EFFECTIVENESS OF FEMALE *MADARIS* IN WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT IN PAKISTAN

Submitted By

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*A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology*

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Effectiveness of Female Madaris in Women’s Empowerment in Pakistan

Abstract

This study explored the role of female Madaris (Islamic seminaries) in women’s empowerment in Pakhtun Society. The key aim of the study was to examine whether Female Madaris empower women or perpetuate women subordination in Pakhtun Society. The study attempted to understand and highlight how madrassah stakeholders (Muhtamim) and female madrassah graduates think of women when it comes to equality between males and females or establishing an egalitarian social structure. The study was carried out in two districts (Nowshera and Peshawar) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study was conducted by employing Qualitative research methodology. The study’s respondents consisted of three groups (Muhtamins/teachers, students and students’ parents). Interview guide was used as tool of data collection. The relevant data was collected through in-depth interviews (both individual and group) and personal observations in field. With an insight from interpretivism/hermeneutics, the data was analyzed and presented thematically. The overall claim that the study makes is that female Madaris in study locale produce a cluster of females for perpetuating patriarchal structure of society under the garb of religiosity. The knowledge taught in female madaris is selected knowledge that is controlled and interpreted by men for their hegemonic interest. This teaching and interpretation of knowledge from men’s perspective and its internalization by female students has led them to false consciousness. The assertion that is made is that female Madaris strengthen patriarchy and male hegemony instead of empowering women. Thus, it is concluded that female Madaris of pakhtun society are reproducing the existing pakhtun patriarchal norms and structures. These institutions are received financial support from local and international
actors coupled with access to political power structure. The institutions work as camp offices for religious political parties and their rhizomization leads to the multiplication of their vote bank. These Madaris, in return, promise to keep intact the vested interest of the actor/donors implicitly.

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The path to get this research done is littered with distractions. At each distraction I found some ‘guiding lamps’ of my journey. Among them the foremost is my supervisor Professor Johar Ali who had been a mentor, an advisor, at times a strict teacher and at times a friend. Throughout my research journey he has been the motivator to learn new things more and more. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor/advisor other than him. Besides Professor Dr. Johar Ali, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my foreign supervisor Professor Derek McGhee, head of social sciences at the University of Southampton, who immensely supported and encouraged me during my 6 months visit to Southampton and patiently read my drafts written in Asian English.

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I like to extend my thanks to the staff of Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar for their cooperation and help in making all the necessary arrangements of my PhD.

Last but not the least I would like to thank my parents and siblings who supported me spiritually, their support and prayers have always surrounded me inside and outside Pakistan. I feel I could not have made this success without them.
DEDICATION

DEDICATED TO MY FATHER WHO SAW THIS DREAM FOR ME AND MY MOTHER WHO PRAYED FOR THIS DREAM TO COME TRUE
This study attempts to examine the effectiveness of female Madaris in women’s empowerment in Pakistan. The inspiration for this study comes from the current serious academic concern regarding the role of Madaris, especially for the last two decades. Albeit in the Muslim world it is strongly believed that Madaris\(^1\) have played/played an important role in promoting learning, both secular and religious (Sheikh, 2010; Ali, 2009; Winkelmann, 2005; Ahmed, 2002; Ali, 1996; Kraan, 1984; Ahmad, 1982) and molding the personalities of individuals in the light of religious teachings in the history of Muslim society. Religious education was not restricted to male but was also given to female in the informal environment of homes. It is an established fact that formal education for females was not institutionalized until late 18\(^{th}\) century. Previously, females were taught religious education at home through prominent teachers and scholars of their time along with domestic skills and ‘Adab\(^2\)’ instructed by elderly skilled women. Since the advent of Islam, the aim and focus of such practices were grounded in a stereotype belief of socializing young girls as “house wives” and “mothers” for long time. It was not until late 1800s when the trend of female Madaris started and spread rapidly (Charafi, 2007). Their purpose was to discipline women in line with Islamic norms and values in the Muslim world (Farooq, 2005), especially of South Asia. It was in 1970s that the tendency of establishing female Madaris emerged in Pakistan primarily concentrating upon imparting religious education to women.

This study is aims to assess and understand the concept of women’s empowerment in the context of female Madaris and its impact upon the role of Madrasah graduates in modern society. In other words, the study attempt to examine the status and potential role of female Madaris graduates in contemporary society. Thus, it can also be asserted that female Madaris/female religious institution is a part power struggle, Islamic feminist would argue, which may play an important role in women’s empowerment (see Bano, 2010).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Madrasah phenomenon is an emergent area of research. A number of researchers (like Ahmad, 1999; Charafi, 1990; Christopher, 2008; Makdisi, 2008) have tried to explore different aspects of such religious educational institutions. For instance, history and structure of Madrasah, parent’s preferences towards Madrasah education, Madrasah reforms and relationship between extremism and Madaris are some of the aspects which have been researched. However, the phenomenon of female Madaris is yet to be explored in detail as various aspects and facets of female Madrasah have not yet been explored.

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\(^1\) Madrasah (plural Madarris) is an Arabic word which means place of learning.

\(^2\) Adab is an Arabic word which refers to the prescribed Islamic etiquettes: refinements, good manners, morals, decorum, decency, humanness (see Firmage et al., 1990, pp. 202-3). Winkelmann (2005, pp.72-73) refers to it as “value education”.

researched. Hence, the main focus of my research is on the role of female Madaris for preparing young women for their social and economic roles in society. The study is an attempt to analyze the phenomenon of women’s empowerment from the perspectives of madrassah stakeholders.

Since 2010, Madaris have been under pressure to be more transparent in their independent status as NGOs, introduce more progressive curriculum and prepare their students for active part in mainstream society (Khan, 2011). These organizations enjoyed an authoritative position throughout their history for providing religious education and preaching the basic principles of Islam. Due to its traditional/conservative approach, some of the western writers, national and international media, declared that some Madaris are centers of propagating terrorism. Similarly, female Madaris were also looked upon with suspicion by the secular actors within and outside the country (especially USA and European countries), regarding their explicit/implicit role in educating their students as per Islamic teachings and promoting religious fanaticism. Hence, it was felt necessary by the researcher (being a member of the same society) to study the role of female Madaris in educating women to understand their status, role, duties and rights in relation to Islam in a developing country like Pakistan.

1.2 Rationale of the study

So far a number of studies have focused on the different aspects and trends associated with Madaris (See Jessica, 2001; Richards, 2001; Andrabi, Das and Zanjoc, 2006; Bano, 2010; Ahmad, 1990). Some academics have researched Madaris through a micro lens, studying its curriculum and educational pattern, while others concentrated on the macro level analysis of their role as an institution. However, there is no comprehensive study available that reflects upon the role of Madaris in women’s empowerment, taking into consideration its various components like cognitive, psychological, social, political, economic and legal aspects. Therefore, this project is an effort to evaluate the role of female Madaris in the socio-economic empowerment of women with particular reference to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa\(^3\) (KP). The exact topic of this study may be stated as the “effectiveness of female Madaris in women’s empowerment in Pakistan”.

I deem it pertinent to give a succinct account of female Madaris and its role in women’s empowerment in Pakistan. Empowerment is a widely used term, defined differently by different academics, gender specialists and development workers.

Lazo defines empowerment as “a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means enabling the access to a control over such means and resources” (1995:25). While Stromquist (1995) has refined the term further. By empowerment she means “a process to change the distribution of power both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout the society” (Stromquist, 1995:8). Empowerment is generally regarded as a gate for human development where education plays a significant role. In this study I tried to find out the role of female Madaris in bestowing the necessary status to and stall on their graduates in the society and

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\(^3\) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is one of the five provinces of Pakistan which was previously known as North West Frontier Province (see chapter 3 for further detail).
ensuring them to get their due rights. In congruence with Islamic feminism, I conceptualize ‘empowerment’ as inducing a potential in individuals that permits them to assert themselves as an entity. Human beings are not a collectivity of certain traits that could be quantify rather any human phenomenon needs an in-depth exploration (More, 2011). So the aim of the present study is an in-depth examination of the role of Madaris in either ‘empowering’ or ‘disempowering’ young women who receive Sannad\(^4\), to be economically and socially active members of Pakistani society.

Female Madaris, as discussed earlier in this chapter, became apparent in late 1970s, and came under the spotlight after 9/11. Girls used to get education at homes before the establishment of madrassah (see chapter 2 for details). Some authors suggest that female Madaris were established in a struggle to educate women in Islamic culture and save them from the negative impacts of modernization/westernization (Farooq, 2006; Bano, 2010; Malik, 2005). Almost all Islamic sects have established their own female Madaris. Among them the most prominent and largest is Deobandi Madaris, who have their Madaris all over Pakistan (Ali, 2007: Sikand, 200). Deobandis claim to follow the original Dars-e-Nizami with slight variation/modification to cope with the changes in contemporary society. The Madaris of KP are almost similar to Madaris of the other provinces. All Deobandi Madaris are run by Male Muhtamims and they take ownership of the curriculum. Similarly, the Madaris graduates in other provinces too set up their own Madaris or teach in Madaris after their graduation (Farooq, 2005).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1) To examine the social status and skills of Madaris graduates.

2) To study the perception of Madaris graduates towards their participation in development of society/country.

3) To examine the views of religious leaders and Madaris owners regarding women’s mainstreaming in society.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As this study focuses on Madaris of KP and their role in women’s empowerment, it would be of interest not only for academics and gender experts but also could inform policy makers and government officials in making amendments in their structure/curriculum. It will be equally significant for religious scholars and the owners of Madaris and hopefully will encourage them to bring appropriate changes to their curriculum and teaching techniques in the light of findings of this study.

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\(^4\) Degree received from Islamic Madaris, usually after 5-6 years of study.
This research is an analysis of the religious educational institutions and highlights their actual role in women’s empowerment. This topic has attracted little or no research so far which is less researched so far. Thus, it would add to the existing literature.

1.5 Organization of the Study

To make this study coherent and reader-friendly, I have organized it into nine chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic, its objectives, statement of the problem and its significance. Chapter two gives a detailed account of literature review. It combines literature on Madrassah history, its role and the western philosophical concepts such as empowerment, panopticon and total institutions.

Chapter three explains the methodological steps and procedures employed in conducting this study. Each step and decision has been justified with citation and justification from established research practices.

The next four chapters (fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh) comprises of emerging themes from the data and views of the respondents are presented thematically for better understanding of the issue. The four major themes that have emerged from the data and field observations are: the controlled environment, patriarchy and power structure, dichotomy of religious and secular education and secular and religious empowerment. Chapter four explains the controlled environments of the Madaris.

Chapter five highlights the patriarchal social structures of the society and male hegemony of religion. In chapter six, the dichotomy of religious and secular curriculum has been discussed. It further unpacks reasons and effects of the different curriculum on the respective graduates and society as a whole. Chapter seven brings into debate the difference between religious and secular empowerment in the popular literature and the stance of Madrassah leaders and teachers with regard to women’s empowerment.

Chapter eight analyses the collected data in the light of literature. It compares the primary data with the secondary providing spaces for deriving inferences and draws conclusions on the basis of such analysis. In the last chapter, the conclusion, I sum up the study and recommend some key avenues for future research from sociological point of view.
Chapter 2  Theorizing the Role and Prospects of Female Madaris

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the focus, objectives, rationale and the overall organization of the study. This chapter will provide summary of the relevant literature on Islamic education in general and Madaris in particular. It also takes into consideration different key concepts and engages them to create a theoretical debate in the present research. The chapter is divided into three parts.

The first part of the chapter starts with the history of Madaris. It explains the emergence and changes these institutions have experienced over time. I, then, turn the discussion to the recent multiplication of female Madaris, their statuses in society and the role they play in shaping the lives of the current students and those who graduated from these Madaris. In the second part of the chapter, I draw attention to different key concepts i.e., empowerment, panoptics, total institutions, secular and religious education. I have attempted to comprehend female Madaris through the lens of Coleman, Bourdieu, Foucault and Islamic feminists. My aim of drawing on the western and Islamic scholars was to develop a theoretical framework for the current study. Although, female Madaris have not yet been the focus of much academic research there are some useful studies providing insights about the institutions of the Muslim world in general and Pakistani society in particular which I will draw on. The third part of the chapter will be an effort to see the gaps left by other researchers in their studies on female Madaris of Pakistani society in general and KP in particular.

Part I

2.2 Madaris—Story From Inception till Date: A Historical View

The Madrassah tradition is as old as Islam itself. The last Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) used to disseminate the teachings of Islam in the courtyard of mosques. The teachings comprised not only of the recitation and meaning of Qur’an and its exegesis, but also the techniques of spending life according to Islamic customs as well (Blanchard, 2008;
Malik, 2008). However, at that time such meetings were informal and unstructured, without any specific institutional structure and curriculum. When Islam spread to the non-Arab countries, the need for translations of the verses of Qur’an\(^5\) and Hadith\(^6\) from Arabic to other native languages emerged and, therefore, learned people started translating both Qur’an and Hadith from Arabic to other languages (Ali, 2009). Along with these translations they emerged a trend of writing books on different aspects of Islam, life of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

Similarly, a need to disseminate Islamic ideology entailed a group of religious experts and Madrassa\(^5\) was envisaged to train these experts. For teaching the books (like Hadith, Tafsir) required expert teachers, thus, with the passage of time the tradition of Madrasah (Centre of learning) initiated, where these books were taught by knowledgeable persons. The Muslim teachers later became Sheikhs\(^7\) and began to hold regular religious educational sessions called Majalis\(^8\) (sessions). Islamic institutions have been the central place to impart religious knowledge and maintain an ideological structure through participating in religious politics (see Andarabi, Das and Zajonc, 2006; Anzar, 2003). Jamaat al Qarawiyyin in Morocco (859, AD) is considered to be the first established Madrasah in the Muslim world followed by the Al-Azhar University in 959, (AD) Cairo, Egypt (Anzar, 2003).

