-take appropriate measures for immediate remedies. Second, the newspapers and magazine have special sections and pages reserved for women related articles and reports, which apart from providing information to its reader, also suggest solutions for the discussed problems. However, another view about the reporting of print media regarding women problems is that sometimes, it exceeds the ethical and moral boundaries to highlight these issues, which instead of suggesting a solution, further worsen the situation for women victims. Taking notice of such omission, the government of Pakistan had to issue certain directions known as the Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance 2002, under which the Press Council of Pakistan formulated a 17 points ethical code of conduct for newspapers and journalists. According to this code, the press industry is entitled to present the news within the parameters of ‘morality’, ‘fairness’, ‘accuracy’, ‘gender equality’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘un-biasness’. It further discourages the press to intrude in the personal matters of the people and categorically directs them that “in the cases of sexual offences and heinous crimes against children, juveniles and women, names and

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identifying photographs shall not be published.\textsuperscript{611} Contrary to this, the print media at times, while publishing the reports and news on women abuse set aside these mentioned principals and the most effected of such publications are women victims. The already mentioned survey of 14 Urdu and English newspapers, endorses the view that media coverage of women related issues is also ‘non-supportive’ at time. This survey concluded that the ‘supportive’ treatment of media coverage towards women related issues were 21,395; whereas the ‘non-supportive’ coverage of women related issues remained low at 4,908.\textsuperscript{612}

There can be two dimensions of this viewpoint. One is the traditional socio-cultural set-up, which though generally sympathize women victims as highlighted by newspapers, but when an opportunity comes for these abused women to be part of the mainstream, there is a considerable socio-cultural resistance against such induction. Second, is the competitive nature of the print media for better ratings, for which sometimes the compromises are made, crossing the ethical boundaries. There is a tendency that report of an incident is given a sensational look, which might not have any relevance with reality. Thus, instead of helping women victims to get out of dire circumstances, the print-media at times become a hurdle for them. Another opinion about the women news in newspaper is the absence of follow-up by print-media, which though highlight the crimes, but hardly provide any incentive to find out a solution, so that such acts are discouraged in future. In such a situation, though the society receives information and the women victims get heard but such reporting is confined to mere information. Further, the reporting lacks the ability to reach a logical conclusion by providing solutions to the administrator as well as the society; it tends to solidify the stereotypes, which are entrenched deep inside the society, as they are only addressing the symptoms.


\textsuperscript{612}“A National Study on Monitoring and Sensitisation of the Print Media on the Portrayal of Women-Changing Images”, \textit{Uks-A Research, Resources and Publication Centre on Women and Media}, op.cit.; Supportive treatment refers to balanced, unbiased and factual coverage of women-related news. Non-supportive treatment indicates biased reporting and analysis, the use of stereotypical images, analysis in which women are not portrayed as equal citizens and their genuine issues are miss-reported or ignored.
The above discussion on the role of print-media reveals that newspapers and magazines play subsequent role in highlighting women issues through various ways, thus it has become an important medium of information for society at large and for women particularly. Through, the magazines and newspapers, women are even better aware of the rights enjoyed by other societies, which enables them to compare their issues with the women of different societies. Print media is also a better medium of updating the knowledge of women about fashion and latest trends in attire, which help them to groom themselves in various ways. However, as far as its pressure to bring any change in the traditional attitudes of society towards women is concern, I hardly observe any significant transformation.

I talked about the problems of the media, especially its miss-representation of women abuse cases. That becomes another hindrance in the way of an effective impact of the print media to have significant effect; to make dents in the orthodox section of the society and to mobilize women in such a manner that they are able to exert a forceful pressure for the preservation of their rights. The downside of print media is that it also provides space to those writers, who represent orthodoxy, supporting the status quo and are against the women related transformation. At times, they provide forceful arguments in support of their own convictions, which can confuse the semi-educated women population.

**9.2: Electronic Media and Women**

I have hinted above that the development of information technology and globalization has played a significant role in the mushrooming of electronic media in overall Pakistan, including Punjab province. The expansion has transformed this medium of information, more swift, responsive and effective. Consequently, electronic media, consisting of radio and television also provides women related news, along with different programs like dramas, films, documentaries and talk shows. These various programs on one side highlight the challenges faced by women, along with remedies in some cases. On the other side, some programs and T.V channels give considerable time to the representatives of the orthodoxy, who vision the on-going women progression with a bias. While
explaining the role of electronic media in reinforcing the conventional thinking, an expert in language and education writes:

In contemporary technologically advanced communication systems, the process of stereotyping has gained tremendous speed and impact. The media, through its news, plays, commercials, discussion programmes, movie, and songs, is reinforcing the stereotypes by legitimizing them and amplifying their impact. This impact is so overwhelming that even the marginalized groups internalize the notions constructed against them by the dominant groups.⁶¹³

Though, I might not fully agree with Dr. Siddiqui’s assessment about the entire reinforcement of electronic media to only ‘stereotypes’ in society but rather I believe that it has the capacity to re-shape opinions because of its wider canvas than the print-media. There are three main factors responsible for this opinion making. First, is that the electronic media has a large number of audience in rural/urban Punjab, unlike the readership of print-media, because the literacy factor becomes less relevant in this case. According to 2008 BBC survey, the usage of television and radio in rural centers is 66/31, whereas in urban is 89/28 percent, respectively. This percentage is much higher, when I compare it with the newspaper readers in rural/urban areas, which is only 18/37 percent, respectively.⁶¹⁴ It determines that the electronic media is more accessible in all settings. This accessibility has become easier, since the growth of cheaper cable and satellite facilities. Second, is the audio-visual nature of electronic media, which because of being enriched in facial and vocal expressions retain the message for an extended period, in the minds of its listeners and viewers. This increased usage of electronic media has not only made it diverse but also responsive. Therefore, despite of a presence of orthodoxy projection, media is able to play a role of a ‘modernizing agent’ particularly, when it comes to women issues in Pakistani/Punjabi society. In proceeding pages, I would investigate the impact and gravity of radio and television in transforming the role of Punjabi women. It is relevant to compare the impact of mass-media on Indian women, as it would enable us to understand further a situation in almost similar societal

⁶¹⁴“Pakistan: Urban-Rural General Media Use,” op.cit.
composition, at least in secular matters. In the Indian setting, the mass media “have made very little contribution in informing and preparing society about women’s role in national development. There is a very limited reach of the mass media among women and girls particularly in rural areas. Whatever little exposure they have, it is in the form of entertainment of film-based programmes. The educational and information content is minimal.”\(^{615}\) The Pakistani media likewise presents the same quality and frequency of women related programs but here the difference is that the dramas and documentaries based on women related issues have a large audience among women population of Punjab.\(^{616}\) From a survey conducted from the graduate students (representing middle and upper class mixed population) of a well-known university in Lahore, it is derived that out of the sample of 192, 63.5% watch women related T.V programmes, while 65% believe that these programs are effective to change the patriarchal mindset.\(^{617}\) Appendix J provides the list of questionnaire. This signifies that apart from female population, the educated males are also interested to acquire information about the issues of women.

Radio in Pakistan has remained a principal source of information till 1960s, because of being the first electronic medium to provide information to a wide-range of the country. With the introduction of television in 1964, the listeners of radio might have shifted towards television in big cities like Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. According to the Women’s Division Government of Pakistan Report of 1982, there were eleven radio stations at that time, which broadcasted 30 minutes weekly women related programs, out of 200 hours transmission in a day.\(^{618}\) At that time, Pakistan television, because of its limited transmission frequency, along with expensive TV sets in comparison with radio, could not become the wide-spread source of information. However, with the development of technology through introduction of satellite and mass-production of television sets, this


\(^{616}\) Because of advanced Indian film industry, where scores of films are released every month in different languages. The Indian women unlike their Pakistani counterparts have an alternative source of entertainment and utilize their spare time. Very few Indian films are based on real social issues and rather glamorized for purely entertainment purposes.

\(^{617}\) A survey held amongst the graduate students with mixed population of Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore, on September 20, 2014.

medium of information and entertainment, enabled to improve its number of audience. With the mushroomed growth of private television channels around 2002, which started providing multifarious information with sound analysis and commentaries, thus the viewership multiplied. According to 2008 BBC Pakistan survey, the percentage of rural/urban women access to radio broadcast was 55/62, while television viewer-ship grew to 79/96 in same category.\footnote{BBC Pakistan survey 2008”, quoted in “In Pakistan Social and Institutional Inhibitors Lead to ICT Gender Divide,” posted January 28, 2014, http://www.audiencescapes.org/country-profiles-pakistan-communication-habits-demographic-groups-gender-media-divide-women-men-habits-access-use; When we compare women listeners with the male population, in urban/rural divide, there is not much difference in both situations (72/70 percent), however, there is no difference when it comes to viewership in urban centres, while in rural centre, and there is a slight gap (96/87 percent).} Although, this survey shows variation in the use of television and radio, in rural/urban centers, but it does not qualify the time consumed and their preferences about the broadcasted programs. It is a likelihood that most of the women just glance and listen at the already frolicked programs by their men folk. I can also presume that a considerable number of women prefer the entertaining and informative programs, relating to cooking and fashion, in which little or no awareness about women rights and privileges is provided, as depicted in the responses of already mentioned survey.\footnote{Already mentioned University girls’ students’ survey.}

Figure 9.1: Which program you prefer to watch/listen on TV/Radio?

![Circle chart showing preferences](image)

Source: Survey through questionnaire held by researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.
Figure 9.1 demonstrate that the university going female audience is keen for fashion shows on radio and television as 45% of them like to watch or listen such programs, in comparison with women related talk and cooking shows (55%). The low audience for women related programs determines that the message through radio and television about women issues usually go unnoticed with no impact even on the condition of educated women, what to talk about the uneducated women, who neither have facility, nor have capability to grasp the provided knowledge about their issues. On the other side, 45% audience for fashion shows, in comparison with 29% for women related shows also determine a fact that women are happy to be fanaticized through glittery life, consisting of beautiful but costly attires, heavy but expensive designers jewelry and make-up by imported cosmetics. These educated females have a tendency to be away from the hard realities of under-developed Punjabi societies and to a certain extent; they are not even interested in any women friendly legislation.

The female attraction to radio and television in Pakistan generally and particularly in Punjab is influenced by various factors. In comparison with television, radio is the cheapest, easily maintainable and commonly accessible electronic medium to provide entertainment and information for particularly women, as most of them are financially dependent on their male family members. Therefore, access to radio, through mobile phones might have become more convenient and economical. Combined with this factor, being transmitted in simple Urdu and Punjabi languages, the dialect of radio becomes more comprehensible for Punjabi women especially, when their literacy level is considerably low. Thus, for this category, radio becomes more preferable. While, talking about the significance of radio in rural and urban areas, a recent report of 2009 states:

> In rural and urban areas of Pakistan many people don’t have an access to newspapers and television, while in rural areas 65percent population could not take benefit from both of them due to illiteracy….The private radio stations have been working in Pakistan since 2002.Presently more than 100 FM radio stations are working in various parts of the country ….To get access to poor population of rural areas radio is the best choice. Compared to newspapers and TV channels that publish or broadcast their programs from federal or provincial capitals, majority of FM radio stations are based in rural areas.\\footnote{FM Radio Broadcasting in Pakistan,” Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2009), pp.4-6.}
There is another view that radio is unable to communicate in a language which is colloquial and easily understandable for the low class illiterate rural Punjabi population, who have grown more in number as listeners. The reason attributed to this condition is that “the westernized English speaking elite has been replaced by a more indigenous elite whose mother-tongue is most likely to be Punjabi or Pushto but is increasingly speaking a great deal of Urdish.”\footnote{Akbar Zaidi, “Radio as Social Metaphor,” Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 31, No. 8 (February 24, 1996), p. 458. Urdish is a where some Urdu words are replaced by English words.} However, it is despite the fact that radio not only brings awareness about social issues like honour killing and domestic violence in their transmission but is also more direct to its rural/urban female listeners. These women listeners frequently call in such programs, which are designed to take a feedback from its audience through live calls. This argument is reinforced by a report of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, which mentions that “though women are the largest group of FM radio listeners, as most of the callers are female, but their issues get less attention in radio programs. Especially, very few programs are presented on their healthcare issues. It is the accepted fact that if radio losses its women listeners it would not survive.”\footnote{“FM Radio Broadcasting in Pakistan,” op.cit., p.15.} This women related limited coverage of radio though has a reasonable number of rural/urban women listeners but there is no definite survey done, which gauges the level of impact regarding their receiving capabilities and furthermore to advance them in their environmental conditions. On the contrary, television has a handicap to present the women abuse victims on-air because of socio-cultural and procedural hindrances. However, its strength lies in exposing the women issues more explicitly than radio through group discussions and talk shows, where the audience can also see the body language of the presenters and the effecters of abuse. While commenting over the role of television dramas dealing with female population, Dr. Siddiqui says that “television play, being very popular among the masses, especially among females, act as one the most potent sources of constructing and perpetuating gendered messages.” \footnote{Shahid Siddiqui, Language, Gender, and Power: The Politics of Representation and Hegemony in South Asia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 175.} This assessment is reinforced through the percentages derived from an already mentioned survey in figure 9.2, where the female university students have been asked about the effectiveness of radio and television in covering women issues.
Figure 9.2: Radio and Television Coverage of Women Issues

Source: Survey through questionnaire by the researcher from 622 female students of University of the Punjab, Lahore; Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore; held on August 20, 2014.

Figure 9.2 demonstrates that a large percentage of female University students (86.80%) believe that both television and radio are effective tools in bringing awareness, regarding women issues. Nevertheless, the respondents share that the most effective between the two is television (68.60%), closely followed by radio (62.20%). Considering television as the most effective medium is because of its audio-visual presentation of issues, which not only enhance its effectiveness but also its viewership.

Nevertheless, the reception of audience to the messages delivered through dramas, either on radio or television varies. The female audience, who have been conditioned to serve their families or in-laws in a subordinate manner, will have a different interpretation of the broadcast dramas, than those who are educated and professionals. The first mentioned category would conceive the broadcasted abuses and discrimination against women, as a part of a normal life. However, the educated and working-women are
sensitive about the gender discrimination presented in dramas, corresponding to the real intend of the presenters. They further believe that these women problems need to be addressed on all forums, as “women and girls today are no longer willing to accept a traditional social order and are speaking out. They refuse to be subservient to social structures and obscure their individuality. Male superiority cannot be accepted by the modern, educated and articulate woman. Though empowerment across the board is still a distant dream, men need to modify their attitudes and bring behavioral change at places of work.”