The trend of establishing Madaris continued with the spreading of Islam to other parts. Nizammiyah was the first official Madrassa established in late Abbasid period and under its banner, hundreds of books and other material got published (Ahmad, 2000). They (Madaris) got institutionalized in the 11\(^\text{th}\) century with a specific structure and a broader spectrum, offering both religious and secular subjects. They focused on inclusiveness of day to day affairs in religion: thus, minimizing the impact of religious extremism and enabling their students to get a proper place in society as administrators, religious scholars and government officials (Ahmed, 1990). In the subsequent decade, as Islam spread to the eastern regions (Indian Sub-continent, eastern and central Asia), Madaris remained the central learning institutions in the Islamic world.

The focus of the institutions widened with the passage of time and produced religious scholars and masters in secular subjects including mathematics, physics, philosophy and logic until the defeat of Muslim empires. Muslim Ulema\(^9\) reacted against the popular structure of Madaris and turned to the revival of classical approach\(^10\) (see Charafi, 2007; Christopher, 2009). Andarabi, Das, Khwaja and Zajonc (2005) in their study on Pakistani Madaris note that graduates of the Madaris used to serve in different sectors ranging from political administration to religious scholarship. Early studies, i.e., fair (2006), Blanchard (2008), Candland (2005), Charafi, (2007) also show that people from different religions

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\(^5\) Qur’an, (also Koraan) is the major religious book of Muslims.

\(^6\) Sayings of the Holly Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

\(^7\) Sheikh or shaykh is an Arabic term means “elder”, Islamic Scholar, who get this title after graduating from the basic Islamic religious school.

\(^8\) Majalis; (single: majlis) is an Arabic term meaning “a place of sitting”, used in the context of assembly gatherings among common interest groups especially religious gatherings in Muslim countries.

\(^9\) Ulema is an Arabic word (singular Aalim), meaning religious expert.

\(^10\) Classical approach refers to the curriculum of Islamic Madarisi limited to religious education only in 9\(^{\text{th}}\) and 10\(^{\text{th}}\) century AD, where secular subjects were not part of it.
too graduated from such Madaris and their teachings were not limited to Muslims only. Students from other countries and regions also used to get education in Madaris. In the 19th century, Madaris curriculum was revised in response to the indoctrination of British secular education especially in South Asia. The main focus of the revised curriculum was to teach religious subjects only. This change was criticized with the claim that this has adverse effects on the students depriving them of ‘worldly wisdom’ (Farooq, 2005; Anzar, 2003).

Madaris are attractive to ‘poor’ or ‘low income’ groups in society through offering free food, lodging, free education; thus, they spread throughout the Muslim world (Cristopher, 2008). The main aim of the curriculum followed by the Madaris was to prepare future Islamic religious scholars and extend the teachings of Islam to the common people as well.

This neo-classical approach became more dominant after the introduction of new education system during the European colonial period when Madaris were marginalized. This trend led to a dichotomy in the education system i.e. ‘secular’ education for the rich/wealthy and ‘religious’ education for the poor sections of the society. The ideological shift had deep-rooted impact upon Madaris, specifically in the Indian sub-continent. This is evident in the Madaris curriculum, teaching style and quality. Although Madaris in Arab countries, for example Egypt and other parts of the world were also impacted upon by Colonialism yet they carried on with the educational structure of early Madaris of Baghdad (Charafi, 2007). It is pertinent to note that the discussion so far encircles the phenomenon of Madrassah in general.

The concept of female Madrassah is not new, yet it has recently come to prominence. In South Asia and particularly in Indian sub-continent, the boom of female Madaris was observed in 1970s (see Farooq, 2010; Jamal and Khan, 2005). The trend of female Madaris emerged and spread with the objective of saving womenfolk from the effects of modern/western culture and secular education, which, in the opinion of Madaris owners, misguided and misled the women from their actual path (see Bano, 2010; Rehman, 2004b). Whereas, the actual place for women is in the home ‘which suits them best’ (Ullah, 2007). The major emphasis of the Madaris was to equip womenfolk with religious knowledge this was considered to be the only solution to maintain the actual status of woman in society and save them from the hazardous effects of secular education, western culture and modernization (see Ullah, 2007). Hence, the culturally defined status/role of woman determined a different curriculum for girls than that of boys.

2.3 Dichotomy of Secular and Religious Education within Madrassah

Pursuing knowledge has been an essential part of the Islamic tradition. As discussed above, the early years of Qur’anic revelations to the Prophet (S.A.W) were disseminated orally and the people of Arabia memorized them by heart. However, as the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) were prolife prolonged, the need

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11 As a reaction to marginalizing religious education, Madaris curricula were reframed on the lines of its evolutionary stage, where no secular subjects were taught in it. The term neo-classical means, the copy of original in a reaction; it is not an evolutionary response to the circumstances.
was felt to preserve this vast knowledge. The divinely revealed knowledge (Qur’an) was completed in a book form in the time of third caliph Hazrat Usman (R.A) (653-656 AD).

Islam has divided knowledge into two types: a) divinely revealed knowledge; and b) secular/humanly created knowledge. It considers both to be of great importance for its followers. It directs both men and women to go and seek knowledge (Helen, 2002). As argued by Ahmad, (1987) Islam, acquiring worldly or secular knowledge is important because it complements the knowledge divinely revealed by God in the Qur’an and helps Muslims to know themselves, their universe and to make their lives productive in this world. Masjid (mosque) was the initial madrassah, where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) summoned people, taught them his revelations and their interpretations. Ahmad (1987) further wrote that Qur’an too was compiled in mosque. At the time of Prophet (S.A.W), mosque was multi-activities centre where Muslims used to get guidance for their day to day affairs of life and solving their problems, in the light of Qur’anic knowledge and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).

After the death of the Prophet (S.A.W.), people turned to Sunna, (the knowledge of deeds of the Prophet) and Hadith, (the sayings of the Prophet) for taking guidance in resolving their daily problems. However, with the passage of time, a need of preserving the Islamic teachings apart from Qur’an, emerged. Therefore, different books were written by experts on Fiqah (Islamic jurisprudence), Sunna (Prophet Muhammad’s traditions), Hadith (Prophet Muhammad’s sayings), and Tafseer (the interpretation of the Quran). The aim of these books was to make the understanding of religion, easy for the non-Arab Muslim populations. This was the institutionalization of full fledge Madrassah, where these Islamic books were written and taught (Haqqani, 2002). The early Madaris had a broader vision than the contemporary Madaris. Their focus was not merely on religious education and preservation of Islamic traditions but also preparing Muslims for religious duties and equipping them with the knowledge of secular subjects, i.e., science12, philosophy, public administration and governance. Ijtihad— independent reasoning— was a special feature of such Madaris (Anzar, 2003).

The aim of such Madaris was to prepare the students for public services/jobs in various countries and regions of the Islamic empire. The majority of Madaris, during subsequent centuries, remained the centers of Islamic learning; a large number of them produced renowned scholars and philosophers (Anzar, 2003).

Muslim learning and scholarship went into a state of decay after the defeat of the Muslim empire by the crusaders and mutual political rivalries, and unfortunately, it has not fully recovered from this situation (Boyle, 2002: Ahmad 1987). The region in which Madrassah faced a fundamental change in its philosophy was the Indian subcontinent (Peter, 2001; Ullah, 2010). Here (Madaris) had drastically changed their curriculum, teaching methods, and also discarded the teaching of ‘worldly’ sciences.

This shift in ideology of Madaris was due to the new educational system introduced in the British rule that changed the priorities of Madaris (for detail see Anzar, 2003; Gill, 2001). Under the British rule, the British government set up a new system of education, which was perceived to be a threat to Muslim society. The Madrassah system in subcontinent took upon the task to save society (particularly Muslim population) from British hegemony (Charafi, 2007: Candland, 2005).

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12 Science here refers to astronomy, biology, physics, and chemistry.
Defeat in this mission led *Ulema* of the time to reject worldly knowledge and go back to the divinely revealed knowledge and sayings of the Prophet *Muhammad (S.A.W)*. Actually, this step was meant to revive the old level of spirituality which was believed to be the source of earlier Muslim’s power, respect and honor. At the time of the European renaissance, the Muslim educational structure was on decline. The historical downfall of the Muslim world in turn caused a change in the focus and spirit, functions and philosophy of the *Madaris* all over the Muslim world. Many of them restricted themselves exclusively to the teachings of Islam prescribed in the *Qur’an*. *Ulema* used the verses from the *Qur’an* to justify their position of restricting themselves to the ‘Divine sciences’ only. They believed that the ‘worldly knowledge’ either should only be taught in the light of the *Qur’an*. The narrow outlook of *Madaris* leave no choice of employability to their graduates except the religious duties like opening up/or teaching in a *madrassah*, or serving in mosques as ‘*Imam*’

The new educational system introduced at the time of British rule in the Indian sub-continent was ‘the last nail in the coffin’ of Muslim educational system (Anzar, 2003). The contrast between these new British education systems and *Madrassah* resulted in a dichotomy of education, (as noted above), – modern secular education for the privileged upper class, as argued by Ullah, 2012, and religious education for the deprived class. The British rulers introduction of new system of education which divided state and religious education into two separate entities — was considered a threat by the *Ulemas*. They thought of it a threat to Islamic code of conduct and this caused hatred, and resistance against the government policies and actions in the Muslim population (Ahmad, 1987). However, *Madaris* in the other parts of the world carried with the system of education that was established in the early *Madaris* of Baghdad, accommodating the teaching of the ‘worldly/secular’ subjects to date. Particularly in Egypt non-Islamic/secular subjects are offered along with Islamic subjects (Abramson, 2010; Benoliel, 2003). The *Madaris* of Arab and Egypt, however, had a slight difference in terms of the orientation of the Islamic curriculum. Hence, in Indian sub-continent, the ideological shift of *Madaris* had a lasting influence upon the status of their graduates. Khan (2001) states that generally there is a low employability of *madrassah* graduates as the space of employment for Qawmi

*madrassah* graduates is very limited mostly because of the deficient curriculum (in a sense that it does not include the secular subjects and offer only religious subjects). The *Madrassah* owners/stakeholders defend the narrow scope of *Madrassah*’s curriculum by saying that the main purpose of the *Madaris* is to spread Islam and produce Islamic leaders, who can carry out the tradition of Islamic mode of living (Boyle, 2006; Rabasa, 2006; Husain, 2004; Daun & Walford, 2004).

Similarly, Boyle & Pohl (2006) in their studies assert that *Madaris* are often blamed for being unable to equip its students with the required skills and knowledge and meet the needs of contemporary society. They hold that:

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13 *Imam* is an Arabic word denoting a person who lead prayers in a mosque and teach basic books of religion to children. In a return, the locality extend minimal financial help to the person.

14 *Qawmi Madrassah* are one of the two *madrassah* categories of Bangladesh, works as a private organization supported by donations. They follow *Deobandi* curriculum.
“Islamic schools [Madaris] do seek to indoctrinate students with a one sided, narrow-minded, and often pro-violence understanding of Islam” (p.479).

They further suggest that such schools do not want contemporary subjects to be a part of their curricula as they will bring disharmony into their traditional role and core values. Hefner and Zaman, (2007), Roff, (1998) and Sikand (2006) note in their studies that motif of preserving Islamic traditions by Madaris existed even before the colonial invasion of Muslim states yet they kept balance between religion and social/political fields as well.

Secular subjects are basic tools for enabling an individual to know and utilize his/her skills and abilities in order to acquire a desired social status in contemporary world. Many authors, for example, Zaman (1999), Sikand (2000), Bano (2007), But (2012) suggest that the curriculum of such Madaris cannot enable their graduates to enter the mainstream job market of the society as they offer only religious subjects. In other words, they produce a cadre of religious scholars, which can only serve religious duties. The point that needs to be highlighted here is that graduates of these female Madaris are not provided opportunity to perform religious duties on the same ground like their male graduate counterparts do. The limited opportunities are also under the direct or indirect guidance and leadership of males. Farooq (2009) writes that in Pakistan, the owners, patrons, and curricula setters of female Madaris (under study) are all ‘males’ showing strong patriarchal hold of even female-run Madaris. So this study will shed light on the structural impacts of local culture on Islamic educational institutions of females, regarded as total institutions producing docile bodies thus, reinforcing the essentialists’ theories of gender or the biological explanation of gender differences (see Ullah, 2013). Women are held cognitively deficient and, hence, they are secluded from social and economic life. Although Madaris claim to empower their graduates the notion of empowerment they hold, especially regarding women, is narrow (Reetz, 2013; Farooq, 2010). The term empowerment, as discussed in chapter one and discussed in the forthcoming paras, is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional concept. To understand the role of Madaris in empowering their students, we have to understand first the term empowerment.

Part II

2.4 Female Madaris — the Literature

Islam emphasizes the education of male and female without any discrimination (Ali,2009; Sheikh, 2011). However, the practices in most of the Muslim countries are discriminatory towards female education (Jutting and Marrison, 2005; Ali, 2000; Krayem, 2010). In the early years, women were educated at home, where the emphasis was on moral and ethical education, soam o salaat, respect of elders and other such aspects of life that contribute to a woman becoming an ideal wife, mother and sister (Ullah, 2007; Ahmad, 2004; Candland, 2005; Jamal and Khan, 2005). In this context formal religious education and religious authority remains the domain of men. Islamic education and educational institutions are integral part of history of South Asia.

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15 Soam means fast and Salat means prayers.
(Glatzer, 1998; Jamal and Khan, 2005). However, female Madaris were not in vogue until the last 20-30 years (Haddad, 1986; Ahmad, 2004). It was in the colonial era when some religious scholars like Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi and Maududi realized the need to educate the Muslim women (Ali, 2009; Andrabi, Khwaja, Das and Zajonc, 2006; Anzar, 2003) and they started their struggles to educate South Asian women. Thus, Ulema, as explained before, opened up different small and large Madaris in some areas and began formal teachings of Islamic injunctions to women of South Asia (see part one of this chapter). Being recent but relatively neglected institutions by the researchers and academics, Madaris got coverage in recent years especially after Lal Masjid incident in Islamabad in 2007 (see part one in this chapter). There are just a few prominent studies on female Madaris, for example, Farooq (2010), Bano (2010) and Winkelmann (2005) which will be reviewed below.

2.5 Mushrooming or Rhizomization? Female Madaris in Pakistan

It is argued that the curriculum and organization of contemporary Madaris were developed in a manner that discouraged the higher Islamic education of women, especially in Asia. It was believed that women had no place in the public sphere and, hence, no need of further higher education. They were given only the basic religious education which was considered important for them. Bano (2010) argues that religious authority is the domain of male scholars in Islam, therefore, training women in higher Islamic education was not prioritized till recently. It was in 1970s that a number of Madaris for girls were established by different sects in Pakistan. This new development was a response to modernity: “women’s liberation, consumerism, and un-Islamic way of life that would threaten the integrity of the community itself” (Sikand, 2005:217) which challenges the traditional power structure in Muslim societies. Female Madaris in Pakistan are growing rapidly. These institutions providing opportunity of graduation to young women every year (see Farooq, 2009; Bano, 2010). Some have described this trend as the mushrooming of female Madaris (see Bano, 2010; Kamran, 2009) where these Madaris are sprouting with the same institutional structure and its own orthodox standpoints and aims. Drawing on this discussion I use the term rhizomatous/rhizomization, for describing this phenomenon. The reason is that these are spreading out horizontally under the authority of the same teachers/Madaris. That is, a number of graduates are opening their own Madaris under the supervision of their Muhtamims and teachers (see chapter 5 for detail). Thus, they reproduce their own specific class that perpetuates the same conventional mindset of their Muhtamims (see Coleman,1988 also see part first of this chapter).

These female Madaris have a specific normative pattern. Inside the Madaris, they have their own world that is governed and controlled by the Muhtamims and their families. They have their specific teacher-student relationship pattern and controlled and monitored routines in their specific buildings. Their characteristics are somehow similar to ‘total institutions’ as defined by Goffman (1961), which will be examined below.
2.6 A Critical Analysis of the Role of Female Madaris in Women’s Empowerment

As stated in chapter one and reiterated here the aim of this study is to examine the role of female Madaris in women’s empowerment. It is pertinent to point out that the role of female Madaris is appreciated as well as criticized with reference to women’s empowerment. Bano (2010) argues that female Madaris play an important role in women’s empowerment. Her study concludes that female Madaris are an alternative source of high quality education and employability for women (Bano, 2010). Madaris equip girls with religious as well as secular education and that Madaris encourage females to go on to get secular degrees (Bano, 2010). She further argued that women are provided with vocational skills along with secular and religious education i.e., skill like sewing, thread work and cooking, painting, computer learning etc. She notes that students have the opportunity to travel to other parts of the country and thus have the confidence to travel alone. That gives girls and young women an opportunity to have interaction with and exposure to different cultures. Thus, socially empowering the girls and enabling them to form social networks.

Farooq (2006), on the other hand, disagrees and asserts that the curriculum of the female Madaris is deficient. He criticises, both the pedagogy and curricula of female Madaris. He rejected the claims made by Madaris to empower women on Islamic lines through selected religious and some secular subjects. Highlighting the narrow focus of Madaris, he stated that Madaris internalise the established gender norms of the society and Islamic womanhood. It will not be out of place to argue that Madaris produce docile personalities who are used as tools/instruments by the Muhtamims for their vested interest.

However, my study finds no such skill enhancement opportunities for women in Madaris outside of the religious teachings. Muhtamims and the teachers were of the view that such skills are not important for girls, as the focus should be on learning Islam and secondly, girls do not have much time for these extra activities. However, the Madaris in current study lack such opportunities for girls. My study shows that girls are not allowed to travel alone even to other parts of the same city not even to the markets outside the madrassah. They have to be accompanied by male relative either father, brother husband or uncle for travelling. Due to such rules/restrictions many students, being the resident of the same city, stay in madrassah even during vacations. The traditional stance of Muhtamims had an ample impact upon the structure and functioning of the institutions. The buildings of the female Madaris were designed in a way to monitor all activities of the students. Repetitive exercises coupled with strict timetable operated to induce docility in the students. Although, the graduates were told about their rights, yet they were taught to accept the cultural norm of male supremacy. Because, the Madaris are a part of local culture and wish to enlarge scope of the extended support from society. Furthermore, a short curriculum specifically designed for female students reflects their perceived cognitive capabilities inferior to male.
This study points out that female Madaris established under the garb of female empowerment in the light of Islamic norms are actually extending the political, economic and social accumulation of few individuals i.e. owners/Muhtamims. Moreover, a stark bifurcation between religious and secular educational institutions is commonly observed phenomenon in these institutions. They are poles apart in their ideology, their dresses, attitudes and timetables etc. The debate between the former and later group of scholars and my study data (see forthcoming chapters) enable me to argue that Madaris are not institutions that empower women in the western sense of empowerment (see Lazo, 1995 and Stromquist, 1995). It also enables me to argue that female Madaris are tools that are used by the male Muhtamims for perpetuating their dominance. It would not be out of place to assert that female Madaris reinforce the values of patriarchy through the interpretation of Islam by religious leaders. Religious leaders interpret female empowerment as the freedom from western evils and empowerment from the distractions from one’s duties as a good Muslim woman. Nevertheless, there are some changes that can be taken into account as an empowerment from a conservative perspective. However, the overall conclusion that can be drawn from previous studies as well as this study is that the outcomes of female Madaris are not transparent. Having said this, my position in this study reflects what Foucault, when he examined the advent of institutional surveillance through analysing Jermy Benthom’s design for the panopticon. I use surveillance here in the same sense it was used by Hazir Ullah. Ullah (2013), drawing upon Foucault (1978), defined surveillance as a constant ‘inside watch’ that contemporary society use to discipline people. Now drawing on Ullah (2013) I argue that female Madaris are institutions that are used by male Muhtamims as a surveillance strategy to discipline and control females. In the forthcoming discussion I am going to establish how female religious institutions/Madaris are working as means of surveillance or act as an institutional panopticon in contemporary KP.

Part III

2.7 Women’s Empowerment and its Different Perspectives

Empowerment means “a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means and resources” (Lazo, 1995:25). It is important to note that concept of empowerment has been used and defined by a variety of disciplines in their own contexts. It originated with the ‘women’s movement’ and spread to all spheres of human life (Joseph, 2010; Keiffer, 1984). It has become one of the most commonly used terms by development organizations, activists, politicians, government organizations, women's groups, non-governmental organizations, international agencies and academia (see Mosedale, 2003; Murphy-Graham, 2008; Medel-Anonuevo, 1995). Being a relative and widely used term, each of the disciplines defined it in its own way (Medel-Anonuevo and Bochynek, 1995).

Although, empowerment is usually expressed in social and political terms, it can have other aspects as well. The term covers but is not limited to political participation, awareness raising and decision making. Stormquist while defining empowerment
argues that one must include “cognitive, psychological, political, and economic components” (Medel-Anonuevo, 1995: 14). The cognitive element refers to women’s awareness/consciousness about/of their conditions of subordination and their micro and macro levels causes (Hall, 1992). The psychological component includes woman’s self-development. It also includes the belief in her own capabilities that she can improve her life, change her conditions (personal and social) and the development of self-belief within herself, of her abilities and potentialities. In various cultures the socialization processes does not encourage the traits of self-belief and self-confidence and, hence, many women feel themselves unable to contribute and change their situations and environments. And ultimately, it renders them unable to solve their own and other’s problems (Jack, 1992).

The political facet of empowerment focuses on the ability to investigate the surrounding situation in political and social terms; including the process to create and organize social change. Thus, empowerment processes involve awareness and collective action for attaining transformation. Some of the scholars (see Blackburn, 2000; Minkler, 1992; Israel et al., 1994; Solomon, 1976; Fawcett et al., 1994; Rappaport, 1981, 1985) have used other terms for the same concept. Schrijvers is one such case, who describes "autonomy" as "a fundamental criticism of the existing social, economic, and political order" (1991: 6). Defining autonomy, she argues that it refers to the process of facilitating concept that stimulates critical and innovative thinking and actions. She further says that empowerment is an attitude of inner strength, resourcefulness and the ability to utilize those energies against the undesirable dominance of others (ibid). Schrijvers’ idea of autonomy focuses on the psychological aspect of empowerment which are beyond the focus of this study.

Some scholars, i.e., Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002) and Kabeer (1999) argue that the central focus of empowerment is to enable women to control their lives and destinies. It means an equal access to and control over capabilities, capital. Women should have the authority for using rights, resources and opportunities to make deliberate choices.

The above discussion about empowerment reflected the secular aspects of the term, however, in this thesis two definitions of ‘empowerment’ are in tension with each other. First, the western or secular definition of empowerment is considered to be a western phenomenon in Pakistan. It is regarded to be women specific, focusing upon women’s ability–over the expansion of assets, resources, capabilities and transformed institutions – to take decisions for themselves and their development.

Second, the Islamic definition of women’s empowerment emphasizes the rights of women in every status, and female Madaris are so-called harbingers of the revival of women’s empowerment. Islamic feminism focuses upon the actual teachings of equality, questioning the patriarchal interpretation of Islamic teaching in the light of Qur’an, Hadith and Shariah (Islamic law) (Badran, 2002).

Farooq argues that these bodies are molded, transformed and are subject to vigilance and discipline. This control in female Madaris is similar to seems what Foucault called gaze designed for the surveillance and control of ‘inmates’, patients, children and soldiers. In the panoptic institutions, subjects internalize institutional norms through

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16 Gaze means a constant surveillance and control (Foucault cited by Ullah, 2013)
the perception of unobservable surveillance (Peter, 2013). Such institutions do not empower women, rather make them more submissive and docile. In such institutions ‘inmates’ do not have any say in deciding any aspect of their everyday life, nor is the concept/idea of self-determination promoted. However, this fundamental right is not yet been awarded to women and the patriarchy is yet in rule in various societies, Pakistan is no exception. Women struggle for their obvious and central right through different mechanisms. Women’s empowerment is mostly associated with the women’s movement called feminism.

This is a movement of women, by women, for women, who work for the empowerment of womenfolk in all walks of life and they struggle to achieve an equal place for this 50% of population. Thus, it is an attempt to ensure the quality living standards for women on equal footings with the other half population, that is, men. Women’s empowerment take the conventional approach (see Kabeer, 1999), as the process by which women attain autonomy and self-determination as well as a struggle and a mechanism to eliminate patriarchy.

Islam, from the very inception, treats women equal to men and awards them with basic rights they were deprived of in pre-Islamic Arabia (Badawi, 1999). Islam gave women respect and her due status in society and asked its followers to treat women with care and bestowed her with the right of education, property ownership, consent in marriage etc (Badran, 2008; Barlas, 2002). However, such ideas of women empowerment are now regarded as a western agenda to disturb the social order of Muslim community (as one of the Muhtamim during my field argued). It was felt necessary to look deep into religious institutions for women and hence, analyse their stance on women’s empowerment.

With the exception of just a few scholars, Bano (2010), Farooq (2009), no direct study of female Madaris has been conducted in the area. Various scholars (as mentioned earlier) have written extensively on male Madaris and their role in society, the link between Madaris and terrorism, the reason for madrassa reforms and the reasons why madrassah have expended in the area. However, female Madaris have been less researched and is therefore an area requiring further research. In the light of the perceived need, this study is designed to see the role of female Madaris in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakisan.