However, the main question of our investigation remains that whether, those who receive the message correctly are able to advocate it at appropriate occasions and forums. It is relevant to mention here that generally the women listeners and viewers do receive information from women related dramas, documentaries, talk shows and films on radio and television but with different perceptions. As hinted above, in a mix of program, the broadcasters tend to highlight the views of those, who represent conventional biased attitudes toward women. Summing up, I can conclude that there is an ample evidence that radio and television could not become an effective agent of change, neither they are able to act as an instrument of significant societal transformation, by altering the centuries old mind-set, which is a root cause of discrimination and abuse against women; nor it could empower rural/urban Punjabi women to raise their voice against gender related discrimination in a short span on time. Endorsing this analysis, Nawaz states:

(\textit{Media}) can be seen to have changed only those opinions and those modes of behavior that have been lightly held by the recipients of information. Also, the mass media can be effectively employed to make slight adjustments in the direction of action and thoughts of people. For example, it is possible to convince people to use one brand of tea instead of another, but it may be more difficult to convince them not to drink tea at all if the

\footnote{Although the example is quoted from an Indian society but when observed closely, there are lots of similarities between the attitude of Pakistani/Punjabi women and those of the Indians, which are the concentration of discussion by the author. \textit{Business English} (University of New Delhi: Pearson Education India, 2008), p. 117. Although the example is quoted from an Indian society but when observed closely, there are many similarities between the attitude of Pakistani/Punjabi women and those of the Indians, which are the concentration of discussion by the author.}
population of a particular country has made tea drinking an integral part of its own culture and life style.\textsuperscript{626}

\section*{9.3: Social Media and Women}

With the advancement of information technology, the Internet base social networking web-sites (Google+, hi5, orkut, facebook, and Twitter etc), including blogs have gained popularity among the urbanized educated youth in Punjab. Though, initially these social media sites were not taken seriously and had become a ‘playing ground’ in the hands of teenagers. However, gradually they have not only become an effective vehicle of communication but also a forum to send and receive messages, including some human right activists and political leaders, as well. Today, social media is also utilized for academic purposes, where students share the reading material and participate in group discussions regarding various courses offered by colleges and universities. Nevertheless, this fact cannot be neglected that when comparing with print and electronic media, these social net-working sites are the quickest way to update its users on different socio-economic and political news, happenings and events. This fact is confirmed by an editor of BBC Pakistan, Haroon Rashid, who compared the role of social media with that of print/electronic and explains:

No one wishes to read yesterday’s news’ not only showcases today’s reality as far news consumption is concerned but also a challenge that print journalism faces in the world, including Pakistan. Millions of instant tweets and Facebook updates have kind of snatched the exclusive “breaking news” privilege from the electronic media….The well-regarded newspaper claims that the job of print now is “to provide the second, more thoughtful draft of history after television, Twitter and text phone messages have provided the initial information.” But also the visual changes are unprecedented. Nowhere in the past the paper carried as much photographs and graphics as it does now, perhaps responding to availability of these formats online that come to be ubiquitous.\textsuperscript{627}

\textsuperscript{626} Shuja Nawaz, op.cit., p.943
The usage of Internet among urban population has grown with time, especially among the educated classes. In both rural and urban centers, the use of social media is also conditioned with the availability of Internet providers and devices require to access social networking web sites. BBC Pakistan in their 2008 survey estimated that urban/rural use of Internet is 8/1 percent, respectively. These percentages determine that rural population is substantially low users of Internet and it can be derived that the female percentage is hardly of any significance. However, this usage is almost equal in both genders, if they are educated or at least enrolled in academic institutions at various discipline and levels. If I take the example of only one social networking web-site Facebook, according to the estimation of its Ads Manager, the Pakistani users of Facebook are more than 10 million out of a population of around 180 million, where women users are much low in number, estimated to be around 3.2 million, while men are three times more in number, with around 10.7 million. He further states “additionally, 2.9-3.2 million local Facebook users are university graduates, of which 2.1-2.3 million are men and 0.78-0.86 million are women.” This estimation define various trends about the use of social media; first is an extremely low usage of this media by urban/rural population, especially women; second, it is exclusively utilized by educated youth; students in particular, as mentioned above.

However, I should not forget that although the use of this medium has become convenient because of the cheap availability of ‘digital media’ devices but the low literacy and increased poverty, has posed limits on its usage in the Punjab province. This is contrary to the international situation, where the usage of social media has become widespread and apart from providing useful information, has become a debating forum without any censorship and discrimination. In these societies, social media apart from highlighting other issues also advocates gender equality by raising voices against female

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628 Pakistan: Urban-Rural General Media Use”,op.cit.
630 Ibid.
631 “Digital media comprise merely the latest phase of media’s contribution to modernity, but the most complex of all, a complexity illustrated by the nature of the internet as a network of networks that connects all types of communication from one-to-one to many-to-many into a wider ‘space’ of communication.” Nick Couldry, “ Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice,” (Malden: Polity Press, 2012), p.2.
discriminatory practices. While writing about the social media influence on these societies, Dr Johanna Blakley opines:

I am convinced that the growing influence of social media will help dismantle some of the silly and demeaning stereotypes that characterize media and advertising globally. In particular, I think that social media may help free us from the absurd assumptions we, as a society, have about gender…. Women not only outnumber men on social networking sites, they also spend significantly more time on these sites than men do…. The fact that women, once online, gravitate toward social networks should not surprise us. But this dominance is not just in first world countries, but even in places where women have far less access to Internet-connected computers and smart phones… Reports indicate that once women are online, they seek out social media sites far more passionately than men.632

I might not agree with Blakley’s observation of the outnumbered use of social media among female population in developing societies like Pakistan/Punjab, but I acknowledge the possible influencing role of social media on the urbanized educated upper class female users. However, in some exceptional events in developing societies like Tahrir Square movement during the Arab Spring 2011, where there was a wide-spread social upheaval and mobilization, in which social media became a part of communication and directives between the organizers and the protesters. In those events, “social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and of course mobile phones, were widely used to organize the revolts and link the protesters to each other and the outside world. Perhaps more crucially, media played a role in preparing for the rebellions over a number of years and even decades, by facilitating the circulation of ideas in national and global spaces and challenging state monopolies of information.”633 Inspired by the role of social media in Egyptian revolution, an expert on digital media, Paolo Gerbaudo writes that “in a way, modern media have always constituted a channel through which social movements not only communicate but also organize their actions and mobilise their constituencies…. Social media can be seen as the contemporary equivalent of what the newspaper, the

poster, the leaflet or direct mails were for the labour movement. They are means not simply to convey abstract opinions, but also to give a shape to the way in which people come together and act together, or, to use the metaphorical language…\(^{634}\) Gerbaudo’s estimation, though correct in theory but cannot be applied to the present day Punjab, as hinted above the literacy rate and social media users are nearly absent in rural areas but the situation improves, when I include the urban base women. The visible influence of social media in Punjabi society was first time observed during the Lawyers movement for the ‘restoration of judiciary’ in 2007, which is acknowledged by Dr. Zahid Shahab Ahmed in his writing, as he states:

Prior to November 2007, social media in Pakistan was not as effective as other forms of media for the lawyers’ movement, but during the 2007 emergency era, this new medium was one of the important modes of communications for the civil society to organize protests….The use of blogs and social networking mediums, such as facebook, was widespread during the lawyers’ movements in Pakistan. Many people contributed to the civil resistance either by commenting on existing blogs or by setting up specific blogs and online forums.\(^{635}\)

Although women in larger number were the part of this lawyer’s movement but here I need to understand that though this movement was not women rights specific, but the female constitute more than half of countries population, thus whenever the struggle for political rights and democracy would be raised by the society, it will definitely effect female population, though indirectly.

After assessing the meager role of social media in Punjab regarding its usage especially among female population, I can conclude that this particular media though has awared a limited number of urbanized educated women but its over-all impact on the society


remains substantially limited. Thus, when the question of change in the traditional/conventional thinking pattern of Punjabi society regarding women rights through social media is raised; I realize that it depends on the responsiveness of male/female users. Though, educated and urbanized population of Punjab by participating in discussions, launching ‘pages’, choosing ‘likes’, publishing their views on women issues do generate an activity on social media web-sites, which to the maximum could sensitize its followers and members, but it hardly leads to any collective effort to mobilize effectively the Punjabi women.

Apart from the positive use of social media by accommodating women related issues, this medium is also used to harass and abuse women through various ways. The most common methods of women abuse and harassment, on social networking web-sites are “via email, cyber stalking, exploitation, tampering, cyber pornography, defamation, morphing, visual surveillance and tracking.” 636 It is important to mention that in patriarchal society of Punjab, if the girls are being harassed, through any of the mentioned method, they are blamed even if they have no part in such activity and also face severe criticism from their families, thus become more vulnerable. While talking about the psychological after-effects of such crimes against women in a panel discussion organized by Aurat Foundation, Mental Health Professional Khadija Tahir states that the “internet is creating new ways and means for crimes to be committed against women and children (and the) psychological impact of this crime is tremendous on girls.”637

9.4: Conclusion:

While concluding the role of media in defining women position in the society, I would say that print, electronic and social media plays two roles. First is to provide information and awareness about women related problems and second is to dampen socio-cultural biases against female population, so that the society could at least strive towards a meaningful social transformation, if not an upheaval or even a movement. A survey

637 Ibid.
result derived from a University of Lahore confirms this contention, as out of the sample of 192 educated graduates, 69% believe that social, print and electronic media becomes an instrumental tool, in condemning violence against women.\textsuperscript{638} The educated girls of Punjab University and Lahore College University have definite opinion on the contribution of media for exposing various issues, confronting the women population. Punjab University girls believe that “though electronic media highlight women problems but the frequency of such issues is insignificant in number and are mostly politically motivated, designed to enhance their ratings.”\textsuperscript{639} They further believe that “media as a whole has become an important factor for reshaping the mind-sets of the parents regarding the benefit of education for their daughter.”\textsuperscript{640} Students of both universities further expressed that though media characterize women in a sensational manner but nevertheless their message also helps us to find a solution to various challenges faced by them, like ‘Pink Ribbon awareness campaign for Breast Cancer’ and ‘Polio vaccination’.\textsuperscript{641} During a groups discussion there were number of girls who differed from the previous views and said that media does send a useful messages but it depends on the viewer that how they interpret it.\textsuperscript{642} Adding, a Professor of History stated that an increased number of women newscasters and anchors on electronic media exhibit the changed societal acceptability of the female in high profile positions.\textsuperscript{643}

\textsuperscript{638} A survey held amongst the graduate students with mixed population of Forman Christian College (A chartered University) Lahore, on September 20, 2014.
\textsuperscript{639} Group interview held at “The University of Punjab,” Hostel No 8 (Hazrat Hafza Hall) on September 19, 2014 in Urdu language. The proceedings of the interview translated by the author.
\textsuperscript{640}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{641}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{642}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{643} Interview with Professor Dr. Syeda Arifa Zahra, Professor of History at Forman Christian College University Lahore; September 01, 2014. Translated from Urdu by the Author,
Chapter 10: Impact of Civil Society on Socio-cultural Placement of Punjabi Women

In previous chapter, I have analyzed the impact of media as an independent variable on socio-cultural placement of Punjabi women. Here, I have picked up civil society as another agent of change, which in general, “bears the responsibility to challenge the government when government escapes unscathed after narrating lies and doing wrong. Second, it is its duty to make use of all opportunities to exert pressure upon government to benefit the people.”

Civil society, at times is considered as an inter-linked variable with media, because of various reasons. First is that both are mostly located in the private sector, building their credibility, especially in those circumstances, where state institutions are non-functional and unable to address the aspirations and requirements of people at large. This correlation is further strengthened when civil society movements receive support and promotion from media. While endorsing this linkage, Ki-Sung Kwak states that media’s response towards the public is “the result of the influence civil society exerted on the broadcasters… (In this situation), it is necessary to examine the historical perception the television broadcasters have had towards the public and civil society.”

Kwak though has discussed the relationship of media with the Korean civil society but this principle is also relevant to understand the relationship of these two variables with reference to Pakistani/Punjabi society.

A number of civil society organizations are not only confine to a particular province but rather have a national agenda. Nevertheless, their scope and agenda also includes the province of Punjab, therefore when I mention such organizations, it would by implication include the Punjabi society. After taking a comprehensive view of different forms of civil society, for the purpose of this research I need to focus on the women related organizations, which exclusively raise their voice against women injustices. Nevertheless,

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I also keep in mind that apart from women related organizations; there are others forums like lawyers associations, labour organizations, human rights organizations and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. These are though not women specific in their scope but in some cases do highlight, support and promote concerns of women in Punjabi society. Therefore, I will include the women related concerns of these organizations in our research, whenever presented.

From 1947 to 1976, Pakistan underwent the process of nation and state building. At that time, the women organizations like Women’s Voluntary Service (WVS) 1948, followed by Pakistan Women’s National Guard (PWNG) and Pakistan Women Naval Reserve (PWN)1949, with a sole purpose to provide help and support to female population, including refugee women were formed. In formation of these three NGOs, the role of Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan and Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz was pivotal. In 1953, APWA, which was formed in 1948, demanded for the reservation of ten seats for women in National and Provincial legislatures. It also drafted and presented the ‘Charter of Women Rights’ in Constituent Assembly. Another most active forum to raise voice for women was the ‘United Front for Women Rights’ (UFWR), formed in 1955, in response to the second marriage of Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra. The UFWR and APWA together demanded from the government to constitute a ‘Family Laws Commission’, which was accepted, and Begum Shahnawaz was one its member. The details of these deliberations are included in Chapter 4.