2.8 Feminism and Empowerment

Feminist theory offers a comprehensive framework for changing women’s inferior social status. Feminism refers to a comprehensive and broader movement struggling against sexism and oppression through empowerment of women (Breines, 2006). Feminism has been successful in social reform mostly in western society, ranging from culture to law. Including women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights), reproductive rights, domestic violence, sexual harassment, workplace rights and other forms of gender based discrimination against women (Baker and Zeleny, 2009). But in the global scenario and in the changing social situations, it is difficult to single out a feminist strategy to empower women and end discrimination against them. Disagreement upon uniform strategy is considered useful because it initiates different debates that ends in the more innovative, advanced and culturally
specific approaches to women’s empowerment. We observe emergence of different sub-branches in feminisms on the basis of philosophical differences (some of which intermix with each other).

These branches hold their own theories and tenets; the most prominent among them are: Liberal, socialist, Radical, Marxist, Islamic, Modern, Anti-Racist Feminism, (see Behrami & Raftari, 2011 for further detail).

All the sub branches are important for women’s empowerment in their own fields as they address women issues and the societal discrimination according to their own principles and perspectives, however, discussing all of them here is beyond the scope of the current study. Islamic feminism is however, discussed in detail for the purpose of the present study. This decision was taken in line with the objective of the study and the relationship of female Madrassah with empowerment.

2.9 Islamic Feminism

Islamic feminism means “discourse of gender equality that derives its mandate from the Qur’an and seeks rights and justice for all human beings across the totality of the public-private continuum” (Badran cited in Barlas, 2008:18). Islamic Feminism appeared in early 1990s in academic discussions and research across the globe, especially in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia and Africa. Islamic feminism strives for the equal rights of women within the Islamic framework. It seeks to establish an anti-patriarchal reinterpretation of Islamic teachings, and the sources of knowledge – Qur’an, Hadith, and Shariah which are considered to be interpreted on patriarchal grounds by the advocates of Islamic feminism (Barlas, 2002).

Turkish scholars (i.e., Yesim Arat, Feride Acar and Nilufer Gole) in their articles and books used the term in 1990s to describe a new emerging feminist paradigm in Turkey. Shamima Shaikh (South African activist) used the word Islamic feminism in her speeches and articles in the 1990s along with other scholars (Hussain, 2007). By the mid-1990s, Islamic Feminism was circulated throughout the globe and became the most used term in Muslim communities (Badran, 2008).

The articulators of Islamic feminism are comprised of two groups; one who accept the label of Islamic feminist and the other who do not. Those who accept to be called Islamic feminists, declared an Islamic feminist identity from the early days of their use and practice of Islamic feminism. Such groups include South African exegetes and activists, Sisters in Islam in Malaysia and some Iranian scholars including Badran (2002), Sikand (2005). The latter is unwilling to accept such identity. Two prominent among this second group are Amina Wadud, the African American Muslim theologian and author of the landmark book Qur’an and Woman (1991) and Riffat Hassan American based Pakistani theologian (Hidayatullah, 2014; Lamptey, 2014).

Islamic feminism believes in women's rights and equality within Islamic discourse. In Iran, it draws upon secular discourses and methodologies to strengthen and extend its claims. Wadud (1991) in her women-sensitive interpretation of the Qur’an combines
traditional Islamic practices with new tools of social sciences and secular discourses while holding a strong and fundamental foundation in Islamic thought. Supporters of the movement seek to focus the deeply rooted lessons of equality in the religion and question the patriarchal interpretation of Islam. They tend to revise the original teachings of Islam through re-interpretation of Qur’an, Hadith (sayings of Muhammad [S.A.W.]) and Sharia (Islamic law) towards the creation of more egalitarian and just society.

Islamic feminists believe that women and men are equal in Islam and Islam does not give preference to one gender over another (Badran, 2008). They refer to Qur’anic verses and Hadith to prove their stance. They mention that rights like education, property ownership, economic independence, decision making, and marriage consents among others are being given to women by Islam but the patriarchs of society show reluctance in following the Islamic values in true spirits. Therefore, they (the patriarchs) presented deformed interpretation, reflecting superiority of man over woman. The advocates also give misleading/out of the context examples of the women of Prophet Muhammad’s (S.A.W) family, to strengthen their arguments and show how they lived and experienced those rights (Barlas, 2002).

According to Islamic feminists, there are two things that hamper the emancipation of Muslim women. First, there is a conservative Islam that hinders women access to religious knowledge and obstructs the equality approved by the Qur’an. On the other, is colonial feminism, of the North and fastened with Orientalism (Badran, 2008; Mernissi, 1991). This type of feminism dictates manners and framework of their emancipation to women of the South, arguing that it is impossible to be both subject to God and freed from the power of men (Badran, 2008).

The female Madaris included in this study had a different rather a complex perspective on the status of women. The students were informed about some of their rights like education, property, marriage consents but were also told to obey the male members of their family and forbade from protesting against them. As one of the female teacher said during an interview that “we know about all the rights Islam gives to women but we cannot ask for these rights, due to our societal norm not to raise voice against male.” This teaching reflects the patriarchal control of the Madaris, and their curriculum, which is designed by the Muhtamims.17 It is worth mentioning that all Madaris i.e. male and female in the area were run and managed by males who, as will be revealed in findings chapter, were clearly exerting patriarchal control. Female Madaris are not as established as male Madaris. In Pakistan, this trend started in late 1960s and early 1970s as a part of Islamization program. However, they have been brought into the limelight after Jamia Hafsa incident of Islamabad in 2007.18 After the incidence, it has been reported by different media sources (like Tribune, 2011) and different studies

17 Muhtamim is an Urdu word means manager/administrator.
18 Jamia Hafsa is a female Islamic seminary in capital city Islamabad, Pakistan. In 2007 the students of Jamia started a campaign against government and asked for rule of Sharia. The reason was a Chinese massage center and a brothel in that area of Islamabad and the owners and students of Jamia wanted government to take action against these immoral centers, but government did not take any action, as a result the jamia students took this responsibility and made the owners of both places as hostages. To release the hostages, government officials tried to contact the madrassah officials and by
(Bano, 2010; Singer, 2001) who all suggest that the Madaris are rapidly growing and mushrooming. Islamic feminism considers Islam as an egalitarian religion that treats women and men equally. However, Islamic feminists are critical of the patriarchal interpretation that confines women to the limited and restricted sphere of home. Islam holds women and men equal reflected by the fact that Muslims are addressed by ‘o believers’ instead of ‘o men’ in the Qur’an. Here the Islamic feminists also seek help from the life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) to further strengthen their arguments. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Islamic feminists stress equal opportunities for women in the light of Qur’an and consider the availability of rights given by Islam as basic element of empowerment. They argue that Islam empowers women in all walks of life from educational attainment to decision making and property inheritance, that is, the rights Islam gives to woman. Islamic feminists regard Islamic education to be a key factor for empowering womenfolk.

The above discussion reflects that female Madaris are dedicating to preserving the prevailing patriarchal structure of society. The existing social institutions place men and women in distinct categories in society. This categorization takes place through daily practices deeply rooted in established beliefs. Family practices, religious mythologies, social division of labor, sexual division of labor, marriage customs, educational system and civil laws combine to produce hierarchies, internalized beliefs, and expectations that are constraining but at the same time naturalized and thus seldom contested (see Yang, 2008; During, 2001). In this context, failing to do so they raided the jamia and the adjacent Lal Masjid, which caused many injuries and casualties on both sides (the Jamia students and the police officials).

empowerment is a process to change the distribution of power, both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society (Stromquist, 1995).

2.10 Madaris as Total Institutions: Myth or Reality

Goffman (1961) elaborated the concept of total institution in his essay titled On the Characteristics of Total Institutions, published in his book Asylum. Total institutions are social hybrids, the social establishments that are part of residential community and part of formal organization intended for the bureaucratic management of large groups of people (see Ritzer, 2007: Goffman, 1961). Goffman defined a total institution as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (1961: xiii). He regarded mental hospitals, prisons, army barracks, ships, boarding schools, and monasteries as examples of total institutions. These establishments are differentiated by the extents of closure or separation from the outside world. The daily actions and activities take place in the same place, under a single authority, and in the presence of a large group of others. Total institutions make the justification of life through time scheduling, strict regulation, and administrative rules that result in the disciplinary control of members of such institutions-the inmates (Burns 1992; Ritzer, 2005).

Just as in the pinopticon the inmates of the total institutions internalize the system, the design encourages conformity based on rules, rewards and punishments. Good conduct
and obedience are viewed as improvement and reinforcing privileges are subsequently rewarded. In addition, the inmate social system—a corresponding and sub-cultural system composed of ethics, meanings, and informal constructs that clash with bureaucratic control can emerge. Other inmates view these institutions as their habitat. Most inmates adopt some adjustments strategies, responding to situations by acceptance, and live in the system with a calm and casual attitude, in order to getting out from the place without any damage or injury. The concept of total institutions produces a distinctive framework to understand the structural elements of the inmates' experienced social reality (Steudler, 2001).

As a theoretical model, the total institution has certain important limitations. Goffman (1961) stressed the bureaucratic authority and its legitimate authoritative structure in total institutions. However, he ignored the power structure of the larger society, (political ideology, domination, and power) of which these total institutions are a part. For Goffman, however, total institutions were a social form that existed in a social vacuum, without blood or social conflict and unrelated to ideology or dogma. He framed classification of the total institutions and analysed their structural and functional characteristics by examining the mid-twentieth-century institutions. He did not talk about the historical development of total institutions in the West during the transitional modern period i.e. from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Further, he never addressed the questions raised by his contemporary, Michel Foucault, a French theorist, who studied the birth of the clinic, asylum, penitentiary, and the key medium of power inside the bureaucratic state and total institutions (Foucault 1965).

Once an individual is admitted to a total institution, Goffman believed, he/she undergoes a process of mortification in which "he begins a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of self" (1961: 14). In a similar way, in the Madaris the soul and the mind of the student are purified through the teachings inside the Madrassah (that is, purified of the influence of their pre-Madaris life). They are trained in early days of their admissions to concentrate on themselves and change themselves according to the current environment. Partly, in response to the processes of mortification, Goffman sees the inmates as developing what he calls secondary adjustments that he considered as the essence of the institution. Thus, secondary adjustments are defined as "any typical arrangement by which a member of an organization employs unauthorized means, or obtains unauthorized ends, or both, thus getting around the organization's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence, what he should be" (p.189). "These practices together comprise what can be called the under life of the institution, being to a social establishment what an underworld is to a city" (p.199). In a total institution, the whole life of the inmates are regularised and managed through a series of activities, to keep the members of these institutions busy, and under observation. The same is true for the Madaris where the possibility of every second of the life of students is managed, controlled and they are kept busy with tight time schedules, so that they can be observed and can be moulded in the ‘desired’ ways; mentally, socially, spiritually and religiously. The same idea has been further explained by Michael Foucault, in his study Discipline and Punishment (1965). In the Discipline and Punishment he elaborated the minute details of such institutions and the life patterns of their inmates. However, Foucault focused upon the surveillance mechanism found in panoptic establishments in terms of
how they work, and their social outcomes in terms of social, mental and personal life of the inhabitants.

2.11 Factories of Surveillance/Docile bodies

Throughout Foucault's work, one finds various references to education and the school, especially in *Discipline and Punishment* (1986). In this book elaborates his discussions on education intermixed with the analysis of disciplinary methods within the economic, military, judicial, monastic, medical and of prisons. Foucault primarily focused this discussion on education in two of his texts — the first at the University of Buffalo, where he had an interview with John Simon (Foucault, 1971), and the next was in a general discussion with high-school pupils under the sponsorship of the journal *Actuel* (Foucault, 1977). Educational issues can also be found in Foucault's speeches at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in 1973 (Foucault, 2000), and in an interview to radio in 1975 (Foucault, 1996).

Foucault starts with the model of the soldier in the seventeenth century. The classical age discovered the body as the target of power and the docile body is exposed, used, converted and enhanced. The process was carried out uninterrupted and under constant compulsion. Such exercises always existed in monasteries and armies, yet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they became a general formula of domination. In his discourse, Foucault considers the body as subject of attention. The body is subjected to forces of discipline and control.

Docile bodies are shaped through the actions of discipline. Foucault regarded discipline as tool for controlling the operations and positions of the body unlike, force or violence. He finds the roots of discipline in monasteries and armies, important in this regard. Both emphasize self-control and obedience to rules through regulating the behavior of monks by Monastic rules, and drill exercises in the army. He gives much importance to the institutions in which the process of observation operates rather the process itself. He argues that the ideal disciplinary institution is that in which everything can be watched at once, clearly referring to the Panopticon discussed in the forthcoming discussion.

2.11.1 Panopticons

All modern mechanisms for controlling abnormal individuals derive from the measures taken against the plague in the seventeenth century. Foucault begins with the description of these measures. The idea of discipline was created against the image of plague. The fear of plague brought into existence disciplinary mechanisms associated with a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring and supervising what he calls ‘abnormality’. Foucault then describes Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a design of building where a tower is erected at the center for monitoring each cell around in which a prisoner or schoolboy is locked up. In the panoptic design visibility is a trap to make each individuals see each other but cannot communicate with the wardens or other prisoners. The sense of permanent visibility of power is achieved and internalized through the ever present monitoring tower.
Foucault adopts the panopticon as a central theme in his theory of discipline. The process of individual observation and analysis takes place in a building that makes these procedures easy. It develops the need for surveillance shown in the institutional response to plague as instituted in Europe. The disciplinary society is not necessarily characterized by establishing a panopticon in every street, rather the state controls such methods of intimidation and activates them throughout society, according to Foucault, in the form of institutions (Baracks, hospitals, schools, prisons etc).