After 1948 Shariat Act and 1961 MFLO, a tradition was established by the women activists and organizations, though few in number, sending a message that they are aware of the needs of female population and if required, have the will and capacity to agitate for their rights. The manifestation of this awareness of women rights NGOs and activists can be observed in 1972 reforms package and in 1973 constitution. 1972 reforms made the women eligible to join public services. From a brief assessment of an emergence and activism of women rights NGOs from 1947 to 1976, it can be derived that women

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646 For details, see, Pakistan Times, October 03, 1972; “Equality for Women, The Pakistan Times (Editorial), October 05, 1972.
organizations and their activities had three bearings. First, due to the circumstances their sole role remained in the rehabilitation for the aftermath of independence, followed by providing necessities like education, training and shelter to the girls. Second, at a later stage, they concentrated on women specific issues like awareness about their rights. I can add here that the urban elite women managed the NGOs and the membership was limited. Therefore, I witnessed that the focus was on the improvement of middle and low class urban female population. Third, they tried to build a pressure on the government to under-take appropriate measures for improvement of women status in the society. Because of these exertions, the subsequent governments legislated laws and formed committees. However, even these marginal efforts could have had results, if an over-all literacy ratio, with special emphasis on women education would have enhanced, along with required changes in school syllabus, demonstrating equality of gender. Thus, I may assume that the constitutional protections and executive measures cannot bring any change by themselves, unless it is not supported by conducive socio-cultural environment.

After the analysis till 1976, the focus of study would be to evaluate the impact of civil society, which with the passage of time has matured itself to the level that it is known today as an effective pressure group. For this purpose, the chapter is divided in three phases. The first phase deals with the reaction generated against the discriminatory policies of Zia-ul-Haq, from 1977 to 1987. The second phase from 1988 to 1998 is when the civil society presented its demands from democratic eras, by adopting a policy of understanding and accommodation. The third phase from 1999-2012 is theoretically and practically considered as the most active period of civil society, in terms of various pro-women legislative and executive measures.


The first phase of women rights organizations involvement ranges from 1977 to 1987, in which the dictatorial government of Zia-ul-Haq, used the name of religion to legalize his rule. For this purpose, apart from tempering with all political institutions, he also
enforced women discriminatory laws, under the label of Hudood Ordinance, which have been discussed with detail in chapter 5. These anti women laws confined the place of women in society, however, on the other they helped to generate an activity for the rights organizations to raise their voice against the women unfriendly laws. Therefore, throughout this phase, the women NGOs played an active part to confront Zia’s policies. During this struggle, new organizations, forums, street theatres, research base centers and commissions were formed. The most significant among them were Women Action Forum (WAF, 1981), Applied Social Resource Centre/Institute of Women Studies Lahore (ASR/IWSL, 1983), Ajoka (1983), and LokRehas (1984) Simrogh (1985) and Aurat Foundation (1986) and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (1987). Besides this, a tug of war continued between reactionaries and modernists on the definition of the rightful status of women in an Islamic society. This debate made the efforts of women NGOs an uphill task to convey and translate their message in a proper perspective. Most of the time, their voices were not even heard or lost in variant opinions, supported by the might of the state. In the following paragraphs, to facilitate our study, I intend to investigate the responses and effects of women organizations and activists on legislative and executive measures of Zia’s anti-women laws and policies.

As far as the legislative measures are concerned, Zia-ul-Haq enforced discriminatory laws dealing with Zina, Qisas/Diyat and Shahadat under Hudood Ordinance, as discussed with detail in Chapter 5. Over this, the civil society organizations, especially, APWA Punjab, Punjab Women Lawyers Association, Human Rights Associations, Young Women Christian Association, ShirkatGah, Human Welfare Association, WAF and Women Front Lahore, representing the concerns and apprehensions of the Punjabi women reacted through various ways. Under Zina law, the manner in which these cases were registered, alarmed these organizations and activists. In this regard, the most famous registered cases that were extensively discussed and became a point of reference were that of Fehmida/Allah Bux, Safia Bibi and Shahida Perveen. Apart from these exclusive cases, from 1982 to 1983, a number of such cases were registered under this law, which because

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647 The details of this struggle, arguments and counter arguments are discussed in Chapter 5.

648 The details of these cases are in Appendix D.
of the unfairness of the procedure made the women particularly of low class vulnerable and subject to injustice. Such instances compelled, the *Punjab Women Lawyers’ Association (PWLA)*, to oppose “the tactics of using religion for personal motives (and) they felt aggrieved that religion should be misused, misinterpreted and played around with as is being done by certain factions interested in furthering their own ends.”

Apart from the *Zina* law, the legislation on the weightage of female evidence equally faced severe criticism from various sections of the Punjabi civil society. This criticism was followed by a huge demonstration organized by civil society in the capital of Punjab, Lahore. The procession aimed to present written reservations on the Evidence Laws to the Chief Justice of Lahore High Court. Before they could proceed accordingly, they were tear-gassed, baton and later the leaders were arrested by the police. It was the first time during the Martial Law of Zia that women with full support of their husbands and parents came out in a large number to protest against discriminatory policies of government, in particular the Evidence Law. The Lahore event mobilized the civil society by triggering a similar kind of protests in other cities with a full support of renowned activists during Pakistan Movement and the wife of first Prime Minister, Begum Khan, who was also a founder member of APWA. Begum Khan also sent a six page statement to *Majlis-i-Shura*, in which she quoted extensive verses from Quran to support women’s equal right of testimony.

While discussing the protest of middle and upper class women against Evidence Law, in various cities, including that of Punjab, one of the prominent Journalist, Ghazi Salahudin refer this response, as a sign of change in the society and states:

> For the educated urban women the battle lines appear to have been clearly drawn. One understands their brief on the proposed amendments to the Law of Evidence…This incident overshadows a week that is littered with manifestations of conflicts and

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contradictions in our society…. Can we look at it as the seed of division in the ruling class, which is the final evidence of impending social change?\textsuperscript{652}

Similarly, the laws of \textit{Qisas/Diyat} also subjugated the Punjabi women’s position. This law faced serious reaction from women organizations like APWA, which along with nineteen other women organizations sent its written reflections to \textit{Majlis-e-Shura}. They further emphasize on the half blood money for female murder comparing to male, which they regarded as a clear discrimination against the female victims.\textsuperscript{653}

As far as the executive measures are concerned, the directives of Zia’s government affected women prospects of education, sports and employment. In the realm of education, the active response of civil society was witnessed over the demand of a separate women university by the conservative elements. This demand was out rightly opposed by APWA in its third yearly conference (1982) and \textit{Khawateen Mahaz-e-Amal} (women organization) during its deliberations to executive committee (1983). \textit{Mahaz-e-Amal} and APWA, both argued that the money which the government intend to use in making a separate women universities needs to be spent on the much needed primary education of girls and the programs which could increase their over-all literacy rate. \textit{Mahaz-e-Amal} opined that the government should discourage gender discriminated polices against female in academic institutions so that they are not dispirited to educate themselves.\textsuperscript{654} While adding, APWA stressed on four points; first they demanded the formation of National Commission to determine the women status and to review the economic policy effecting women. Secondly, in their opinion, vocational training and better chances of employment should be provided to facilitate women in the job market. Thirdly, the restriction by government on women sports should be lifted,\textsuperscript{655} which would be discussed in proceeding paragraphs. Coming back to the question of a separate academic institution for women, a debate was held in the newspaper columns, where

\textsuperscript{654}Jang, February 10, 1982.
\textsuperscript{655}Jasarat, March 03, 1982.
apart from women rights activists and organizations, the male members of civil society also expressed their concerns.\textsuperscript{656}

Similarly, in response to the un-written government ban on women sports, both national and international, from 1980 to 1984, the women organizations and civil society registered their protest from time to time. The women rights organizations, especially WAF and women activists also registered their concerns through newspaper articles. One of such article was written by their member, Kausar S.K, who pointed out the unresponsiveness and insensitivity of government towards the raised concerns of women NGOs, over the ban on women sports. She also forwarded a request to send women’s team to Delhi Asian Games by pleading, “a few national records were broken in a hastily organized one-day women athletic meet in June of this year. At least these record breakers should be sent to Delhi, along with the Women’s hockey team.”\textsuperscript{657} While responding to such kind of restrictions on women participation in 19\textsuperscript{th} National Games, a reputed newspaper from Lahore reflecting the views of civil society wrote in its editorial:

\begin{quote}
The recent act of discrimination implies that Pakistani women will be barred from playing in every international tournament-no participation in Asian or Olympic games. And the consequences? Mediocre and second-class sportswomen. Participation of women in national games is un-Islamic. Well, what about poverty? Is it not Kufr to tolerate poverty and corruption? What is more important from an Islamic point of view-excluding women from public events or struggling to eradicate penury and inequality? For God’s sake let’s get out of our little microcosms and contribute to life.\textsuperscript{658}
\end{quote}

Apart from discrimination against women in sports, they also faced biases in the job market. Certain sections of civil society responded when the ‘single’ women were set aside in the merit criteria and were barred from appointments, promotions and postings in the public sector. In this regard, women NGO, \textit{Khawateen Mahaz-e-Amal}, criticized the

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656 For detailed discussions in columns see, \textit{Jang}, May 08, 1982.  
\end{flushright}
said policy of government by saying that it would deprive them to serve the country on international front, which is against the principles of gender equality in Islam.  

In all these discriminatory legislative and executive actions of government, the orthodox section of society supported these measure, whenever they got an opportunity to appear on television programs.

The most severe reaction of women activists and NGOs was on the partiality of Dr. Israr’s television program. One of such demonstration organized by WAF, under the leadership of Begum Asghari Rahim was held outside Pakistan Television (PTV) Karachi, in which apart from women protestors, which ran in thousands, from various fields of life participated. As an extension and endorsement of this demonstration, the President of APWA, called a meeting of eighteen women organizations. In this meeting, the participants issued a joint statement, condemning Dr. Israr’s views on women and demanding his removal from the membership of *Islamic Ideology Council* and *Majlis-e-Shura*. It should be recognized that such kind of endorsement was not in the agenda of APWA but due to the larger interest of female population, they made this reaction as an exception and put forward their demands from the government. Apart from these women organizations, the street theatres like Ajoka and LokRhas, in their live performances through plays and puppetry in rural and urban Punjab, highlighted the discrimination continued during this military regime. The most interesting aspects of these street theatres were their performances in Urdu and Punjabi language and the participation of performers from all social classes. However, this fact cannot be denied that the women performers were less in number as compared to their men colleagues. It is a common belief of Punjabi women, that certain women rights organizations and street theaters are exclusively urban based in their agendas, devoid of social values required to understand the problems of rural women. They are also convinced that these women rights groups are devoid of sensitivity about the real issues, confronting the middle and

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659 Jang, 10th February, 1982.
660 The views of DrIsrar about women have been discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
661 Jang, March 19, 1982; See also The Pakistan Times, March 19, 1982.
662 APWA’s basic functions revolve around providing of schools and advocacy campaign on women issues. As a matter of policy they do not demonstrate on roads like other organizations.
low class women. While ratifying this image from a gathering of a well-known organization, APWA, Naila Aziz opined that “an appreciation of APWA’s welfare services has often been accompanied by a criticism of the westernized outlook of its members on various social and cultural issues. To many outsiders, it is an organization of wealthy and influential begums driven to the welfare, business by the sole motive of self-projection.” Whatever the criticism or the impression about these urban base women NGOs might be, the reality is that these organizations have in one way or the other contributed towards the achievement of a rightful place for the women population of Punjab.


A second classification of women rights organizations and activists is located during the democratic era 1988 to 1999, equally shared by the two elected Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, who took office twice. This era also raised the expectations of the civil society, especially those belonging to the women rights groups, expecting that Zia’s hostile laws and measures against women would be done away with. Therefore, number of women related organizations, which have emerged during Zia’s regime as reactive forums were by this time well-established and some new organizations were also formed like Dastak (1990), Bedari (1992), Kashf Foundation (1996) and Rozan (1998), which focused on uplift and development of female population, but with a changed focus. While writing about the transformed emphasis of women groups in post-Zia era, it is analyzed that “the women’s movement has shifted from reacting to government legislation to focusing on three goals: securing women’s political representation in the National Assembly; working to raise women’s consciousness, particularly about family

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planning; and countering suppression of women’s rights by defining and articulating positions on events as they occur in order to raise public awareness.”

The pre and post-election promises and commitments of Benazir Bhutto helped her to win the trust of civil society, especially those women groups who have been vigorously struggling for women rights during Zia’s rule. When Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister for the first time in 1988, these women NGOs gave her an opportunity, providing time and space, so that she settles down in the new democratic set-up. Nevertheless, these women rights groups along with other civil society organizations time and again reflected the concerns of female population, through various seminars and conferences. In one of such event, which was organized to celebrate Women’s day in Lahore, APWA and Women Action Forum, along with other women organizations first highlighted women problems through speeches, songs and other programs; later they universally agreed on 11 resolutions, castigating inequalities against women.665

Apart from reminding the government for the reversal of gender discriminatory laws, as hinted above, the focus of civil society and particularly women groups was on education, health and employment related challenges faced by women. For example, the secretary of Cancer Research Foundation of Pakistan, Professor Khalida Usmani, while addressing the Asian region round table meeting, stressed to improve the female literacy in Pakistan, so that they could compete with men in all fields of life.666

Apart from health and education, an equal opportunity for women employment also became the agenda civil society. On this issue, the challenges faced by women at workplaces were highlighted in a Wapda women union ceremony, where the head of Wapda Hydro-Electric Central Labour Union, Bashir Bakhtiyar stated that “women have been made slaves and they are facing many problems. There is no such mechanism, in which during the working hours of mothers, their children are being taken care of, so that

they could concentrate on work without any problem." He further stated that the "state should provide protection to women from harassment at schools, colleges and other places."

Benazir Bhutto made a comeback after winning the elections of 1993, for the second term. During this term, the first demand of civil society organizations, particularly women rights groups was regarding *Hudood* ordinance. The Human Rights Watch (Pakistan) disclosed that in 1993, 387 women were in jail, facing cases under *Zina* ordinance in Punjab. The miseries of these women prisoners continued, as they were financially unable to submit their bail bonds. This issue was further highlighted by the *Chairman Lawyers Human Rights Society*, in his petition in Lahore High Court, where it was requested that these "women may be released on their personal bonds."

Although, the government representatives, on various occasions accepted the demand to repeal all anti-women laws during Zia’s regime but the delay to reverse or amend such laws did not coincide with the governmental undertakings. *Aurat Foundation* in one of its quarterly newsletter mentioned the ‘rationale’ of the government’s delay for these laws by stating:

> The first excuse by law makers is that they believe the other national issues are more important at this point of time than to repeal Hudood Ordinance. Second excuse is that they think that there is not a single person is yet punished under Hadd. Third excuse is that they stress on the need of national consensus before taking any step regarding this law. Fourth excuse is that they think there is no problem with these laws but the issue is with its implementation.

The Second demand by civil society was to increase women seats in legislative chambers. Regarding this, *Aurat Foundation’s* established group called a session on 29th July 1995

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668 Ibid.
in Islamabad, in which the spokespersons of various political parties, women rights organizations, human rights groups and other civil society organizations also participated. The purpose of this meeting was to sensitize government about the need to have more women representation in parliament. At the conclusion of this convention, the mentioned political parties agreed that there should be an increase of 20 women seats in National, 5 percent in provincial assemblies and 9 seats in the Senate.\(^\text{672}\)

Third demand which the civil society organizations and women groups pursued during Benazir government was related to violence against women. Specifying more, the HRW (Pakistan) revealed the figures of women victims for the year 1993, where it stated that 2,920 women were raped and 730 gang-raped. To aggravate the women sufferings, there were 785 women facing prison in Punjab.\(^\text{673}\) The increased number of violence cases against women and absence of government redress alarmed women rights organizations. The most prominent case of torture and brutality in 1994 was reported, when a husband, who was also a prayer leader tortured his 24 years old wife in such a manner that the women rights groups and other civil rights organizations could not but raised their resentment, asking the government to bring the culprit to justice.

The fourth concern of women groups was the fundamental right of women to marry on their choice, in which the patriarchal society is a major hindrances. This issue was particularly highlighted, when a debate started in 1994. A father of 22 years old Saima Waheed filed a case against her daughter by pleading that in Ahle Hadees sect, the father as Wali (guardian) is responsible for her daughter’s marriage, thus without his permission, this marriage is not valid. The women activists, Asma Jahangir, Hina Jilani (the lawyer of Saima) along with WAF supported Saima’s contention that under Islam, being an adult, she could marry without the permission of her father (Wali). A heated discussion started, as reflected by a renowned Urdu daily newspaper Jang, which organized a forum to highlight various views on this subject. During this forum, it was stressed by women activist that in Islam an adult woman could marry on her own and consent of Wali is not

\(^{672}\)‘‘Legislative Watch, Quarterly Newsletter,’’ *Aurat Publication*, Vol.1, No.1 (Islamabad: Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, 1995). Shafqat Mehmood of PPP, Mehnaz Rafi of PML(N) and Malik Ghulam Mustafa of ANP agreed and signed on this convention. Translated by the author.

\(^{673}\) *Dawn*, March 04, 1994.
required.\footnote{Jang, October 06,08, 1996.\textsuperscript{674}} While giving a decision in a similar case S.M. Zubair stated “Islam allows an adult Muslim woman to marry according to her own choice. A Wali, or guardian, is bound by the will and consent of the woman; not the other way around.”\footnote{Quoted in “Pakistan: Saima Wins Case; But Judgement Threatens Women’s Rights,” Inter Press Services, posted May 12, 2014, \url{http://www.ipsnews.net/1997/03/pakistan-saima-wins-case-but-judgement-threatens-womens-rights/}\textsuperscript{675}} These vital decisions by the Punjab High Court clarified the ambiguities about the religious right of marriage to the adult women, opening avenues for women, which was already being pleaded by the activists for quite some time. This particular matter arising from the decisions of the Punjab High Court became a core of discussion when the report of Women Division was presented in 1995 for a feedback from the women members of civil society and political parties. The respondents agreed that Islam ensures the marriage right for women on their own free will and rather socio-cultural norms of the Punjabi society is a major hurdle.

While concluding the efforts of civil society during the two terms of Benazir Bhutto and its bearing on women population of Punjab, I cannot over-look the challenges Ms. Bhutto faced at that time. First was the criticism of orthodoxy regarding her legitimacy as head of an Islamic country. Second challenge came from the Punjab government, where People’s Party could not form a government.\footnote{Katherine M. Doherty and Craig A. Doherty, Benazir Bhutto (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990), p.93.\textsuperscript{676}} By ignoring the ground realities regarding women’s conditions in the country, Benazir government confined itself to theoretical assurances, supported by its various representatives.

Nawaz Sharif’s Punjab provincial government on its part remained docile to the demands of the civil society and no concrete steps were taken to redress the grievances of the Punjabi women. Apart from that, I do not see any concrete evidence where the Nawaz government made serious efforts to improve the conditions of the Punjabi women. However, such existing laws as \textit{Hudood} were beyond his purview as they related to the federal government.
Nawaz Sharif was elected as Prime Minister twice, once in 1990-1993 and then again in 1997-1999. Moreover, during Benazir’s first government from 1988 to 1990, he was the Chief Minister of Punjab. During his first tenure, Prime Minister Sharif had to rely on an alliance named IJI. The inclination of Sharif’s governments has been towards the religious parties. For reference as mentioned above in first tenure of Benazir, Nawaz government, being a ruling party in Punjab Province, apart from issuing few statements in favour of women socio-political rights, did little to improve their condition at provincial level. During Nawaz Sharif’s first term as Premier, the focus of attention for civil society, women rights groups and activists was on two major issues. The first became the growing number of rape cases, which enhanced a feeling of insecurity among the female population, including that of the Punjab province. The response of civil society towards this serious social evil was triggered particularly from the alleged rape of Veena Hayat, a daughter of a well-known politician. After this incident, one of such protest was organized under WAF in front of President House, on 10\textsuperscript{th} December 1991, where women from all walks of life participated. The prominent women organizations and civil society groups included \textit{Aurat Foundation}, Women Wing of Youth Groups-PSF and Peoples Lawyers Forum, joined by Islamabad Quaid-e-Azam University students.\footnote{Jang, December 11, 1991.} Second concern remained with the probability of \textit{Shariah Law} enforcement, which had the inclination to modify the Pakistani society, with a suspicion that women status might not be reduced.

As the various injustices against the Punjabi women were widespread so the women related NGOs and media could not remain aloof and reacted promptly to such crimes, whenever it occurred. For example in one of such advocacy press release, APWA Punjab stated, “women are not safe even in their homes. It’s unfortunate that the incidents of gang rape are common in a country, which claims to represent the Islamic values. These incidents are also taking place in Police Stations by the law enforcement agencies, which is creating an environment of terror and insecurity for female population.”\footnote{Jang, December 12, 1991.}
In 1997, when Nawaz Sharif again came in power, the stress of civil society and women rights groups revolved around, particularly on three demands. First was to seek more women representation in various law making bodies, so that they could safeguard their interests at the level of legislative process. Second was about the repeal of *Zina* ordinance, which since its initiation provided a pretext to discriminate and victimize middle and low class female population. The third was the demand from Nawaz Sharif to devise a strategy, which could help to curtail the incidents of honor killing.

During his previous term, the demand to increase women representation followed after the crime rate against women multiplied and the women rights organizations like International Women Club (Lahore), strongly felt that only female legislators could safeguard women rights in the parliament, who would be instrumental in enacting women friendly laws. Therefore, through their resolutions, they demanded the restoration of women reserved seats in the Parliament.\(^\text{679}\) While supporting this plea, a well-known journalist of an Urdu daily Irshad Haqani in his op ed article criticized the non-responsiveness of Nawaz Sharif, as even after completing one year of governance, he could not restore women reserved seats in the Parliament. The writer further stated that “women are 52 percent of the population, while in the National Assembly, only two women are present and that also because of their influential family background. The government on its part took no initiative to restore their seats in parliament, although, one year of this government has lapsed. The country is full of such people (and *Ulema*), who right from beginning oppose women representation in assemblies.”\(^\text{680}\)

This demand of women rights groups along with other civil society organizations continued with more expectations, during the second term of Nawaz Sharif especially after the report of Inquiry Commission on the Status of Women (1997) , which presented a frame work to enhance women’s political participation. In addition, the women rights groups hoped that the Nawaz government would respond favorably because of its heavy mandate in the National Assembly, which could make any amendments or introduction of

\(^{679}\) Jang, December 18, 1991.

\(^{680}\) Irshad Ahmed Haqani, “Khawateen ka Almi Din aur Pakistani aurat (worlds women day and Pakistani women),” Jang, March 11, 1992.
new women related bills easier, i.e., in spite the opposition of the orthodoxy. In this regard, *Aurat Foundation* in its newsletter of 1997 reminded Sharif’s government to take appropriate steps for women political representation, as only adequate female representation could guarantee women laws. The editorial of this newsletter further stated:

Government and all other political parties along with public representatives should realize that the issue of women representation in assemblies needs to be resolved on priority basis. Therefore, the method presented in the report of inquiry commission suggest to open a discussion with women members of political parties, legal experts, women rights organizations, members of election commission and parliamentarians. Moreover, in the up-coming session of National Assembly and Senate, the amendment bill about the restoration of women seats in parliament should be presented. Only then, the women of Pakistan would be comfortable and have a feeling of being an equal citizen.  

Similarly, during the second term of Sharif’s government, various civil society groups raised the probability of repealing the *Hudood* laws. The Action Committee of Human rights along with seventeen NGOs, in one of its demonstration “urged that the government’s announced package must ensure the repeal of all the ‘discriminatory laws’ passed by the Late general Zia-ul-Haq against women.” The similar demand was raised by the Chair-person of APWA, Mariam Habib in her interview to the Urdu newspaper, *Jang*. Mariam said that “the rights which men enjoy in Pakistan must also be for women. Our struggle against discriminatory laws of Zia-ul-Haq is still continued and we hope that Nawaz Sharif by having a 2/3rd majority will amend those laws.”

Third demand of civil society organizations and women rights groups from the Nawaz government was to take appropriate steps against ‘honour killing’. The protest to condemn this heinous crime against women triggered from the murder of Samia Sarwar

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(a daughter of the Chairman of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a Senator), in her lawyer’s chamber (Asma Jahangir), by her family in 1999, as she wanted divorce from her estranged husband. Under the demand of various civil society groups, a PPP Senator Syed Iqbal Haider, with a support of nineteen other Senators presented a resolution to condemn 'honour killings'. However, this resolution was opposed by the majority of the upper house, especially those members belonging to PML from NWFP, thus it was shelved. The critics consider that “it was sad day for the women of Pakistan. The house by liberalism, democratic credential and its erudition one felt one could swear any day let the Pakistani women down …when it upheld by a over-whelming vote a motion to reject even the consideration of the resolution to condemn the practice of ‘honour killing’.”

The lack of response of the legislators nonetheless intensified the debate on ‘honour killing’, giving a wide coverage in the newspapers with a note that such inhuman crimes against women had a support of the ruling elite, as they themselves are the product of this discriminatory culture, which at times is justified under the guise of religion. In one of its editorial in English newspaper Dawn, apart from the comments made towards the reaction of the Senate’s majority, on the ‘honour killing’ resolution along with suggestions to the government by stating:

Legislators from Frontier supported by like-minded colleagues from the plains, have argued that “honour” killings are part of tribal and cultural traditions; some have even attempted to provide a religious justification for the practice…. The government ought to make up its mind where it stands: on the side of bigotry or a just and civilized dispensation. It should immediately stop shielding those who are involved in “honour” killings or other acts of violence against women. The ruling party must stop waffling on fundamental issues and take a clear line which its legislators should be under an obligation to follow. How long are we going to remain teetering on the brink of being called a mediaeval state that patronize reactionary practices and encourages extremist trends?

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The second factor, which aggravated the worries of women organizations, was the crackdown of the government against NGOs, including those belonging to the Women rights groups. The Punjab Social Welfare Minister, Pir Binyamin Rizvi singled out women organizations and even “confused the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan - a group working to compile data on human rights, raise awareness on such issues and work to resolve them with Dastak, a shelter for women seeking escape from domestic violence or harassment.” In his criticism of Dastak he accused it for “brainwashing young women and making them pursue a course that clashed with government policies. Women who had protested against the Shariat bill in Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi were affiliated with this organization.” The Minister of the Punjab government announced a regulatory policy to scrutinize women organizations, especially those who were protesting against the conservative policies of the government. Therefore for many activists, it was a reprisal of the government for those organizations, who opposed those policies of the government, which could impede the development of women population. Rizvi went further to regulate the functioning of the women organisations, by announcing:

All non-government organizations (NGOs) working in the Punjab and any new ones that are formed will have to get ‘clearance’ from provincial and federal intelligence agencies before they can get registered with the social welfare department… All NGOs would have to give a written pledge that they would not get involved in what he called ‘anti-state, anti-government or anti-religion activities’… There were 6,316 NGOs registered in the Punjab (1,282 in Lahore division) of which ‘around 30 percent were bogus’… All NGOs which had refused to submit an audit report of their funds fell in this ‘bogus’ category.

In response to these allegations, a coalition of Rawalpindi-Islamabad NGOs (CORIN), in a press conference condemned the dissolution of 2500 organizations by the state

688 Ibid.
authority, usage of PTV to propagate against the Human rights and women organizations and various allegations of the Punjab Minister against the NGOs. These government crackdowns against the NGOs was criticized in the media. While writing regarding the government’s justification for the ban on NGOs, a renowned columnist of *Dawn* noted:

Government spokesmen have stated with a straight face that their crackdown has nothing to do with the freedom of expression or human rights. Excuse me if I take this claim with a pinch of salt. NGOs like ASR, Shirkatgah and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan are being targeted. Under the grab of “scrutinizing” the accounts of these and other organizations, a number of frivolous charges are being laid at their door. Since they don’t get any funds from the government, this high-handed exercise is simply a method devised to harass and hobble institutions that refuse to dance to our rulers tune. 

While concluding the impact of civil society organizations in general and women rights groups in particular, on the Punjabi women, during the two terms of Nawaz Sharif as Premier, I can assess that in comparison with his first term, his second tenure remained hostile against the NGOs. However, from time to time during his both terms, women rights groups and activists raised such issues like increase in rape and ‘honour killing’ instances. Apart from underlining the mentioned anti-women crimes, these women rights groups also contributed to bring awareness among female Punjabi population about their socio-economic and political rights through various organized activities. No doubt, the main participants in such events belonged to influential upper middle class women but the fact remains, that they provided a voice to the demands of common Punjabi women through relevant forums.