Foucault argues that more cultured societies offer more opportunities for control and observation, referring to liberty and rights. He assumes that modern society is based on the idea that every citizen is free and authorized to make certain demands on the state, along with the techniques of control. Instead of criticizing such political ideals, Foucault merely argues that it would not be possible to understand them without apprehending the mechanisms that also control and examine the citizen. This examination spreads throughout society and schools, factories, hospitals and prisons all look similar, not just because they resemble each other, rather they examine pupils, workers, patients and prisoners, categorize them as individuals and try to make them follow the "norm". The rate of change is revealed by the fact that the modern citizen spends much of his life in at least any of these institutions.

As argued by Foucault in the above discussion, the Madaris siphon off their students from other members of the same family working in mainstream society and hence, working against the inclusiveness factor. Madaris can be regarded as panopticons, where the graduates are disciplined. Through observation and control of the students, their minds and activities are being moulded and shaped to a particular ends; docility. The knowledge is imparted in a manner that controls their whole life, even after graduation and when they start their own families, and in some cases open up their own Madrassah in their own hometown. The students are kept under surveillance and observation, having a strict timetable to follow. They get up in the morning before dawn and start recitation and memorization of given lessons. After taking their breakfast, they attend classes of different subjects ranging from Fiqah (Islamic Jurisprudence), Tafseer (exegesis), Hadith (sayings of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWS)) and Nazira (recitation of Qur’an). So their whole day is prescheduled and monitored. No student can leave the class without permission of the monitor, who will then ask Baji, and only after her permission is granted can the student go out. There is, not only hierarchy of administrative positions, rather some students have also been given recognized positions to check and control their fellow students. Thus, reflecting the hierarchal and regimented arrangements Foucault described when a European town was put under ‘special measures’ in response to plague.

These panopticons continue to reproduce themselves in the shape of mushrooming of Madaris. In reproducing the structures students internalize the organizational norms and likewise produce, maintain and reproduce their ‘habitus’ after graduation. In other words, the organizations have very strong association with each other through networks of graduates who either setup their own Madaris or send their children to other Madaris. Coleman (1988) argues that structures play an important role in creating and maintaining social capital in its different forms i.e. obligations,

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19 Baji is an urdu word used literally means elder sister, it is differently used for females senior in age, education etc., but here it is used for head girl of the class in madrassah language this word is
expectations and trust-worthiness of the structure, information channels and norms and sanctions. He further argues that closure of social structures is important for the existence of effective norms and trustworthiness. So I used Coleman’s and Bourdieu’s approach to social capital to explore how Madaris networks can become infused by particular norms.

2.12 Madaris as Source of “Social Capital”

Social capital is an interesting concept regarding civil and social life. It is used in a variety of ways and in different meanings. The term was first used by Lyda Judson Hanifan who described social capital as tangible substances which count most in daily life (see for example, Hanifan, 1916; 1920). After that the term appeared in the writings of various theorists but the major contributors in the development of the used for senior girls of the class and also for the wife/daughters of Muhtamim. In some Madaris students used to call their teachers by this name.

term are Jane Jacobs (1961), Pierre Bourdieu (1983), James S. Coleman (1988) and then Robert D. Putnam (1993; 2000). Social capital has been differently defined by the scientists/writers in their own ways, however, all similar and different at the same time. Long after Hanifan, Bourdieu (1983) described the term social capital as a sum of resources (both actual and virtual), that help the group and individuals in creating a durable network of relationships either institutionalized or not. He was more concerned with reproduction of social class through utilizing social and cultural capital reviving neo-Marxist tradition of critical analysis. Then in late 1980s and early 1990s, James Coleman while concentrating upon children’s educational pattern/achievement, added the flavor of trust into the social capital and regarded it as resources based on “trust” and shared values, developed by the people living together and sharing lives. Coleman states that social capital is a set/combination of different entities which have two things in common i.e. a structure and they will be assisting/facilitating the actors of that structure in their work. But this (social structure) is specific to certain activities and may not be helpful or facilitating for other actors (outside that specific structure). He further argues that although it can facilitate the action of individuals but at the same time it can be restrictive as well (Coleman, 1988). Coleman linked the formation of human capital to/with social capital and states that the social side of capital (the relationships) affects the formation of human capital (skills, capabilities and potentialities, sense of self identity, power of expression) by enabling the human to learn (the skills, norms values) and be a productive/successful person in the society. Coleman’s ideology broadened the scope of social capital and viewed it as valuable not only for the higher strata of the society but for the whole society including each layer, no matter poor or rich. Coleman classified social capital, as discussed above, into three forms i.e. obligations, information channels and norms. These are the basics of social capital in keeping the society intact and enabling the relations to be more strong and productive.

He regarded social capital as one of the potential resources of an actor, along other resources such as their skills and capability (human capital), tools (physical capital), or money (economic capital). Although it is not something perceptible, that social capital
cannot be owned by the individual rather these resources are there in the society to be used by the actors.

Coleman also points out the importance of social capital as “a useful source of information in everyday life and of norms and sanctions, which can facilitate certain kinds of actions, but can also be restrictive” (Coleman, 1988: 104–5). In particular, he talked about an important result of social capital that is “its impact on the creation of human capital in the next generation” (p. 109). This ‘human capital’, such as a secure sense of self-identity, confidence in expressing one’s own opinions, and emotional intelligence enables young people to become better learners, and hence, more successful in school and society. The human capital emerges out of social capital, because this kind of development depends upon relationships, most obviously within the family (or other support networks) (Coleman, 1988).

Analyzing religious institutions on the lines of Coleman’s notion of social structure producing social capital, we find somehow a different picture. The Islamic religious institutions (Madrassah in common language, plural Madaris) are closed structures possessing their own norms and values. The life inside the Madaris is totally different from the outside world. It seems that this is another part of the world, where the standard of language spoken, dress of the students and teachers, ways of eating, gossiping and the behaviors and attitudes are all different from the other educational institutions like mainstream government and private schools/colleges. It was found in the study that all the students were dressed in the same color (every Madrassah has its own uniform of a different color), including a large head scarf.

No single student can step out of the Madrassah without wearing a ‘Burqah’ (a large gown covering the whole body along with a cap-like head cover). Those who do not wear such attire are considered bad. There are specified timings for eating, prayers, gossip and other activities. These institutions place certain obligations on their actors as Coleman regarded important for producing social capital. In the Madaris, everyone is conscious of what she is doing and how she is doing it. The norms are internalized so strongly that the students even think it a sin if they do not follow the particular pattern taught in Madrassah. They help to enhance human capital by imparting religious knowledge to the students and enabling them to spend their life as a ‘good Muslim’. Madaris have a variety of structures working in horizontal fashion exclusively. Each sect has its own networks nationally and internationally catering for general welfare under individual influence. This is why state efforts to mainstream them are countered in a rigorous manner. These networks with strong values and trust inside the homogenized chain strengthen in a particular way to further the cause in shape of mushrooming. In contrast to Coleman’s argument that parents’ involvement in children’s education produce and reproduce norms and attitudes in society; parents of such students have casual contact with the institutions and no contact with other parents at all. Unlike Coleman’s belief that affiliation with religion (church in his words) will make the adjustment of the individual easy in the society, these religious schools actually marginalize them and make this difficult for their graduates by limiting their access to the other sectors of society.

The institutions reproduce their own class (in the words of Bourdieu), as stated earlier; these are spreading horizontally which reveal the idea of Bourdieu on social capital. They Madaris utilize their available resources i.e. socio-cultural (religious norms and
sanctity, social structures) and financial (in shape of charity and grants from local and international community) to keep their own interest intact. They do not allow any outsider, even the government to intrude in their affairs, even for their financial betterment or their upgradation.

2.13 Madaris are the Structures that Reproduce Themselves

Studying individual’s, interaction and social action, two approaches have been adopted by the theorists – action and praxis. The ‘action’ approach highlights the individual aspect of action to the actor – Weber, Parsons, rational choice theory, and some symbolic interaction approaches highlight this. The praxis approach stresses the outcome, demonstration and production of social action, illustrated by Garfinkel and Goffman. Both of these sociological methods study social action, patterns, social institutions consist of these forms (family, peer groups), and social structures (like patriarchy). The difference lies in the analysis of social action. (Cohen, 2000: 74).

Giddens analyses social action from praxis approach, where social action is denoted by conduct of actors, social practices and their reproduction, local construction of praxis. He emphasizes space – proximity or distance and their facilitation through social structures – and time (continuity/discontinuity and the organization of activities across time). This is a two way process – social conditions and situations are shaped by structural components/features of society and social praxis is the means through which these structures and institutions are produced and reproduced. Giddens’ approach of social action differs from micro sociological perspectives in examining the connection of social action and social practices to existing pervasive systems/structures.

Giddens (1984) argues that social structures and systems are reproduced through the continued practices. Cohen (2000) regards Social action and interaction as “tacitly enacted practices” leading to establishment of “institutions or routines” and “reproduce familiar forms of social life” (p:94). Giddens states:

“... human social activities, like some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive. That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible (Gidden, 1984: 2).”

Giddens considers this approach as an integrating force combining human social action with the larger systems, structures, and institutions. The social actions are repeated in regular and habitual forms that set up the larger social forms that Giddens defined as structural reality. In Durkheim’s view of structural determination of individual action, there are constraints on social action. While the structuration view states that there could be some flexibility and change in these group actions.

2.14 Conclusion

Summing up the discussion, the chapter was designed to link the status of the Madaris with available/related theories in general and associated to women’s empowerment in particular. An overview of the historical development of Madaris in sub-continent explicates the narrow/traditional outlook of their owners/Muhtamims. Its boom in early 1970’s in Pakistan is associated with the ideological politics that how
Madaris are used by male maintaining their dominancy and control. Males are using the female Madaris to enhance their economic status to earn for their families both locally and internationally. This study also attempts to explicate the status of madrassah graduates in contemporary Pakhtun society. It intends to investigate female Madaris, an integral part of the local system, with a focus upon their usefulness for society in general and women’s empowerment in particular. The study draws upon the views madrassah stakeholders (Muhtamims, teachers and students) on the issues of modern world and women’s role in it. Having these objectives the study utilized observation and indepth interviews for the better understanding of women’s empowerment through Madaris.

CHAPTER 3                   METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter elaborated the literature and identified the gaps left behind by earlier researches and also set the theoretical stage for the study. The current chapter explains the methods used in this research. It discusses how the research was carried out, the epistemology of the study, respondents’ selection, tools used for data collection, and field issues. It also elaborates the limitations and ethical considerations of the study. It demonstrates that study is qualitative in nature which employed qualitative method of data collection and analysis. In a nut shell, it shows a complete picture of the field and analysis of the collected data.

3.2 Setting the Stage

Focus of this study is on Madaris education as an institutional site for the articulation of particular variants of Islamic teachings on the status and role of women in Pakistani society.

The link between Madrassah and extremism has received considerable attention in media after 9/11. However, very little is known about the everyday functioning of the Madaris and the role they play in life of their graduates as discussed in the previous chapter. The female Madaris, have not been studied in much detail. Although, some aspects like historical origination, curriculum, enrolment statistics of Madaris students, parents’ preference for girls education have been studied (see Bano, 2010; Andarabi, 2008; Farooq, 2009; Keay, 1964; Metcalf, 1982; Makdisi, 1974; Kadi, 2006). However, female Madaris in Pakistan, and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), have not been studied in detail.

This research focuses on the role female Madaris play in women empowerment. The research is based on the perceptions of Madrassah stakeholders (Muhtamims, staff, students and parents). It is reiterated that research employ qualitative methodology.

Through a qualitative methodology I gained insight into the structure, functions and role of Madaris in empowering or disempowering females through its curriculum, environment and objectives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I conducted in-depth interviews with Muhtamims, teachers, students and their parents. I also conducted group
interviews in order to elicit more in-depth information from the respondents. The aim of group interviews was to know the strategies adopted by female Madaris to socialize their graduates.

3.3 Tools of Data Collection

Unstructured interview guide was used as tool of data collection. It helped in getting detailed data regarding Madaris. I also employed observation during data collection process. The observation in field was also carried out with the aim to analyze the prevalent trend of religious education in theory and practice. The emerging perspectives from the qualitative interviews and field observation notes will be presented in the form of a case study. Case study, as a research strategy enabled me to present a more holistic and in-depth knowledge of the Madaris, their structure, philosophy and educational objectives, giving wider range to present the participants’ views objectively.

3.4 Case Study

To understand the role of female Madrassah in Pakistani society, it requires an in-depth and detailed study of the institution’s aims, objectives and structures from the perspectives of staff, parents and students. A case study approach allows using variety of tools for data collection (Yin, 2009). In order to conduct a contextual study, a combination of tools like individual interviews, focus groups and ethnographic notes were used for collection of data.