While evaluating the performance of civil society organizations and women rights groups from 1988 to 1999, in highlighting the demands of Pakistani/Punjabi women, I cannot undermine the role of Punjab based famous street theatres, especially Ajoka, which after the end of Martial law rule restructure their policies.

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I can sum-up the above-mentioned implication of the women agitation as follows; first, it mobilized civil society in general and women rights organizations in particular, to focus their attentions towards highlighting social crime of this nature. Second, it enabled the women rights groups and activists to present their suggestions and demands to the government, so that the appropriate measures against this kind of anti-women crime could be taken. An over-all impression, determined during this phase was that the role of civil society organizations, especially women right groups, remained supportive for both Benazir and Nawaz Sharif’s governments. As it is already hinted above that women activists and rights groups after witnessing eleven years of Zia’s suppression for the supporters of women rights, had some hope in the democratic governments that they would provide relief to the women population as expressed in their election manifestos. However, these expectations remained un-fulfilled by the democratic governments, because other political issues became urgent priority. Under the pressures of the civil society organization, their response was confined to some un-filled assurances, promises and commitments; and no concrete steps were taken by Sharif and Bhutto governments to improve the status of the female population.

10.3: Third Phase: Attempts to Empower Women (1999-2012)

In this phase, the activism of women rights organizations responded accordingly to the liberal out-look of Musharaff regime (1999-2008) and later on when elections were held and democratic set-up was in place (2008-2012), they designed their policies to operate within requirements. Although the fundamentals of the two eras were different but as far as the struggle of civil society, particularly women rights organizations is concerned, their efforts adopted a more comprehensive approach to deal with women problems. Thus, they generated an appropriate pressure for which dictatorial and democratic governments responded nearly in a similar manner.
For almost a decade, Pervaiz Musharaff governed the country by adopting a liberal policies under the slogan of ‘enlightened moderation’. The combination of global pressure and Musharaff’s ideological conviction provided a chance to the women rights groups to put forward their demands, which was a departure from the policy of lethargy towards women problems by both democratic leaders; Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. Musharraf’s ‘modern out-look’ brought hope for the women organizations, encouraging them to aggressively present their demands for the reversal of Hudood Laws of Zia’s regime. These organizations also desired relevant legislations for ensuring women’s socio-economic and political empowerment. While making a comparison between the policy directives on women issues by democratic rulers (Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif) and the changed domestic environment under Musharaff, Professor Shahnaz Khan comments:

Although the Bhutto and Sharif regime did not appear to be as clearly aligned with pro-Islamic forces as those under the Zia government, policies towards women remained uncertain and daily violation of women’s rights continued without state response… In marked contrast to Zia’s vision is that of General Musharaf, the current military ruler of Pakistan. Musharaff presents himself as a secularist and a modernist, identifying Turkish modernist leader Mustapha Kamal as his hero. He rules Pakistan in a different world from that in which Zia promoted Islamization.690

From 2000 to 2012, a number of new organizations were formed, like Alliance Against Sexual Harassment, AASHA (2001); Women Empowerment, Literacy & Development Organization, WELDO (2003); Gender Reform Action Plan, GRAP and Star Welfare Organisation (2006); Pakistani Women's Human Rights Organization, PWHRO (2010), who aligned against women abuse and harassment. During this decade, the civil society, including women rights organizations had realized that the previous state policy of the

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690 Shahnaz Khan, Zina, Transnational Feminism, and the Moral Regulation of Pakistani Women (Canada: The University of British Columbia, 2006), p.94.
past governments, influenced by the forces representing orthodoxy could not achieve much. Therefore, to exert effective pressure on the government, this time, the women activists organized themselves in a more active and vibrant manner. They grouped together and tried to engage common people from various fields of life for the advocacy campaign.

For the purpose of our research, I would divide these ten years of dictatorship and democracy in two portions, which would be studied from three directions. First, I would trace the potentials of civil society, along with their efforts for the cause of women rights. Second, I intend to investigate the emphasize of women NGOs to repeal the discriminatory laws. Third, is to explore the struggle of these organizations for pro-women legislation.

In 1999, there was a fourth time comeback of military coup d'état by General Pervaiz Musharaff, replacing the elected government of Nawaz Sharif. In comparison with another military dictator Zia-ul-Haq, the ideology and vision of Musharaff was way apart from, when it came to the female population of the country. During his first year of rule, the human rights situation was surprisingly encouraging and “despite his personal discomfort, he did not curb the press and was vocal in his denunciation of human rights abuses in the country, especially against women and minorities.” 691 This impression of Musharraf’s style of governance provided hope and encouragement to the civil society organizations, including women rights NGOs and activists to put forward their demands. The first long-awaited demand of civil society organizations and women rights groups were about women political representation in national, provincial and local level legislatures. Second was to make the process of divorce, maintenance and guardianship, simpler so as to facilitate affected females. The third concern of women groups was against the unchecked increased number of crimes against women and fourth was the reversal of discriminatory Hudood laws of Zia’s regime.

The first demand of civil society about women share in representative bodies continued even during Musharaff’s government, resulted in 33% reserved seats through Legal Frame Work Order (LFO) 2002 and 17% quota for women was fixed in National, Provincial legislatures and in the Senate as discussed in Chapter 6. Musharaff believes coincided with the demands of women activists that political emancipation of women leads to their empowerment, in all fields. Naeem Mirza and Wasim Wagha in their Research report for Aurat Foundation, credited prominent women NGOs like WAF, Aurat Foundation; various civil society organizations like Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and members of political parties for materialization of increased women quota in representative bodies.

The second demand of women rights groups was to make the process of divorce, maintenance and guardianship less complicated, so that affected illiterate and underprivileged women could be facilitated. Regarding this, the women rights organizations pushed hard for amendments. Quoting an example of one such organization, the results “came after years of struggle from the women’s movement and include a number of recommendations forwarded by Aurat Foundation in 2000 and years of advocacy, especially in collaboration with the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.” 692 These recommendations ultimately were materialized by Musharaff’s government in the shape of ‘Family Court Amendment Ordinance 2002’. According to this ordinance, the courts were bound to finalize the divorce, maintenance and guardianship within a specified time-period. While endorsing the positive impact of this amendment act, the Aurat Foundation also pointed out some lacunas in this Act in its implementation stage. These views were reflected in its quarterly newsletter, stressing that despite of legislation, the strongly imbibed influence of patriarchy hardly guarantees equal place to women in matrimonial affairs. One of the reasons mentioned by this organization was “conservative scholars and elements (who) always influence and effectively block any positive attempt for progressive legislation or amendment. It therefore remains a fact, that women remain vulnerable under the current regime of

Muslim family laws, whether under legislation or the informal personal law, both of which are influenced by custom and traditions and the patriarchal interpretation of religion.”

Third concern of women groups was to raise their voice against the growing crimes like rape and honour Killing. As far as rape is concerned, this social evil against women took the attention of civil society organizations and women rights groups, when in 2002, to settle the dispute between two tribes, on the decision of *Punchayat* (a local village council) of South Punjab village, a 33 years old woman named Mukharan Mai was publicly ganged raped. Similar kind of other rape cases were reported during Musharaff’s regime. Among them, after Mai’s case, the most notorious was the alleged rape of Dr. Shazia in Dera Bughti by an army officer in 2005. To show solidarity with the victims of such crime, the civil society organizations like *Pattan Development Organization (PDO)*, *the Women Councilors Network and the South Punjab NGOs Forum* organized a walk, in which a huge number of women participated. In this event, the PDO Chairman, Sarwar Bari condemned the government’s response on such crimes by asserting that “the president is promoting the *Jirga* culture despite knowing that women are daily subjected to black laws of *Jirgas* in the rural areas” The unresponsiveness of Musharaff’s government on these rape cases further hyped the issue on national and international media, which had already given a vast coverage to these instances. Here, another observation should also be made that since 2000, as already mentioned above, the media and women rights groups mushroomed in Pakistan, which benefitted such victims as they now had a platform to raise their voice against such crimes. Despite the fact as mentioned above, Musharaff had a liberal out-look towards the implementation of women rights issues, nevertheless his some utterances especially about the rape cases became a departure from his main policies. For example, Musharaff in an interview with *The Washington Post* stated:

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694*Dawn*, March 08, 2005.
You must understand the environment in Pakistan. This has become a moneymaking concern. A lot of people say if you want to go abroad and get a visa for Canada or citizenship and be a millionaire, get yourself raped, the easier way of doing it. Every second person now want to come up and get all this because there is so much finances. Dr. Shazia, I don’t know but maybe she is the case of money that she wants to make money. All are talking against Pakistan that what we have done but I know what the realities are.\(^{695}\)

On this reaction of civil society, especially women groups, Musharraf denied the recorded statement. The newspaper defending its reporting placed an audio-clip of the concerned interview on its web-site.\(^{696}\) Apart from this interview, on another occasion, President Musharraf showed his ‘sympathies’ towards the rapist of Dr. Shazia, by enunciating him innocent, before the completion of judicial inquiry in this case. The impression derived from this pronouncement was that as the accused is from the Army, therefore by setting aside the promises of women empowerment, Musharraf tried to save the culprit. These controversial statements of the President raised questions about his promises for women empowerment. Nevertheless, it helped to mobilize women rights groups and political leaders to further raise their voices against these injustices. The lack of clarity in Musharraf’s attitudes towards the women issues is discussed in an essay relating to one such instance by Jayati Pradeep Vora:

Though General Musharraf has stated that his government is doing all they can to redress wrongs and to combat violence against women, it was his government that confiscated Mai’s passport and placed her under house arrest in June 2002. She had been invited on a speaking tour in America by the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Women (ANAA), and the government was fearful that her remarks would make them look bad in the international press. She continued to speak to the media and lawyers at the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Until, that is, the 13 men who had been arrested for raping her were simultaneously released in an act of intimidation. It was only due to


international pressure that her passport was restored to her and permission granted to leave the country.\textsuperscript{697}

Another second heinous social crime against women, for which civil society and women rights grouped together, was the murder of women, under the pretext of ‘honour’. The figures of ‘Honour Killing’, from the year 1998 to 2003, as provided by one of the Federal Minister of Interior is alarming. Out of 4,101 crime cases, more than half that is 2,028 were compromised through various means. The increased number of ‘honour killing’ cases were because of \textit{Qisas and Diyat laws} of Zia-ul-Haq, which made easy for offender to escape from punishment. The advocacy campaign by civil society and women rights groups continued to exert pressure on the Musharraf government to amend the faulty criminal law. Thus, under the name of ‘Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004 (on 'honour' crimes)’, the amendments were brought in \textit{Qisas and Diyat provisions} of PPC and CPRC as discussed in Chapter 6. However, the women NGOs and activists were not satisfied with the amendments and considered it a half-hearted attempt of the government. Through various activities, women rights organizations continued their demands for an amendment in \textit{Qisas and Diyat law}. One of such activity was organized by rights and trade union activists on 2007 International Women’s Day, in which a demand was put forward for the repeal “of Qisas and Diyat laws, which, according to them, were promoting the menace of honour killing and rendering the recently-passed the Women Protection Act irrelevant.”\textsuperscript{698} The weaknesses of this Act were further highlighted by Maliha Zia Lari in a Pilot study on Honour Killing for \textit{Aurat Foundation}, where she writes:

Despite the promulgation of this Act, legal experts agree that the existing laws leave ample space for judicial gender biases to intervene and result in lenient sentences to murderers, protect perpetrators from getting maximum penalties and facilitate compromises which allow perpetrators to get away with minimal or no penalty. These gaps in effect circumvent the entire idea of effectively prosecuting honour killings. There


\textsuperscript{698}\textit{Dawn}, March 08, 2007.
are so many loopholes that without diligence and activism on the part of the court, it will be hard to get very many convictions for honour killings under this law.\textsuperscript{699}

The fourth demand of women rights groups was about the reversal of \textit{Hudood} ordinance, especially \textit{Zina law}, which was becoming a tool in the hands of male-dominated society to victimize women. During Musharraf regime, cases registered against women under this law tremendously increased, which not only took the attention of civil society organizations in the country but also stirred such international organizations like \textit{Human Rights Watch (HRW)}. In its 2005 report, \textit{HRW} not only highlighted the discrepancies of \textit{Zina} law victimizing women; also presented figures of in-process cases in year 2004. The report stated:

\begin{quote}
Under Pakistan's existing Hudood Ordinance, proof of rape generally requires the confession of the accused or the testimony of four adult Muslim men who witnessed the assault. If a woman cannot prove her rape allegation she runs a very high risk of being charged with fornication or adultery, the criminal penalty for which is either a long prison sentence and public whipping, or, though rare, death by stoning. The testimony of women carries half the weight of a man's testimony under this ordinance. The government has yet to repeal or reform the Hudood Ordinance, despite repeated calls for its repeal by the government-run National Commission on the Status of Women, as well as women's rights and human rights groups. Informed estimates suggest that over 200,000 cases under the Hudood laws are under process at various levels in Pakistan's legal system.\textsuperscript{700}
\end{quote}

On the same issue, a seminar was organized by a body of various organizations, known as \textit{Joint Action Committee}. The theme of this seminar was 'Repeal of Hudood Ordinances: Emerging Realities and Action Required’, in which the focus was on repeal, instead of amendments.\textsuperscript{701} While explaining the effects of this law in the past from 1980 to 1990, an active member of civil society and a retired Justice of Punjab High Court,


\textsuperscript{701}According to various legal experts, given the adversity of the orthodoxy, the amendment procedure is comparatively less complicated and visible than repeal. Thus, considering these legal hindrances, the majority of women rights organizations preferred to advocate for amendments.
Nasira Javed explained that in that period of ten years, the tremendous increase was witnessed in the number of jailed women under Hudood ordinance. The number of jailed women in 1980 was 70, which jumped to 4,500 in 1990. She further stated that “90 per cent of the rape victims were unable to register complaints with the police stations without presence of the male members of the family or were raped by police after registering their cases. A woman who wants to register a rape case is often considered as a woman of loose character. That’s why a majority of the victims did not open their mouth and rape cases go unreported.”