Although there are various Madaris of different sub-sects in Pakistan (explained later in this chapter), however, in the present study Deobandi Madaris have been taken as a case study, because they have been popular and influential even before partition of India. Ten Madaris of the series were selected for the study; five Madaris from each of the two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, viz. district Nowshera and district Peshawar (see their details below). These districts have been selected purposively because of the historical roots of the mainstream ‘Deobandi’ series of Madaris in the two districts and the prestige they enjoy among their communities. The students, parents, teachers and owners/managers of the Madaris were interviewed individually, however, students were interviewed in the presence of their teachers (this was a condition set by all the Madaris managers, who acted as gatekeepers). The managers had full control of the institutions. Without their permission, no one could enter their territory. Even within the Madaris, their offices were placed in such a way to monitor the movement of anybody coming inside or going outside the building. Conducting fieldwork under such surveillance rendered the process of data collection a hectic and laborious job. During individual interviews with the respondents, the teachers accompanied the students and did not let them talk with anybody in privacy. Further, I was always advised to sit in the common room, so that the process of data collection could be observed and monitored.

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20 Deobandi is one of the prominent sub-sects of Sunni Islam in South Asia. The others include Baralvi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Salafi.
3.5 Epistemology

Study of religious institutions is a ‘sensitive topic’ specifically under conditions prevailing in the target area. It needs an understanding of participants’ deeply held beliefs and practices. Therefore, it was pertinent to study the institutions ‘from the insider’s’ view, rather than from the outside where physical objects are taken a unit of inquiry and conclusion is drawn from one sided observations. It is also an attempt to examine the power distribution within the Madaris and to study the production of Madaris on one hand, and the structures reproduced on the other. It requires studying these institutions in their cultural settings. As human beings cannot be studied in isolation like physical world, rather they have to be studied along with their cultural settings in social situations through interpretivists’ perspective (Hammersley, 2013; Truzzi, 1974; Outhwaite, 1976; Hausheer, 1996; Harrington, 2000). I intended to understand the perspectives of female Madaris (their stakeholders), therefore, I chose interpretivist approach, to get their position from their own point of view. I have also incorporated the ideas of Dorothy Smith, Foucault, Goffman while analyzing the data as the themes emerged were reflecting their ideas regarding power distribution, construction of gendered identities, surveillance and hegemony.

I interpreted the data as presented by the respondents, analyzed the phenomenon of empowerment and Madrassah education as perceived by the actors in their own situations and according to their own understandings.

3.6 Background on Madaris Types- Towards a Typology

Islam as a religion has been divided into various sects by its followers, presenting slightly different interpretations in the main ideology/essence, and further differentiation has led to the division in the form of sub-sects. The broader two sects are Sunni (85%) and Shia (approximately 14% of the world Muslim population) (ICOCO, 2008; Abdo, 2013). The Sunni sub-sects in Pakistan are Deobandi, Barelvi and Ahl-e-Hadith or Salafi. Each of the sects/sub-sects teaches its own version of Islam in their Madaris and their branches. Deobandi and Barelvi sects dominate the Madrassah education in Pakistan (Sheikh, 2011). All of the sects have their own Madrassah boards such as:

Table: 3.1  Madaris Boards in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Sect</th>
<th>Board of Madrasah</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deobandi</td>
<td>Wifaq-ul-Madaris</td>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barelvi</td>
<td>Tanzim-ul-Madaris</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>Wifaq-ul-Madaris (Shia) Pakistan</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7 Universe of the Study

The Madaris have multiplied enormously and spread in every nook and corner, covering both rural and urban areas of Pakistan. To study the phenomenon in all of the 25 districts would exceed the time and financial limitations of this project, therefore, only two districts of KP have been selected purposively i.e. District Peshawar and Nowshera. The two districts are adjacent to each other and, hence, more accessible for me from Peshawar. Furthermore, it was not possible to study the whole districts under the present study due to time and resources constraint. Therefore, two cities of both districts were selected for this study.

Although the total number of Madaris in KP is unknown (as there are a lot of unregistered Madaris operating in the country) but a rough estimate of the registered Madaris has been given by the educational board of KP (department of education uses the word ‘approximately’ when they publish statistics of the Madaris). According to education department of KP, there are 152 registered Madaris in district Nowshera while 58 in district Peshawar (Government of Pakistan, 2012). The total number of Madaris and gender wise distribution of students and teachers in the two districts are shown in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Madaris</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>No. of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowshera</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the list, there are 156 female Madaris in district Nowshera, wherein 11769 students are enrolled and 338 teachers are employed. In district Peshawar, there are 58 female Madaris, accommodating 6622 students and 205 teachers.

Nowshera district was selected because it has the highest number of female Madaris in KP (Pakistan Educational Statistics, 2007-08). Secondly, this district experienced a dramatic increase in the number of female Madaris despite the fact that it is a semi-modern area, having some of the best schools and colleges for boys and girls. The existence of the parallel education systems makes this area an ideal location for this study.

The second district selected for the study is Peshawar. This district has geo-political importance in the region. It is the provincial capital and considered the most advanced
city/district of KP. The ratio of women employment and education is comparatively better than other parts of the province. As a provincial capital and comparatively ‘developed area’, there are more chances of women education and employment in the mainstream or secular sector schools, colleges and universities. However, there has been an increase in the number of female Madaris and a large number of females are in Madaris as students or teachers in Peshawar. The objective behind selecting these two districts was to find out why students and parents prefer Madrassah education despite of the availability of secular educational institutions in these areas, and how Madaris managers and teachers articulate the ‘benefits’ of Madaris education for Muslim women and Pakistani society in general?

3.8 Selection of Respondents

As stated earlier, I selected 10 Deobandi Madaris from both districts (Peshawar and Nowshera) which were included in the total number of known Madaris included in the Education Department of KP’s report. Deobandi Madaris were selected because they are considered to be the most popular/established Madaris in South Asia. Furthermore, they have produced many generations of graduates. It was initially planned that 04 students would be selected from the senior most darja (darjais an Urdu term, literally means level). In the present context, it is used for class. 02 parents and 04 teaching/administrative staff were interviewed in each Madrassah. So the total number of respondents would be 100. But when I entered the field, I came across a number of obstacles especially from Madaris managers who became the gatekeepers associated with this research. Some of the Madrassah owners were reluctant to allow me for conducting interviews with female students and graduates and, therefore, so I had to select female students through a snowball sampling technique. Starting from personal contacts, acquainted with Madrassah students, I personally knew who were living nearby. I also initially planned to conduct focus group discussions with students in all Madaris, however, the managers did not allow me to do so, except in two Madaris. The table below presents the number of participants interviewed individually or in group in the study locale.

Table: 3.3 Sample Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Muhtamims</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowshera</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9 Profile of the Districts (Peshawar and Nowshera) and respondents’ profile

In the lines below, effort is made to introduce the locale and the respondents, including description of the area, explaining the characteristics and features of both districts; their demographic and socio-cultural details. Therefore, the section introduces the reader to the respondents and their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

3.9.1 Districts

The fieldwork was conducted in two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); Peshawar and Nowshera. Both the districts have almost the same socio-cultural background; both are Pashto-speaking areas and share more or less the same culture. Peshawar is the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with an area of 74,521 km² (28,773 sq. miles) (Government of KP, 2014). It has boundaries with Nowshera, Kohat, and FATA, which gives this area a geo-political importance. The historic Khyber Pass at West of the city make it strategically important, as it is an easy route to Afghanistan and central Asia. Peshawar has been one of the oldest trade centres of Asia as well, where the merchants from South East Asia used to stay for a while in Qissakhwani bazar. Over the centuries, Peshawar has been the entry point for travellers, invaders, businessmen and merchants. The Khyber Pass was the main gate of these travellers to enter Kabul from India (District Census Report, 1998).

According to 1998 census, the population of Peshawar is 2.019 million, (comprising 1,061,000 (52%) of male and 958,000 (48%) of female) where 51.32% are urban dwellers and 48.68% are rural dwellers (District Census Report, 1998). The literacy rate of Peshawar is 41.75. It is one of the largest cities of Pakistan, providing various opportunities of education, employment and trade/business. That is why people belonging to different parts of the country are settled here, making this city a multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic centre. The major language spoken is Pushto (interchangeably used with Pakhto, Pakhto), while Saraiki, Hindko, Potohari, Urdu and Punjabi are also common in some of its areas. Heterogeneity is found in all aspects of life, including social class, employment opportunities, educational attainment, traditions and cultural patterns and so on. The reason for this heterogeneity is, as stated earlier, the heterogeneity of population. Being a metropolis city, Peshawar accommodates people from different parts of the country. Another

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21 Pashto or Pakhtu is the native language of Pakhtuns.
22 It is an old market where the merchants, travelers and businessmen sat together in part in hotels and shared different stories. Still it is famous for the old hotels where green tea is mostly served. 23 Hujra is a male guest room/drawing room of Pakhtun areas. Hujra is one of the main cultural feature of Pakhtuns.
major reason is the migration of internally displaced persons and Afghan war victims to the district. In rural areas, the traditional setup makes life a bit different from the urban. There is strict *pardah* (veil/veiling) and *Hujra*\(^{23}\) system in most of villages. People still maintain the old established normative and cultural patterns. In their own terminology they still maintain and follow ‘*Pakhtun-wali*\(^{23}\).

Girls’ education is still a challenge for many rural families. They (girls) are just provided with religious education either at home or in *Madressah* and their employment is still a far cry (Ferguson, 2010). However, this situation has changed in urban areas where the impact of contemporary world can be seen in various aspects of life. The familial relations are egalitarian and women enjoy freedom and liberty as compared to women belonging to rural areas of both the districts.

*Nowshera* is another important city of the province. The population of District *Nowshera* is 874373 (District Census Report, 1998), in which 227030 (25.96 %) is living in rural areas while 647343 (74.04 %) have urban dwelling. The literacy rate in the district is 42.50 %. The statistics of literacy in the area shows that the literacy ration of male is 60.55 % and that of female is 22.68 %, which is a clear indication of poor status of female education in the area. The total area of the district is 1,748 km\(^2\). The main source of income in the district is agriculture with 52,540 hectares cultivated area (District Census Report, 1998). In 1988, *Nowshera* got the status of a district, while, previously it enjoyed the status of *tehsil*\(^{24}\) (sub division) of *Peshawar*. It is surrounded by different districts of the province. District *Peshawar* lies in its west, district *Mardan* in its north, *Charsadda* in the north west, *Swabi* in the north east, *Kohat* in south and *Attock* in its east. *Nowshera* is an important military station as well and is famous for the cantonment of the colonial era. It has various military schools and centers like Artillery School, School of Army Service Corps and School of Armour.

The traditional *Pakhtun* culture has strong hold in this district. *Pakhtuns* are the preserver of their culture and religion. There is strong patriarchal hold in the society and almost in all the social institutions, the authority rests in the hands of male (Ferguson, 2010). Patriarchal extended and joint family systems prevails in area. *Nang/ghaira* (honor), hospitality, *pardah* etc., are some of the prominent features of the *Pakhtun* code of life – *Pakhtunwali* (Lindholm, 1982). Women have a subordinate status in *Pakhtun* society, where male has the authority in public and private spheres of life; they are the decision makers, the bread winner, and the family heads (Ferguson, 2010). Little attention is given to female education; they are mostly given religious education (ibid). However, the society is passing through its transition phase and education of women is increasing slowly and gradually which is opening up new employment opportunities for them.

The major languages spoken are *Pashto*, *Punjabi*, and *Urdu*. *Khattak*\(^{25}\) is the major tribe among others like *Kaka khel*, *Awan khel*, *Afridi* and *Mankikhel* (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2014).

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\(^{23}\) *Pakhtoonwali* is the ethical code and traditional way of life that *Pakhtuns* adopt and that is unwritten.

\(^{24}\) *Tehsil* is an administrative region/centre of Pakistan and India.

\(^{25}\) Khattak is the name of a major *Pakhtun* tribe and the predecessors of great Pasto poet, warrior and leader, Khushal Khan Khattak.
3.9.2 Profile of Respondents

From both districts; Peshawar and Nowshera Deobandi female Madaris were selected for this research. It was difficult to get access to Female Madaris, (see section 3.8 in this chapter). Madaris whose managers agreed to allow their students and teachers to participate in the study were visited. Female Madaris, As said earlier, are in a sense, closed-institutions that do not allow any outsider (stranger) to enter their premises due to various reasons, (see details in latter part of this chapter). Therefore, I had to take convenient samples and looked forward for the courtesy of Muhtamims.

Furthermore, it was necessary to select Madaris which were old enough and have passed out at least 5 batches of graduates, because the current study entailed to know the role and status of madrassah’s graduates in the society. Therefore, all selected Madaris were established at least a decade before. However, the Muhtamims participated in this research activity on the condition that I will not include any kind of their particulars i.e. names and locales of Madaris or any other identification. Therefore, I had to omit all such information.

My respondents comprised four different groups including Muhtamims/managers of the Madaris, teachers (all of whom were females), students and their parents. To probe the research questions in detail, it was necessary to know the views of all such stakeholders.

All the Muhtamims were middle aged men, with long beards and wearing turbans26 on their heads. Most of them were Madaris’ graduates while few of them (especially in district Peshawar) had studied in both secular and religious institutions. Most of them, when interviewed, used to sit in their offices which were spacious and having seating arrangement on floor. One of the Muhtamims said that sitting on floor helps you to remember your actual place (grave), where everyone has to return. He further added that sitting on chairs and tables is a western way of life and is artificial and its consistent use is not good for health. All Muhtamims had their offices and houses in the building of Madaris. The entrance of female Madaris, as elaborated later in this chapter, were usually in the offices or courtyards of the Muhtamims’ houses. It was one of the security measures taken by the Muhtamims to protect the students from meeting any outsider without their permission. The wives and daughters or daughter-in-laws of Muhtamims used to teach/supervise the students in Madaris and some of them also worked as wardens of the boarding.