Apprehensive about the past history as explained above, the civil society was fearful that this might not continue, in spite of the fact that Musharaff regime has made useful inroads for the betterment of Pakistani/Punjabi women. Thus they continued to exert pressure through their demands. In response to which, the Women Protection Bill (Criminal Laws Amendment) of 2006 was passed by Musharraf government, which amended Zina laws of Hudood Ordinance. As it is discussed with detail in Chapter 6, that WPB did not reverse all laws under Hudood ordinance and only facilitated the procedural lacunas in zina cases, by bringing the offense of rape under the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). However, this legislation was perceived as a big success for civil society organizations, particularly for women rights groups, who welcomed the bill at large and throughout the procedural stages of this bill, kept on issuing supportive statements by rejecting the objections of orthodoxy. In one of such joint statement, these NGOs criticized the reaction of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) over the bill and stated that “their irrational and extremist reaction is demonstrated by the tearing of copies of the bill without reading it, raising slogans on the floor of the assembly and hurling threats to the secular forces of the country. Their behavior not only violates parliamentary norms but also pose a threat to human rights in the country.”

After a decade of military rule, the restoration of democracy in 2008 elections, once again provided an opportunity for the People Party to redress the concerns of women population. There was a difference between this term and its previous two tenures in

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702 Dawn, March 08, 2006.
703 Daily Times, August 26, 2006.
various ways. The first important difference was that this time Peoples party was led by other than Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated before the elections. Being a female premier twice, she did not only bring hope to the female population but also showed a soft corner for women rights groups, struggling for women empowerment. This time, her absence created a huge gap not only for her party leadership but also for the women rights groups. Second factor was that this time Peoples Party was able to complete its full five years till 2012. Thus, this uninterrupted extensive time of democracy provided an ample space to women rights groups, for their organized advocacy campaigning for women rights. Third change, as already mentioned in Chapter 9, was the freedom of press, accompanied by the mushroomed growth of print/electronic media and civil society organizations, which during this term in comparison with previous tenures dealt more comprehensively with various dimensions of socio-economic and political uplift of women. Fourth development was the healthy and productive coordination between women rights groups and policy makers on gender issues, facilitating pro-women legislation and acts. During these years, civil society organizations, including women rights groups advocated for four women concerns. The first remained the anti-women practices in the name of ‘custom’ like badal-e-sulh, wanni, sawara, Marriage with Quran and the denial of women inheritance right. The second demand of women rights groups was against the sexual harassment of women at work places, so that they could use best of their abilities in their professional life by setting aside all fear and harassment from the opposite gender. The third cause of an advocacy campaign was for the acid burn victims, who are commonly women. The fourth focus of women rights groups was for an effective legislation to sensitize the government over the issue of domestic abuse.

Since long in Punjab province, women have been the victims of customary socio-cultural practices, which not only curtailed their right of marriage, but at times also deprived them honorably living without domination. Over-time, apparent increase in the figures of anti-women cultural practices does not necessarily signify the growing crimes in actual terms but it also reflects that since media and civil society became more effective, these cases are at last being registered, publicized and discussed in a wider women rights circles. Therefore, these categories of crimes attracted the attention of women rights groups and
activists. During this phase, they not only started an advocacy campaign for proper legislation, to arrest these practices but also condemned the role of local Punchayets, who in the name of culture play a key role in the execution of these crimes against women. The government responded formally to the demands of civil society in the shape of legislation in 2011, under the title of *Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill*. This legislation was applauded by women rights organizations and activists. While expressing pleasure over this legislation, the resident director of *Aurat Foundation*, Mahnaz Rahman stated, “We have been advocating for the abolishment of anti-women laws and practices for decades. Finally, we see a ray of hope.”

Important to mention is the lack of effectiveness due to the lacunas at the implementation stage of this legislation and accordingly the women rights groups adjusted their further demands. The anti-women customary practice of ‘honour killing’ *(Karo-Kari)* increased. According to the statistics compiled from various organizations from 2010 to 2012, an Urdu newspaper *Jang* reported that the murder in the name of honour has increased in the country and the Faisalabad (a second largest city in the province of Punjab) had the highest number of such cases. The newspaper went on to explain further that in last three years, 37 cases have been registered in Punjab. According to another estimation provided by the same source, only during a single month of 2012, under this customary practice, 33 married or un-married people, including 22 women were killed by their parents, brothers, and husbands or even by neighbours. While considering this figure, I should not forget that there are number of such cases which are not even registered. Therefore, it is presumed that real number of ‘honour killing’ victims might be more alarming. While talking about these figures, the Chief Executive officer of *Women Development Groups*, Umer Aftab recognizing this reality remarked that the implementation of laws is faulty and “woman is valued as a property. There is a need to

704 See Chapter 6, for detailed analysis of this bill.
706 *Jang*, September 08, 2012. According to another statistic reported by Jang Development Reporting Cell, in Pakistan, during 2011, the murder in the name of ‘honour’ has increased to 27 percent. For this see, *Jang*, November 25, 2012.
bring awareness in society."\(^{708}\) While adding Asma Jahangir said that “to kill women in the name of ‘honour’ is an insult of humanity. Does honour only relevant to men. In reality, in this society women are considered once property, which could be used in anyway. There is a need to change this attitude.”\(^{709}\) The murder of female in the name of ‘honour’ by their own family members take place in a situation, where young girls disagree to the selection of their parents and wish to marry with the person of their own choice. The increased number of murders under these circumstances also verifies the fact that more and more women want to exercise their right of marriage independently; despite of the reality that very few parents accept their choices. Here, it is important to mention that after getting married to the person of their own choice, it is presumed that the threat of being killed by their families decreases, however in reality it increases to the maximum. In this regard, the role of judges is equally important as the cases by the parents of those girls, who marry with their own choice, are registered against their husbands or in-laws, which causes tremendous mental torture for the married couple. The girl’s family often registers a case of kidnapping against her husband, under the pretext that the marriage was illegal as it did not obtain the permission of a ‘Wali (a male guardian)’. The real intention behind registering such cases by parents is “to regain control of a renegade daughter. Such cases can engulf entire families, as the police will often seize property and detain relatives of the accused man.”\(^{710}\) However progressively, the judiciary started to interpret the law differently. The contention by various religious scholars that the valid marriage requires permission by a male member of the family is not being accepted anymore by the courts. In one of such cases, while giving directions, Additional Session Judge of Lahore ordered the Police, to provide protection instead of harassment to the couple, who have married off with their own will.\(^{711}\) In reality, in spite of the judgement, outside the court, the relatives of the girls often resort to violence, attempting to get hold of the girl. Such instances also at times led to the murder of one of the parties. About such type of murders and harassment of women by their families, the views of Mahnaz Rahman, a resident director of Aurat Foundation, is quoted by Meghan "Meghan Davidson Ladly, “Defying Parents, Some Pakistani Women Risk All to Marry Whom They Choose,” New York Times, September 08, 2012.\(^{710}\) Daily Express, September 08, 2012, Translated by the Author."\(^{711}\)
Davidson Ladly, where Rehman states, “things are changing; the girls are becoming bolder, they are continuously taking steps, and they are not afraid to die. They know that they will be killed, but even then they are taking these steps because they can’t conform to the values of their parents. They are the girls of this modern age.” The views of Rehman are confined to a number of middle or lower middle class educated girls. The situation in the rural setting is worse, where girls have hardly any say in such matters.

Despite of endorsement of women’s right in inheritance, in Anti-women Practices Bill 2011, especially the rural women at large continue to be denied of their rights. The awareness campaign of civil society organizations, particularly women groups are not only helping women to get their share but also through various programs are sensitizing them that this practise is against religion, law of the land and its nothing but a blatant act of blackmail and dominance. Women Welfare Organization is one of such association, whose Chairperson Sonia Naz, while talking to Urdu newspaper Jang mentioned, “90% women, who contact them to get their share in inheritance are from rural areas, however, 10% are from urban centres. Most of them are uneducated and unaware of the legalities to claim their share in courts. These women are so helpless and our organization is working for them. We provide them complete legal assistance to claim their right,” but with the little success. In this regard, the stage dramas organized by women rights organizations cannot be neglected. One of such play was organized by Simorgh Women’s Resource and Publication Centre in Lahore, which highlighted various dimensions of denied religious and legal inheritance right of women, particularly in rural areas. At the conclusion of this play, Justice Dr NasirAliqbal enlightened the audience over the proportion of women share in the property of their family as a daughter, sister, wife and mother in Islam. Justice Iqbal stressed on the responsive and helpful attitude of courts towards the denial of women inherited share. Although, the audience of such dramas are urbanites but since the Punjabi society has an intertwined connection between the rural and urban societies through continuous urbanization. Therefore, such plays even in

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712 Meghan Davidson Ladly, op.cit.
713 Jang, October 12, 2012.
714 “Kholo Surt Mat di Bari (Open the Window of your Intellect),” Organized by Simorgh Women’s Resource and Publication Centre, held in ‘Ali Institute Auditorium, Lahore’, on 15\textsuperscript{th} October, 2010. This Punjabi play was attended by the Author.
an urban centres do provide a logical justification that it would ultimately sensitize the typical ruralized societal set-up. Because of the projection of civil society, we presume that the Punjab government through various means aimed to provide some property related incentives to female population of the province. In Punjab Assembly, ‘Punjab Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill 2012’ was passed on 27th December 2012. Through this bill, the land system is computerized, through which the prescribed share of women in their father and husband’s property is demarcated. Moreover, Punjab government announced in its ‘Women Package 2012’ that the house which would be allotted in government sponsored ‘Jinnah Abadi Scheme’ would be a joint property of husband and wife, which could prove to be a good step to ensure women their property right.

Similarly, against under age marriages, women rights groups started their advocacy campaign by highlighting its worse impact on the health of women, as they face various complications during pregnancy, which are usually harmful for a child or a mother. Since 2008, ShirkatGah in particular, is campaigning against such marriages. In one of the advocacy campaign against under-age marriages, ShirkatGah along with other NGOs, stressed that one of the reasons of increased percentage of deaths during pregnancy are under-age marriages, because the physique of girls are not developed to the extent that they could carry the burden of pregnancy, which create complications for a child and also for a mother. It was further highlighted that “though the legal age of marriage for girl is 16 and boy is 18, which is discrimination but even this prescribed age is not followed. The delay or absence of girls birth registration misguide about their correct age. Government needs to emend the laws and till the amendment; it should strictly ensure the implementation of the existing laws. Government should make it sure that no girl should marry before 16 years of age.”715 Similar views were expressed in an event organized by Rehnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan, where the activists during their media briefing explained that “the under-age marriages are mostly common in poor families, which cause various physical and emotional problems for girls. According to the law of Pakistan, childhood marriages are not allowed. Nevertheless, there is a frivolous

punishment of one month or one thousand rupee (both punishments can be given at the same time), if the legal age for marriage is being over-ride.” During this Media workshop, the participants also demanded from government to prescribe equal age of marriage for girls and boys.

Apart from these suggestions, the women organizations in their research and policy papers also highlighted the role of Punjab government and other state institutions in addressing this issue. For example, *Shirkat Gah* in one of its publication pointed out that by now, Punjab government could not legislate any law against child marriages. However, judiciary has played positive role in addressing this issues as the “higher courts in Pakistan have outlawed giving away of women (mostly young) to settle disputes by parallel justice systems such as *punchaiyts* and *jirgas*. Most of these verdicts have come in response to public interest litigations and suomoto actions. Case law reveals that the courts have upheld the right of the woman to repudiate an early-age marriage performed by her father, guardian or mother.”

Keeping in view the above-mentioned customary practices, the street theatres like *Ajoka* through its drama performances also tried to bring awareness among people, especially the young female population. In one activity, *Ajoka* along with *Lahore Arts Council* organized a three-days theatre festival (9-11 March, 2012), titled “*Wajud-i-Zan Sai Hai Tasweer-i-Kainat Mein Rang (All colours in world are because of woman)*” to celebrate the International Women’s day. The play “*Mainoon Kari Kareenday Ni Mae (They are subjecting me to honour-killing O Mother!)*” inaugurated the festival, aiming to sensitize people about this heinous customary practice against women, so that such kind of crimes could be discouraged. The most interesting part of this festival was the involvement of different academic institutions of Lahore, which helped the performers to stage in their campuses, by providing them appropriate facilities. While mentioning this festival to an English newspaper *Dawn*, Madeeha Gauha, the coordinator of *Ajoka*, stated, “I wanted to involve educational institutions because it is important to raise awareness among the

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716 *Jang*, October 02, 2012.
young generation on women issues since they are future of Pakistan. Hopefully our young people will bring about the much needed change in society.\textsuperscript{718} I strongly support Gauhar’s opinion about the contribution of young population and becoming an important instrument of change regarding gender biased socio-cultural practices. However, the venue of drama festival as already said before determines that only urbanized upper and middle class population could approach it, who are less patriarchal and hardly executes any such custom. Thus such events are unable to have an impact on the affected part of the society, which resides in rural areas and belongs to the poorer sector. Moreover, being alien to the rural set-up, the audience of such events are unable to comprehend a strong network of \textit{panchayat} system, which play pivotal role in spreading anti-women crimes. Therefore, despite of legislation and advocacy campaign against anti-women customary practices, the female population is still being victimized. Hence, the women rights groups and activists believe that legislation merely does not signify any change in the deprived socio-cultural status of Pakistani women, unless a proper implementation mechanism is not formed.

The second demand of women rights groups from 2008 to 2010 was for the legislation to combat sexual harassment of women at work places. In 2010, after much deliberation, the \textquote{Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act} was passed. The bill was strongly supported by civil society and women organizations, who formed an \textit{Alliance against Sexual Harassment (AASHA)}.\textsuperscript{719} While welcoming this law, a senior women member of Lahore High Court Bar and head of a local NGO, advocate Amna Ajmal, who also launched a campaign against sexual harassment of lawyers in Lahore High Court Bar\textsuperscript{720}, said that this legislation would provide protection to women. However, it will not bring results unless a roadmap would not be set with complete

\textsuperscript{718} \textit{Dawn}, March 08, 2012.
\textsuperscript{719} Action Aid Islamabad, Bedari Islamabad, Hawwa Associates Islamabad, Interactive Resource Centre Lahore, Mehergarh: A Centre for Learning Islamabad, PILER Karachi, PODA Islamabad, Preview Productions, WORD Islamabad.
\textsuperscript{720} \textit{The Express Tribune}, July 11, 2012.
seriousness. One of an ardent member of AASHA and women right activist Faouzia Saeed, while sharing her experience, when the bill was in process to be passed state “this bill only asked that organizations establish a dignified work environment for both men and women. The religious politicians were claiming that the bill was anti-Islam, but they were having a hard time making a logical argument of how it violated Islam, which protects human dignity in all cases.” Irrespective of opposition, this bill became a law. The need for this legislation also emerged out of realization that women workforce is increasing day by day because of growing economic pressures in the country, especially in Punjab as the families needs a supplement income to manage the house-hold. Therefore, to provide them a secure environment without any harassment was the most needed demand of women groups. However, as mentioned above that the 18th amendment, to formulate a mechanism to ensure safe environment for women is the responsibility of provincial governments. Under this amendment, provinces have been empowered to legislate a law and accordingly design a mechanism. While endorsing the efforts of government in a shape of harassment law and its impact on women, Saeed stressed on the role of provincial governments in her writing:

Among the positive steps already taken, the laws against sexual harassment stand out. This legislative package not only addressed the issues in the organized workplaces, but also stamped the legitimacy of women to enter all work and public spaces. Despite years of militancy and chauvinism aimed at pushing women behind the four walls of their homes, they have continued to assert their right to be economically active citizens. Although still in process, the implementation of these laws has shown concrete results. Sexual harassment cases filed by women under these laws now number in the thousands. Still, the provincial governments need to address this issue more seriously.

Thus, to sensitize national and provincial governments over the implementation of Harassment law, women groups organized various seminars and conferences. One of such seminar was organized by AASHA, in which the speakers demanded from the Chief Ministers of all provinces including Punjab, to appoint the ombudsmen to redress the problems.

721 Jang, September 26, 2012.
complains of the victims of sexual harassment and to send directions to government
and private departments for the enforcement of this law. While talking at this seminar,
the Director of another member organization ‘Mehergarh’, MaleehaHussain, shared that
“AASHA was running six legal aid centres in the country to provide free legal aid to
women (and) the centres in Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Karachi and
Hyderabad have one lawyer and one counselor each.” Similarly, Women Empowerment
Group, issued a statement, highlighting the frail implementation of harassment law,
which is unable to provide protection to the working women at their workplaces.
Although, this law pronounces the punishment of 3 years and compensation of 5 lac
rupees for the culprit but because of the lack of its application, the perpetrators go un-
punished and the victimized women to preserve the honour of their families are
conditioned to remain quiet. These seminars and statements helped to sensitize the
provincial governments including Punjab Assembly, which after delay of two years of the
national legislation on harassment, passed “The Punjab Protection against Harassment of
Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Bill” in 2012, under which the office of the
Ombudsperson was set-up to hear such cases and give prescribed punishment, under law.
The Punjab Ombudsperson Mira Phailbus acknowledged that the awareness campaign
has been launched by Punjab government with the cooperation of 50 NGOs, so that the
working women could become aware of the procedure of complaints. Phailbus also
accepted the fact that due to the patriarchal structure of society, women victims are
usually shy in registering the cases of harassment. There are two prominent reasons of
this reluctance; first is that in the Punjabi society, the burden of every crime against
woman is considered her own fault. Secondly, once she registers the case, the stigma of
being dishonored is attached with her for a lifetime, which not only affects her
professional but also her personal life. While talking about the impact of provincial
legislation on harassment, a commentator Mohammad Awais, concluded in his article
giving a different perspective as that “the anti-harassment act will go a long way in
improving economic conditions of the country because the women, who are 51 per cent

724 Pakistan Today, January 09, 2011.
725 Jang, September 13, 2012.
726 “Punjab Ombudsperson to curb sexual harassment against women,” Ajj News, posted July03, 2013,
of total population, will join the national workforce without any fear of harassment and could utilise their best capabilities.\textsuperscript{727}

Apart from sensitizing government on the mentioned challenges of working women, the civil society also highlighted the significance of women employment. In this regard, an Urdu newspaper \textit{Jang} conducted a survey from the working women of Lahore, where they shared their contribution to their families. The participants of this survey collectively pointed out that the working women are more disciplined and active. Additionally, they are effective managers and economic contributors in the finances of the household. They also prove to be good mothers, sisters and daughters.\textsuperscript{728} These all qualities of working women were also acknowledged by Chairperson of \textit{Prime Foundation}, who while talking to one of the seminar, discussed various challenges for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan ranging from socio-cultural environment to religious miss-interpretations. Chairperson Malik stressed that an equal employment opportunities for women and supportive role of husbands is responsible to make business women successful in our country.\textsuperscript{729} Another organization working for the economic uplift of women, \textit{Behbood Association}, believes that only economic development of women can guarantee their better societal placement. For this purpose, first the association provided guidance to women for acquiring a job; second, they provide training of manual work and thirdly through various ways helped the destitute women.\textsuperscript{730}

The third issue of increased number of acid attacks on women, mobilized the advocacy campaign by women right groups. The 70\% victims of such attacks are women. In order to confront these tendencies, a legislative draft was presented in the National Assembly, which was jointly prepared with members of Islamabad based \textit{Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Ministry of Women Development (MoWD)}. It resulted in an enactment of “\textit{Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill, 2011}”. Apart, the bill received a strong support of devoted and concerned organizations like “\textit{Depilex Smile}

\textsuperscript{728} \textit{Jang}, 22 October, 2012.
\textsuperscript{729} \textit{Jang}, 11 December, 2012.
\textsuperscript{730} \textit{Jang}, 26 September, 2012.
“Again Foundation” and the “Bakhtawar Amin Memorial Trust Hospital”, which became an important instrument for the help of victims, by providing them medical aid. Through various seminars and conferences, they also encouraged women to live a normal life, once recovered from this physical and emotional abuse. In this regard, different civil society organizations and electronic media continuously played a significant role for the highlight of this serious issue. Moreover, the documentary programs and special reports which different television channels telecasted further sensitized the society about this accelerating social dilemma. One of such documentary was by Oscar Award winner, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, who worked hard with her team to highlight this issue on national and international media, so that a possible solution could be found, preventing this growing social problem in Pakistan. Another such activity to generate a public opinion was conducted by Gallup Pakistan in 2012, with the sampled population of 2685, from the rural and urban areas of all provinces. In this opinion poll, the participants rated the act of throwing acid as the worst crime against women with 39%, followed by domestic violence 24%, honour killing 21% and Vani 13%.731 Despite of the legislation and opinion polls against this inhuman crime, the cases of acid attacks did not reduce. According to another the report of ASF, in 2012 the nationwide reported cases of acid attacks were 84% in Pakistan, 45% were over family disputes, while 17% were over refusing marriage offers.732 This crime could not be curtailed due to the absence of a comprehensive legislation, at provincial level. Even the 2011 federal legislation as mentioned above could not full-fill its purpose. This factor is highlighted by the Chairperson of ASF, Valerie Khan, who in one of her interviews to an English newspaper expressed, “the civil society insisted from December 13, 2011 onwards that it was only the first step of a more comprehensive legislative apparel and that more efforts and action from the government and the legislators would be required to also pass the comprehensive Acid and Burn Crime Bill along with the Acid Control Bill at provincial level.”733 Thus despite of an active role of civil society in highlighting the victims of acid attacks in Punjab, the absence of provincial legislation against this crime became

731 “Opinion Poll-Women-Violence against Women,” (Islamabd: Gilani Research Foundation, Press Release), March 27, 2012; See also, Jang, September 08, 2012.
732 The Express Tribune, October 20, 2012.
733 The News, July 16, 2013
responsible for its increase, which rose to new heights in 2013.\textsuperscript{734} According to ASF, from January to July of 2013, 50 acid burn cases were registered throughout the country.\textsuperscript{735}

The fourth focus of women rights groups was to sensitize government over the issue of domestic abuse, by acknowledging the growing percentage of this crime in the country, including that of Punjab. According to the estimated percentage of domestic violence cases by \textit{Aurat Foundation}, “in 2011, the number of domestic abuse increased to 26 percent, when compared to 2010. In 2011, 6188 cases of violence were registered in Punjab, which were higher than the other provinces.”\textsuperscript{736} While supporting these percentages from a different angle and presenting a solution, the \textit{White Ribbon Campaign} during its media workshop stated that 80 percent women are victims of domestic abuse, in one form or another and to stop this abuse, there is a need to bring awareness among male population of the country. For this reason, during the campaign, the participation of men was made obligatory.\textsuperscript{737} Important to mention is that the campaign to make a comprehensive law against domestic abuse started in 2002 but legislation dealing with this issue, despite of the efforts of two parliamentarians, Sherry Rehman and Mehnaz Rafi was tabled in National Assembly for the first time in 2009. The bill is still pending and yet to be passed till the time of this research. The main hindrance comes from the orthodoxy, who considers the bill inappropriate, as mentioned in Chapter 5. Disappointment by the opposition of orthodoxy, the Chairperson of the \textit{National Commission on the Status of Women}, Anis Haroon said that the “religious parties have their own worldview and thrive on it, opposing anything to do with women. Giving freedom and rights to women is westernising them.”\textsuperscript{738} The chairperson recognized that they have limitations because being a patriarchal society with an added factor of coalition government, where each party having their individual agendas, it becomes difficult to have a consensus. The allegations of orthodoxy against this bill have been answered time and again by various women rights groups. Responding, the Director of \textit{Shirkat Gah

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{734}The Express Tribune, June06, 2014.  
736Jang, November 25, 2012.  
737Jang, September 07, 2012.  
Advocacy and Communications, Fauzia Viqar, disagree with orthodoxy that that men are also subjected to domestic abuse, she out rightly rejected this contention that it is only the women and children, who are in fact the prime targets of the abuse. Secondly, Viqar made attempts to influence the parliamentary religious leaders for the change of mind and to grant more rights to the police to intervene, when any domestic violence case is reported, because physical and mental health of a woman takes priority over privacy.\textsuperscript{739} She writes that “domestic violence is generally considered to be a private matter and even state institutions ascribe to that…this mindset must change.”\textsuperscript{740} The arguments of orthodoxy on this bill were also countered by various segments of civil society, in which media played an important role in bringing awareness about the issues causing domestic violence through different forums. These sentiments are reflected in a survey organized by Urdu newspaper Jang, in which the participants considered the patriarchal mind-set, a major reason of domestic violence, because the intention is to control the body and mind of women, by destroying their individuality. The partakers also pointed out that the emotional abuse is equally an important variation of victimizing women in a domestic environment and which is hardly recognized in any law and even the women themselves are not aware of this particular violation. Moreover, generally women in the Punjabi society, especially those residing in rural areas are prone to domestic violence of all shades to the level that they hardly consider it as an offence.\textsuperscript{741} However, due to the growing awareness through media and civil society organizations, women have started to realize that domestic abuse is a serious crime, which has now become one of the causes of increasing divorce rate amongst the educated women of the Punjab. While reporting the increased number of filed cases of divorce from Lahore (Capital city of Punjab), a widely read Urdu newspaper \textit{Jang} reported that during the sampled 8 months of 2012, three thousand women approached the courts for \textit{Khula} (divorce by a woman in Islamic law). The principal reason as reported by the newspaper remained domestic abuse.\textsuperscript{742}

Importantly to mention is that in near similar Muslim societies like Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh, the law against domestic abuse exists. However in Pakistan a

\textsuperscript{739}“Home and Hearth: ShirkatGah to Launch Campaign against Domestic Violence,” \textit{The Express Tribune}, November 21 2013.
\textsuperscript{740}“Forms of abuse: ‘Change mindsets to end domestic violence’,”\textit{The Express Tribune}, December 04, 2013.
\textsuperscript{741}\textit{Jang}, November 23, 2012.
\textsuperscript{742}\textit{Jang}, September 03, 2012.
different situation exist because of the dominant role of the religious elements in legislative bodies, where they have pursued their own, though incorrect interpretation of the Islamic laws. A well-read commentator on women issues, Fakhira Tahreem, points out the delay of the government to legislate on domestic abuse as:

I am unable to understand, why the law making bodies in Pakistan are hesitant to legislate against the domestic abuse. Although, the Punjab government is committed to legislate on this matter and some progress was also made, notwithstanding the lapse of many months, there is still no development in this direction. In Pakistan, violence is recognized only when some physical part injured especially if a fractured occurs in an arm and legs. The use of abusive language is not recognized as violence act. Unless, there is a definite law, FIR (First Information Report) with a police cannot be filed. If the relevant law is in place, it would help to control such crimes.743

Though, the proper legislation could not take place in this regard, nevertheless, in response to an advocacy campaign of women right groups, the range of already established Women Crisis Centres at the federal level were expanded. In 1988, the first crisis centre was established by Benazir Bhutto’s government in Punjab province. The purpose of such centers was to provide required services to the women victims of abuse and violence. When in 2008, PPPP government came in power; it renamed these centres as Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Crisis Centres and vowed to provide relief for women by expanding its network in various areas. After the 18th amendment in the constitution, the Federal Ministry of Women Development was decentralized and the proper functioning of these centers, consisting of 118 staff member became doubtful, as now they now functioned under the provincial governments. The Punjab government failed to allocate funds for these centers, arguing that similar state shelter homes Darul-Aman (shelters), are already providing similar services as by Benazir centers. This argument

743Fakhira Terhreem, “Gharelo Tashadud ka Masla-Keya Qanoon Sazi ho Sakeyge? (Problem of Domestic Abuse, would the legislation be possible),”Jang, September 01, 2012. See also, Bina Shah, “Time to pass the domestic violence bill,”The Express Tribune, 12th April, 2012, where she states, “I’ve read through the Bill in its entirety and honestly can see nothing ‘un-Islamic’ or ‘anti-Pakistan’ or ‘anti-Eastern culture’ in it. At the most, it provides technical and legal procedures and due process under legal guidelines for how to stop domestic violence, harassment, and emotional and mental abuse (such as the withholding of money from a spouse in order to manipulate or control her). If anything, this Bill strengthens Pakistani families, and is completely in line with what Islam outlines as proper behavior between spouses in the sacred space of the home.”
was refuted by an activist and retired Justice Nasira Javid Iqbal, who identified the difference between the two in a meeting at Press Club Lahore, “these centres are as important as the 1122 service (emergency service). They provide psychological and medical aid, relocation and counselling.” Conversely, Darul-Aman, having inadequate health, education and legal aid related facilities, is accommodating more women than its capacity. While talking to an Urdu newspaper, the Superintendent Darul-Aman Lahore, Misbah shared that this shelter particular home has the capacity to accommodate 50 women but usually 70 to 75 women and 14 children live here and most are referred by the courts. However, the tussle between Federal and provincial government of Punjab weakened the prospects and effectiveness of these centers, which badly affected the women victims of domestic abuse in this province. The only hope for these victims was to get help from various privately managed shelter homes, ranging from counseling to providing legal help. The example of such kind of private Lahore base shelter homes is Kashana and Dastak. Kashana, apart from providing shelter to the women of domestic abuse and violence also offer emotional support, education related facilities and vocational training thus enabling them to acquire respectable jobs. This shelter home has a reputation of providing a safe and peaceful environment to its inhabitants. It has also taken itself, a responsibility to arrange marriages, when require. While talking to the same newspaper, the Superintendent of Kashnana shared that “every girl living here has her own story of violence and each story is accomplished to the level that it can get a shape of a book.” Another such Lahore base shelter home “Dastak”, formed in 1991 provide accommodation to 6395 women victims of violence and abuse. In one of the conversations, the Director of Dastak, Victoria Bajan told that mostly the women reach, who here are the victims of domestic cruelty and violence, however, “women are day by day getting more awareness about their rights and its credit goes to media.”