Interestingly, it was observed that most of the Muhtamims had married more than a single woman (they rationalised this polygamous practice by saying that Islam has given them this right and permission), and all their wives lived together and served in Madaris. Muhtamims had 5-10 children. Male children (sons) of most of the Muhtamims’ especially in district Peshawar had got secular education and ran businesses or served in government, semi-government or private institutions. While some of them had also graduated from Madaris and had been teaching in male sections of the Madaris.

26 Turban in Pakhtun society reflects respect.
Almost all of the Muhtamims, had a traditional thinking and point of view/stance about various issues, including familial, social, and political issues. Although, the Muhtamims were reluctant to answer about their income/sources of income but it was observed that they were relying on Zakat (alms) given by the local and international communities to their Madaris. While in some Madaris, the female family members of the Muhtamims were teaching in Madaris and their male family members were engaged in different businesses and jobs in different sectors.

The female teachers belonged to different parts of the province, mostly the northern side. They were of different age groups and their ages ranged from 20-40 years. Most of them were married, as there was a trend of early marriages especially of girls in Pakhtun societies. Most of them used to live in hostels within Madaris.

Whereas, those living nearby, were picked and dropped by their male family members. When they had to go out of Madrassah, they used to wear Burgah.

Most of the teachers were graduates of the same Madrassah in which they were teaching. When asked why they were not serving in their home towns, they (some teachers in Peshawar) replied proudly that it was an honour to serve in parent institution and pay back what the Madrassah had given them. These teachers were paid a minimal amount which they rationalised that they are not teaching here for money rather they are furthering the cause of their Muhtamims—spreading Islam, which ask individuals and specially females to live simple and obedient life.

Although the teachers, during their interviews, criticised the modern world and modern way of living, however, most of them wore up-to-date clothes stitched in new designs (which were in vogue). Most of them were wearing Shalwar (loose trouser), Qameez (a knee-long shirt) and Dupatta (a large head scarf), that covers their upper body. The teachers held that they served the Madrassah just for the cause of Islam—promoting Islamic teachings, however, the Bajis (wife or elder daughter/daughter-in-law of the Muhtamim) told that they were giving salaries to these teachers. By giving the details of their expenditure, they actually tried to justify the zakat money which they used to receive from community for the betterment of madrassah.

Students in all Madaris had specific uniforms; loose Shalwar, Qameez and large Dupattas (each madrassah had its own colour of uniform for students). The age of students ranged from 5 to 18 years, however, for current study only the senior most (final year) students were taken for interviews. Like teachers, the students also belonged to different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, however, in district Peshawar there were some students from Afghanistan as well, who migrated during war in Afghanistan and never returned back. Most of the students had joint family system where their families lived with their paternal uncles in the same house. They had 512 siblings and most of whom were studying in Madaris, however, siblings of the few students were studying in mainstream schools/colleges. The students displayed shyness and felt uncomfortable during interviews because I was perceived as an outsider and a student of secular educational institution. In most of the interviews with students, a teacher used to sit quietly with us which made the students more conscious and looked to their teachers whenever I asked questions. They answered after receiving (symbolic) permission from the teachers. It was a norm and a symbol of respect not to talk in front of teachers.
Almost all students were boarders living in the Madrassah’s hostels situated either in basement or at the back of Madrassah. They enjoyed 2 monthly holidays, and three to seven days quarterly break for short visit to their homes. The students were not allowed to go home by their own. The male family member (whose name was registered at the time of admission) would have to take them home and drop them back. At the time of admission, the administration of Madaris asks the family to give names and identity card copies of three male members from the family, who may visit the girls. No other person is allowed to meet the girls other than those prescribed names. Majority of the respondents belonged to lower-middle and lower-middle class. The professions of their fathers included taxi driving, farmers, shopkeeper, daily wagers (labourers), mechanics and carpenters. However, some day scholar students belonged to upper middle class and came from well-off families but the ratio of these well-off students was comparatively low.

3.10 Tools of Data Collection

For reliable data different tools were used in this research. Observations inside these structures (Madaris) helped to understand the profound impact of the inner environment upon the female students (and graduates). Participant observation further added in discovering the patterns of interaction among the students and the staff of the Madrassah which helped in understanding the power structure between teachers and students in this educational context.

Getting into the Madaris proved initially difficult, as noted above, the gatekeepers were reluctant to allow access to their students and graduates. They feared that someone might not monitor their activities inside the institutions. They tried their best to protect their institutions, students and teachers from perceived/envisaged negative impact of the contemporary modern world upon the students. I was suspected too as an embodiment of such an ‘external’ influence. My intention in using a range of research tools was to get beyond the direct influence of the Muhtamims on other participants (including students and teachers). As mentioned earlier, the owners and administrators might have influenced students’ responses. I intended to expose the gaps between practice and theory as inspired by Islamic feminism.

In-depth interviews were the only possible tool left to know the stance of Muhtamims and compare and analyze the actual enactment in the light of Islamic feminism. These interviews helped me understand these ‘owner’s’ perspectives on women’s empowerment and their role in reproducing what they viewed as appropriate type of female empowerment.

At the same time, interviews with students were important for giving voice to the ‘beneficiaries’ of these institutional structures. However, it took considerable efforts like convincing them to speak freely, without feeling any fear or guilt, to get the students articulate their understanding of their position and status in Pakistani society.

Interviewing parents of madrassah students helped me analyze their perspectives on Madaris in the context of prevailing religious social structures. The parental perspective also provided some insight into the popularity of the educational
‘choice’ amongst particular cohorts of society, that is both ‘middle class’ and ‘lower class’ individuals who represent the more traditional and conservative sections of Pakistani society.

3.11 Entering into the Field/Negotiating the Field

Conducting fieldwork, as stated earlier, within female Madaris was not an easy task and many obstacles appeared like rigid/inflexible attitude of Muhtamims, problem in reaching the respondents and time constraints. Many factors contributed to make the situation more challenging. Firstly, Madaris are not open to outsiders (researchers) especially female Madaris. Secondly, the Madaris are traditional institutions trying to maintain their status in society without any interference from the outside. They even do not accept financial help from government bodies because it might make them susceptible to the encroachment of ‘alternative’ ways of doing things. Thirdly, female Madaris’ educational aims and objectives (as explained in chapter 5 and 6) are proclaimed to be a counter strategy against westernization. These organizations do not allow outsiders, especially persons belonging to the group which they (the Madrassah stakeholders) call secular and think embody ‘worldliness’. Due to such reasons, I came across so many problems when I tried to access female Madaris.

All the participants were reluctant to be involved in the study; the Muhtamims were not willing to give time even for interview. I resorted to one of my relatives (Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq, who is the manager of a well-known boys’ Madressah in Nowshera) for help. He called different Madressah owners and requested them to extend help in my project. As a consequence, I got appointments with Muhtamims in district Peshawar and Nowshera. It changed my status from a total stranger and I was dealt as a guest (known to a Muhtamim) upon whom, the rest of the Muhtamims could rely and was then allowed entry into their Madaris.

However, they only agreed to give me just a few hours and fewer visits to the Madaris.

3.12 Researcher Reflexivity

Being a researcher, I tried my best to see the things and situations as they were, but being a human, having emotions and feelings and a Muslim, it would be wrong to disassociate myself completely from my topic and my respondents. I am a member of the same Pakhtun community where I conducted this study; therefore, it was difficult to completely isolate myself from my own understanding and prejudices related to the issues in question. At the same time, I am a Muslim, educated in ‘secular’ institutions throughout my education career. I was therefore, both an ‘insider’ in terms of ethnicity, religion and regional identity but I was considered as an ‘outsider’ by participants.

In order to understand these religious institutions from my participants’ perspectives, I had to maintain a balance between my prejudices and ‘hearing’ what participants told me what they consider the appropriate ways of building female empowerment; rather than just observing ‘empowerment’ from the western feminist’s lens. Being a part of the same culture where I conducted research, I could see many common cultural aspects, me and my respondents shared but they were socialized in an environment that differs a lot from my secular educational background.
But after completing the process of data collection, I had to rethink this concept of empowerment. Miles and Haberman (1994) consider the researcher as a measuring device, who views things from the inside. This is what I attempted to do. I also observed the institutions from a close lens and tried to analyze them from the perspectives of the managers, students/graduates and parents; however, my theoretical framework based upon Islamic feminism provided me with an inquisitive yet central perspective for understanding the institutions and the patriarchal misinterpretations of Islam they disseminated.

3.13 Fieldwork Issues

Although, I had a strong reference (of Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq) before entering the field, still many problems lay ahead with regard to entering Madrassah and getting permission to talk to participants. Madrassah owners and the administration suspected my identity and were not satisfied with the information I gave them about me and my project. They were suspicious that I was a member of a NGO/INGO, working on women issues and that I wanted to enter their Madaris in order to influence the students to embrace modern and western ideals (before my study, an NGO in Peshawar had published a very negative picture of Madrassah and the Muhtamims, by portraying them as conservative and inhumane institutions which had probably heightened their suspicions). Therefore, when I went to the first Madrassah in district Nowshera, I waited for an hour in my car outside the Madrassah while the Muhtamim was investigating my credentials. When he confirmed that I did not belong to any NGO/INGO, then he allowed me to enter the Madrassah. Similarly, the students I interviewed inside the Madrassah were under vigilance and whenever I talked to them, they were accompanied by their teachers and/or a family member of the Muhtamims. That might have had an impact on the responses of students while answering my questions.

The managers also insisted to anonymise the Madaris because they feared that my data could be used by foreigners for their own interests and harming the cause of Madaris. Being a research ethic, I promised a complete anonymity of the Madaris and participants too.

3.14 Limitations of the Study

Like other studies on female Madaris, this project also has certain limitations. The trend of Madrassah education of male in general and female in particular, as noted above, is multiplying rapidly in Pakistan. Almost all sects/sub-sects have established their own Madaris affiliated with different boards. However, the present study focuses only on Deobandi Madaris. Although, it would have been more productive if a comparative study of Madaris including all sub-sects could have been conducted, yet time and finances did not oblige me.

Secondly, empowerment is associated with various measurable components, for example cognitive, psychological, social, political, economic and legal. However, this study focuses on social and economic components of empowerment only because these are directly linked with education and hence, more concerned with my study.
Thirdly, my resources did not allow me to study all the students of Madaris and therefore, I focused my attention on only those students who were studying in ‘darja alamiah’ in Madaris, equivalent to master of Arts.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

In any research project, there are certain ethical issues which have to be considered prior to and often during the research process. My research too, was not an exception to it. Being sensitive and controversial phenomenon, the female Madaris were difficult to be accessed and contacted for explicit reason of security/privacy. The students of such Madaris are not allowed to invite or meet any guest without prior permission of Muhtamim or his wife. The buildings of Madaris are designed in such a way that the students’ residential units, the teaching rooms and courtyard cannot be accessed without crossing the Muhtamim’s office/room. Therefore, I had to approach the Muhtamims and seek their permission for visiting the female students and teachers. The owners and managers were concerned more about my identity and motives behind my study of female Madaris. They also showed reservation about the misuse of the information gathered at the hands of non-local actors in future. I assured them that all information gathered during the fieldwork will be used just for my study and that no piece of this information will be given to any other person or published without their consent. I had to provide my identity card and reference letter from my university and supervisor as proof of my identification. It clarified to them that I was a Pakistani national and a post graduate student, collecting this data only for my PhD thesis, and that I would not pass the information to any foreign country. Another concern of the Muhtamims, as noted above, was that I may be somehow associated with an NGO working for any foreign donor agency because few foreign funded local NGOs had tried to investigate female Madaris for their possible connection to Taliban or extremist groups. Hence, I had to assure disassociation with any such organization except my university.

Apart from institutional liabilities, I observed more static form of norms and cultural patterns inside Madaris. In district Nowshera, the Muhtamims were reluctant to talk to a female ‘stranger’, they only agreed upon giving interviews if I cover myself in proper pardah. So, I had to conduct most of the interviews with Muhtamims wearing Burqa. My traditional long shawl (which covered my body) was deemed to be insufficient, so I had to borrow Burqa from a student before the interview with the Muhtamims could proceed. Before recording the interviews, I also asked for permission of the respondents to record the interviews, assuring them confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, I had to omit the names of students and teachers because they talked to me on the condition that their names should not be included in my research project.