From 1999 to 2012, the contribution of civil society and women rights groups remained pro-active. During this phase, their struggle was not only confined to an advocacy campaign for women rights but they were also able to lobby in the parliament, resulting


745Jang, October 16, 2012.
in some women friendly legislation. While endorsing this progressive role of civil society during this phase, Aurat Foundation in its newsletter evaluated that “civil society has emerged as a major stakeholder among governance institutions outside the State orbit. There is increased awareness on issues which were never on the priority list of political parties with the gender gap in literacy rate in urban centres narrowing down to almost nil.”\textsuperscript{747}

10.4: Conclusion

Concluding, I could say that from 1947 to 2012, civil society, including women rights organizations matured themselves to a level, where they have positioned themselves, so as to contribute effectively, in empowering women through various ways. Their performance can be measured through two dimensions. First, these rights organizations have managed to bring awareness and secondly they became instrumental in advocating for the women related legislation. However, its efforts to make considerable advancements towards improving the conditions of Punjabi females are significantly limited. During our research, I noticed that only those women could get benefits from the initiatives of women rights organizations, who are educated enough to understand the complexities of the issues. Even in this case, the major hurdle is from the orthodoxy and patriarchal mind-set. While explaining the impact of women NGOs in transforming women status, an official of Aurat Foundation is of the view that although the women related NGOs has come under pressure from the orthodoxy, blaming them that they pursue the agendas of donors, which are mostly located in the western countries. However the reality is that these organizations have contributed considerably towards the welfare of Punjabi women. These NGOs have highlighted those issues, which are vital for the well being and upward mobility of the women. These includes women legal and Islamic right of marriage, divorce, mobility and choice of job. In spite of the obstacles created by patriarchal society, the women have taken advantage of the attained knowledge and have pursued their rights in a reasonably effective manner. However,\textsuperscript{747} “Legislative Watch, Quarterly Newsletter,” Aurat Foundation, Issue No. 38 (Islamabad: Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, December 2011).
there are certain fields of activities, where the NGOs have not been able to make a break through, the prominent among these being the right of marriage and divorce, as well as mobility. Another aspect to betaken into consideration is that NGOs find it difficult to communicate directly with the rural women, who are not educated and therefore can not take advantage of the print material, highlighting their rights. The only means of communication in conditions is getting hold of local sources, providing incentives and monetary benefits, which then approach the local women to convey the message.

The growth and strength of civil society is also linked with the political out-look of Punjabi society, as witnessed through our research that there has been a variant reactions from different political set-ups towards it. Our study concludes that women organizations have been more effective from 2008 to 2012.

It is a given fact as mentioned previously that no matter the certain governments might have had a supportive attitude towards the demands of the NGOs, but they felt handicapped in the presence of a strong orthodoxy in the provincial assembly of Punjab. The added factors, which contributed towards this obstacle is the century’s old patriarchal culture. In spite of the presence of these hindrances, the role of women groups significantly increased during this time-period, which as an agent of change sensitized the female population about the gender-based injustices, resulting in pro-women legislation. Although, these efforts could not achieve much, nevertheless NGOs provided an effective platform for discussion and thrashing out appropriate solutions for the challenges faced by the Punjabi women.
Chapter 11: Conclusion

This research primarily revolved around the placement of women in the Punjab province of Pakistan, in changing socio-cultural environment, particularly with reference to such agents of change as; education, political process, media and civil society. After identifying various themes, based on the attention of respective authors, I noticed that our main hypothesis of research “The agents of change in the Punjab province of Pakistan have the capability to transform the placement of women in socio-cultural environment”, has been overlooked. Nonetheless, the local and foreign writers highlighted various aspects of the Punjabi women. Their research took little notice of the impact of agents of change, in reshaping the placement of Punjabi women. In this study, apart from an extensive qualitative data analysis, including primary sources, I made efforts to come in grips with the factual conditions of the Punjabi women, through interviews. To support my arguments, one to one interviews from the personals of women rights organizations, activists and lawyers, were conducted to comprehend the contribution of the state as well as the non-state actors, towards the social, legal and political empowerment of women in the Punjabi society. Apart from that, as supportive evidence, I visited three universities of Punjab (The University of the Punjab, Lahore College University for Women and Forman Christian College University). Our respondents were the university girls, representing nearly all socio-economic classes. The intension was to learn from their experiences regarding the impact of the agents of change on the lives of the Punjabi women, residing both in rural and urban settings. I adopted the method of an extensive questionnaire and focus group discussions to understand the aspirations of young educated female population, belonging to different social classes and localities (rural/urban) in Punjab, about various aspects of their status. The synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data analysis has helped us to reach at certain conclusions.

The investigation of an over-all socio-cultural, economic and political setting of Punjabi society, in particular and its Pakistani milieu in general has verified the complexity of women status. This research determined that the placement of women in the Punjabi society has been reshaped over a passage of time. Unlike the previous decades, this
society has witnessed induction of significant number of women in higher education and job-market, more participation of women in political process, including their representation in elective bodies. Apart from more organized women related civil society organizations and media (print, electronic and social), started to play a significant role. The debate in aforementioned chapters reveals the distinctive composition of socio-cultural setup in the Punjab province, with well-entrenched patriarchy along with orthodox interpretation of religion, that visualize women status subservient to male, and believe in their confinement to a specified role, devoid of individual will and freedom.

In this regard, the role of state through its governing bodies, no matter democratic or dictatorial is an important factor. The peculiarities of legislative and executive measures have been discussed separately in three exclusive chapters. From 1947 to 1977, accept MFLO of 1961 during dictatorial rule of Ayub Khan, no significant legislation affecting women was enacted. No doubt, the Family Ordinance proved to be a first comprehensive step, ensuring socio-economic incentives for women, although there were serious problems at the implementation stage. From 1977 to 1988, the gained social safeguards became ineffective, in many ways with the induction of Hudood Ordinance by another military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq. Under the guise of religion tried to redefine women status, overlapping its meaning with cultural connotations. The eleven years of Zia’s rule not only redefined the status of women, with conservative out-look but also altered the perception of society about various socio-cultural values, inculcating bigotry and extremism. These prejudices remained strong even in the democratic spells that followed, from 1988 to 1999, to a level that no attempt was made to repeal Zia’s discriminatory laws. A breakthrough was made in 2006 by another military dictator Pervaiz Musharaff, who through the enactment of Women Protection Bill, partially repealed Hudood laws, thus minimizing its impact on women. The five continuous years from 2008 to 2012 not only proved to be the first complete tenure for democracy but also demonstrated as an era of pro-women legislation. The women related legislations provided opportunities for the women to regain their lost status and to strive for betterment in their socio-economic position.
Apart from the legal assurances for a better women socio-economic status, in the shape of various ordinances, acts and bills; their position in the Punjabi society can be actually reshaped if the agents of change, as discussed in this research are appropriately applied in definite inferences.

The qualitative analysis of data, supported by women rights activists and educated female students interviews and focus group discussions revealed that education, media, civil society organizations and women involvement in political process could not bring drastic change in Punjabi women’s status. However, there are certain segments, where women were able to attain better status, but the pattern of change remained relatively uneven. Our investigation reveals that in some situations, the most significant role in transformation of women status is played by education, followed by media, political process and women organizations. Whereas in certain cases, political participation come first, followed by education, women organizations and media, in transformation of women placement. No matter, whatever is the sequence of these variables in their impact, a fact cannot be neglected that along with these variables, an over-all change in the attitudes, of both males and females, is equally important, corresponded by the responsive state machinery with objectivity of firm implementation of laws. While assessing women transformation in the changing socio-cultural environment, the factor of rural and urban divide cannot be neglected, with an understanding that the impact of agents of change in rural setting is different from that of urban. Our study reveals that both in rural/urban Punjab, the most significant agent of change is education followed by other variables as mentioned above.

It is further derived from our research that in spite of advancements, women still have less options and their spaces are confined. As far as legislation is concerned, I come to the conclusion that contrary to rural women, its impact is more visible on urbanites as they are more equipped and aware of the utilization of relevant laws for the attainment of their rights through courts. On the other hand, the rural women are neither aware of the laws, nor do they have the capacity and conducive environment to make a claim for their legal rights. Adding in the debate of women placement, it is further assessed that the Pakistani society maintains a double standard, in terms of religion and culture, where
convenience is the pivotal decisive factor. The concept of supremacy and control of male is usually determined by mothers of a family. Moreover, the role of religious orthodoxy cannot be over-looked, as it also believes in the subservient role of a female. However, a major reason of gender inequality remains in the overall socio-cultural mindset of patriarchy, reinforced by religious orthodoxy. The most damaging impact of this well-entrenched peculiar environment is that the girls are likely to become conditioned to a conviction that they have a specified subservient role to play in the family and their immediate environment.

My extensive research which was carried to find out the impact of the agents of change on the Punjabi women took me through various points of view and conditions under which the Punjabi women are placed. It also took notice of the efforts of the government to empower the women under given circumstances. Although, this exercise was complicated and had multiple dimensions which were not uniformed in nature but nevertheless we can draw a conclusion that although the selected agents of change in the Punjab province of Pakistan have the capability to transform the placement of women in the prevalent socio-cultural environment, nevertheless a balanced and unified change, addressing the fundamental issues of the Punjabi women could not be achieved. However, we can not ignore the fact that there was a transformation at the peripheral and cosmetic, level, across the socio-economic classes with lot of efforts and dedication, needed to achieve acceptable level of women empowerment in the Punjabi society.. Due to the growing awareness because of education, political mobilization, media and women rights organization, today, women are more aware of their rights. Supplementing, economic independence is equally important as it empowers women, particularly those belonging to the middle and low-middle class, in various ways. Though, middle class women are able to get education and are acquiring good jobs, nevertheless they are restricted, when it comes to their choices in such social matters as marriage and divorce. In these matters, they are still facing various kinds of socio-cultural pressures. Though, governmental laws have provided more safeguards to the women when it comes to marriage, divorce and inheritances, however, women freedoms in these matters remain limited. Therefore, we derive that the state actions (including courts and legislation) no matter how serious they were could not identify the real problems of stagnation in the patriarchal society in other
words, it reflects that formal political and legal sector’s main weaknesses additionally manifested at the implementation stage. Similarly, unaccompanied mobility of women, particularly in the late hours is not accepted by the society, when compared to their brothers. However, it has been observed that working women are comparatively freer in their mobility than the uneducated housewives. Contrary to the middle class women, the upper class are comparatively freer in mobility, education, job and they face less pressure in their choice for marriage. However, in some instances they also face societal pressures, particularly when it comes to such matters as marriage and divorce. The most vulnerable are the low class women, who being devoid of education are unable to comprehend the message of media and women rights organizations about their basic rights. Thus, an enhanced change in their placement is hardly visible.

In the light of the above arguments, I come to the conclusion that in Punjabi society, the place of a woman as an independent individual is not recognized and her position is measured through other factors, like her marital status (married, un-married and divorcee) and bearing of children (preference for a son). Thus, the transformation of women placement is difficult and the common factors hampering its way are century’s old socio-cultural mind-set and prevalent influence of orthodoxy. These two hurdles are strongly imbibed in the Punjabi society, in such a manner that unless an over-all mind-set is not transformed, the pattern of change in women status would remain uneven and spasmodic.

**Recommendations**

Our research reveled a number of omissions and gaps, which needs to be fulfilled for the betterment of the women of the Punjab province of Pakistan. In this regard, we recommend the following measures.

1. The syllabus, particularly for the primary and secondary level students must include lessons, which promote a respect for the females, may they be mothers, sisters or a stranger. The school books should not only carry the pictures of boys, as it is now; rather the girls should also be shown, performing some noble deeds.
2. In the Punjabi society, mothers with growing children play an important part in setting the tone of family relationships and attitudes. In many instances, mothers; mostly uneducated or semi educated are equally responsible for the discrimination of their daughters or grand daughters. Educated mothers can help reduce discretion against the women. Thereby, more emphasis must be given to female education.

3. In subsequent years various laws were enacted for the protection of the female population of the Punjab province, but at implementation stage there are numerous hindrances, which neutralizes even the most just laws. Efforts must be made for the refinement of such laws and a monitoring system be established, to oversee the relevant laws.

4. The orthodoxy conveniently ignores the contribution of women, towards the society, in the past as well as present. Media, in particular - must give proper emphasis; highlighting the role and importance of women personalities, which played a pivot role during the golden eras of the Islamic civilization.