27 The senior most class in female Madaris that is equivalent to Master’s Degree.
28 Burqa is an Urdu and Arabic word, also known as burkha, burka or burqu’, is a covering garment. Women wear it when they go out in public in some Islamic cultures, to cover their bodies. The faceveiling part is usually a piece of semi-transparent cloth with a portion of the head-scarf so that the veil hangs down covering the face and can be turned up.
3.16 Analyzing the Data/ Methods of Analysis

Generating data in such a sensitive field of research was an intensive labor and time consuming in terms of producing rapport with the respondents who were very suspicious of me as an ‘outsider’. Foremost, transcription of data was carried out along with noting my field observations to ensure that I produce the most accurate and reliable data. After a thorough review of the data, I established a number of broader themes like patriarchal control of the Madaris, explained with the help of subthemes like Muhtamims’ authority, hegemony of males and patriarchal interpretation of Islamic teachings through tailored curriculum. Subsequently, controlled environments inside Madaris are discussed where I talked about the structured timetable, scheduled routines and limited interaction of the students with the outside world. Other themes emerged from the data like dichotomy of religious and secular education that I explained from the Madaris stakeholder’s point of view, difference between religious and secular empowerment and the role of these Madaris under study in empowerment. Data was labeled or tagged along each sub theme or category. Categories were refined and data classified across each category. Patterns of association were identified in the data sheet through isolating linkages with feminist approaches related to empowerment, the critique of female Madaris in terms of patriarchal reproduction and Foucauldian themes interrelated with the concepts of panopticons and Surveillance. At the same time, attention was given to the actors/respondents in terms of how they presented their understandings of women’s empowerment, the role of Madrassah education and their ideals of Islamic womanhood.

3.17 Conclusion

This methodology chapter has described and explained the rationale of using qualitative methods; in particular why I focused upon using individual/group interviews, and observations in this study. Furthermore, it elaborated the techniques I used for selecting the sample and the particular locales. The chapter also reflected upon the ethical considerations of this research, such as taking consent, keeping privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. I also justified my intentions of presenting the data in thematic form utilizing the case study technique. The next chapters will elaborate different themes/sub themes emerged from the data interpreting views of the respondents.
Chapter 4             The Inner and Outer Environment of Female Madaris

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave a comprehensive picture of methodological steps and procedures adopted in the study. This chapter highlights the working patterns of female Madaris under study. Female Madaris are one of the controversial institutions now-a-days in Pakistan. The institutions are considered to be useful and empowering women (Bano, 2010), yet they are criticised too for doing the opposite (Farooq, 2008; Malik, 2009). These establishments have their own patterns, course of action catering for the needs of communities and hence, inviting some suspicions upon its hidden agenda/ideological practices. This chapter, thus, is an attempt to examine working environment, educational settings, daily routine of the learners as well as the teachers. The chapter also attempts to unpack the hidden politics and ideological link of male dominancy through female Madaris. It further highlights how the teaching practices, timetable setting etc., create an event that can be linked with empowerment or subjugation.

4.2 Madaris as Total Institutions

Social institutions encompass certain tendencies i.e., fulfilling some interests of its members’ and providing them with something beneficial (Goffman, 1961). For Goffman institutions/establishments of the society that work for certain specific purposes. He regarded the establishments as ‘total institutions’ characterised by the separation of its members (he usually named as ‘inmates’) from the outer world. He grouped them into five categories: the first one takes care of the incapable and the homeless, like orphanages and homes for the blind or aged. The second category caters for persons who are considered (unintentional) threats for the society and are incapable to look after themselves like TB sanitaria and mental hospitals etc. The third type is structured for welfare of the persons considered intentional dangers/threats for the community, including jails, camps etc. The fourth type includes army barracks, boarding schools, work camps which are established on certain instrumental grounds and justify themselves on its functionality. The fifth and last one is the institution designed “as retreats from the world while often serving also as training stations for the religious” (Goffman, 1961: 4-5) like abbeys, monasteries, and convents. Foucault regarded such institutions as important disciplining agencies. He holds that in these institutions the body is treated as an object of power, where power is used to shape and mould it into the desired form which he named as docile body. Docile body is defined by Foucault as “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault, 1977: 136).

In Discipline and Punish (1977), Foucault elaborated the practices of training individuals with disciplinary power. According to him, initially these were started in institutional settings including schools, prisons, hospitals, military establishments and factories and later on were extended to the broader social regulation and control. The disciplinary power is directly exercised on the body. Disciplinary practices subject physical activities to a process of continuous strict observation (surveillance) and
examination that facilitates a constant and persistent control over conduct. The practices are designed to enhance/improve simultaneously the body’s abilities, skills, efficiency, usefulness and docility. Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, “docile” bodies (Foucault, 1977: 138-9). It is not the body only targeted by disciplinary techniques; rather Foucault presents corrective power as useful for certain types of subjects as well. In order to bring a mental state of

‘conscious and permanent visibility’ in Discipline and Punish, he describes that constant surveillance that initially focused upon disciplining the body, lead to control of the mind as well (p. 201). In other words, continuous surveillance deeply influences individuals to produce the kind of self-awareness that defines the modern subject. Building on Foucault’s discussion of surveillance and the concept of modern subject, I assert that these female Madaris create graduates who think/may think of themselves as modern subjects. Thus religious institutions under study have considerable similarity with Goffman’s concept of ‘total institutions’ (Goffman, 1961).

Nevertheless female Madaris play a vital role in the society. On one hand, they impart religious education and on the other hand, promising poor families to rear their children in a religious educational environment. However, the Madaris are closed social organizations, like total institutions, working according to their own set patterns. They are similar to the total institutions of Goffman in a way that they are actually preparing the squad of young girls educated in religion. Like total institutions, Madaris observe their own time schedules; all the activities are conducted under the same authority which are arranged and sequenced to fulfill the aim of the institutions (Goffman, 1961). However, they do differ from Goffman’s institutions in certain characteristics like the hierarchal relations between the Madrassah staff and the students where the staff occupies an unquestionable position over students (‘inmates’ in the words of Goffman). Similarly, the power structure of Madaris differs from Goffman’s establishments where physical punishment is considered one of the essential elements.

Like total institutions and panopticons, almost all of the Madaris consist of large buildings having more than one entrance and different sections according to the area and locality. The Madaris have different units; the outer one is used for guests and visitors (relatives and parents of students), whereas the middle portion is used by the Muhtamim and his family (as their residence) and the inner section is specified for teaching-learning process. Within the inner section, boarding facility is provided for the Madrassah students. This section does not have any direct entrance, totally secluded from the outside world. The only entrance to this section is through the house of the Muhtamim or through a small passage beside the Muhtamim’s house. The point to be noted here is that Muhtamim’s constant surveillance and gaze is believed to ensure the parents that their daughters will not be involved in any kind of immorality. Some of the smaller Madaris also resemble the larger ones with only difference of residential unit for girls established in basement or at the back of the main building; however, direct entrances are denied here too. The specific design actually separates the inmates (students) physically from the outer world which is one of the three main features of Goffman’s total institutions.
Life inside the isolated units is regulated through a series of activities/strategies, designed to mould the students into practical Muslims. One of the Muhtamims in Peshawar, defined the aim of opening female Madaris in the following way:

“Our aim is to purify the new generation, to save them from the negative impacts of Westernization that leads to obscenity, and to enable them live a pure and satisfied life.”

This discussion put all the burden of morality and community honour on woman only. It is what Ullah and Skelton (2014) argue that in KP “girls and women have been perceived as source of moral disruption and disjuncture in the public domain” (p:10). These institutions have designed time tables and work schedules that keep female busy all the time. As noted above, most of the Madaris offer boarding and lodging to the students. The students enjoy 4-5 monthly holidays, which they spend at homes with their families. Inside Madaris, the students observe a mechanical routine of activities round the clock. They follow a strict timetable in performing different activities ranging from taking food/rest to study/revisions and prayers. During day time, they receive instructions from their teachers and supervisors who assign them different tasks to do. The whole gamut of planned activities are supervised by the Muhtamims either directly or through their female family members; even the knowledge imparted to them is also scrutinised/ modified according to their (Muhtamims’) approach towards female education.

Madaris inculcate a narrow outlook and a specific mindset through controlled environment sequestering their students from secular world. The institutions are like Panopticons in many respects (see Foucault, 1977). Like panopticons, I observed practices in Madaris that ensure minute observation and control of the students, their minds and activities without letting them know that they are being watched. The knowledge imparted to them becomes a tool to control their lives. Most of the time, such control extends to their post-graduation life, when they open up their own Madaris in their hometowns. Similarly, Foucauldian concepts of surveillance, discipline and control are equally applicable to the structure/functioning of a madrassah.

4.3 Strict timetable/Defined Timings

Madaris too, like other educational institutions, maintain formal setup although some changes can be observed in its routine. In order to inculcate in them maximum knowledge, they prefer to enrol full time students. Both teachers and students experience a strict controlled environment with a proper time schedule for the whole day. The teachers and the taught, both are busy whole day from early morning till Esha prayers. The latter have a prescribed time for study, nimaz (prayers), and breaks for lunch and dinner, specified in a scheduled time table centrally displayed in a common room. The students too have a copy of the time table in their note books. Similarly, teachers have also a separate timetable; they take classes, supervise prayers, and prepare/serve lunch and dinner. Talking about her duties, one of the teachers in Nowshera said:

“we take classes almost the whole day with small breaks, but in the breaks we have to supervise the students, while they pray. My work

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29 Eisha is Arabic word used for the time after sunset till midnight.
starts in the morning. Before *fajjar*\textsuperscript{30} prayer, I awake all the students for prayers, supervise the prayers till breakfast. Our classes start at 7:30 in the morning. Till lunch break of 40 minutes for each class, I take classes with different grades, as I teach *nazira* (recitation of *Qur’an*), and *Tajweed* (rules of recitation of *Qur’an*). Then after *asr*\textsuperscript{32} prayers, revision classes start which continue till night prayers.”

What can be noticed in the above quote is that the students and the teachers find a break of two hours in afternoon only. They keep their day packed with activities offering little chances of altering or modifying the schedule. Each minute of the day is planned by the teachers and *Muhtamims*. One of the teachers, in *Nowshera*, justified this strict routine when he said:

“The aim behind this practice is to teach the students discipline, time utilization, and self-control. Although it is a hectic and too burdensome for the students but they have to be kept busy so that they may not have time to think about different unrelated issues.” This timetable was followed in almost all *Madaris* except where no boarding facilities were available. It reveals that students were consciously kept busy the whole day to inculcate self-control and tolerance. However, in few *Madaris*, dayscholar students attended the institutions from morning till five o’clock in the evening. The *Muhtamims* explained that they did not have space to provide hostel facility, so such students used to come in the morning and go back their homes in the evening. This attempt of keeping the students busy all day may be seen as an attempt to disable female students not to think of challenging the existing patriarchal social structures and think alternative.

As discussed earlier, there is a time schedule for every activity like eating, sleeping and studying in *Madaris*; each and every one has to observe his/her own time table. The students rarely find time even to talk to any person. When I wanted to interview the students, I had to make an appointment beforehand. During discussion in interviews, they criticised my research as an aimless activity and wastage of their time. Although they talked to me as I approached them through their *Muhtamims* or through a relative whom they could not disappoint, but their gestures and hurried replies during the interviews exhibited their disrespect for my research. Most of the students valued their busy timetables and considered it beneficial for them. As one of the students in *Peshawar* said:

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\textsuperscript{30} Fajjar is Arabic word used for the time before dawn till dawn.  
\textsuperscript{32} Asr is Arabic word used for late afternoon till sunset.
“we take classes all the daylong and we do not find time to think of our families. It is also good because our time is not wasted in unnecessary gossips.”

The students primarily tried to defend the stance of Madrassah owners while talking about their daily routine, as their teachers and Muhtamims justified this tough routine as a strategy to protect them from unnecessary contacts, unproductive thinking and to strengthen their contact with the ‘Creator’. For Madrassah stakeholders, all worldly contacts are aimless, except those which are having some religious importance.

It is easy to infer from the interviews with students and teachers that, for diversions, there was no freedom of choice, expression and freedom for students or for teachers. The discussion leads to the idea of discipline by Foucault (1977) when he talks of a strict timetable as a special feature of the institutions like factories, prisons and schools where people are constantly observed by various authorities. The Madaris under study also adopted the same strategy to socialize their ‘pupils’ into a specific manner and to control their minds.

4.4 Under Observation

Similarly, the study of the Madaris reflects an environment of surveillance. The study schedule of the students shows that they are kept under observation through their monitors (other students) or teachers from dawn to dust. The strict timetable of the teachers shows controlled by the senior teachers or the family (wife, daughter, daughter in law, sister) of Muhtamim who reside within the premises of Madrassah and work as senior supervisors in Madaris.

The classrooms and dining halls in the Madaris are consciously designed well ventilated and the doors and windows are always kept open so that the students’ activities can be observed. Similarly, the common area for students is situated in the centre of the building where anyone passing by could see what is happening or what they are doing. However, in a few Madaris there was no common room, rather the students used to sit in corridors and lawns in their break time.

The Muhtamim’s residential space in the centre of the madrassah is not different from what Foucault in his work Discipline and Punishment (1977) argues. Foucault argues that the front offices (principal’s office, supervisor office) are typically located in centre for surveillance purposes. In this sense, Foucault (1976) claims that surveillance “was integrated into the teaching relationship” (p. 175). As a result of such hierarchical observation, Foucault states that it is “a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficacy” (p. 176).

The students are observed by staff members the whole day long and they were assigned different tasks one after the other. I observed that the students and their teachers did not have ‘spare’ time to participate in this research activity. They were busy in their pre-scheduled routine, although I visited the Madaris after zuhur (Midday) prayer, which is usually their nap/rest time, especially during summers. It was also noted that throughout their activities, they were constantly taking advice and permission from ‘baji’ (literally means elder sister, but in Madrassah the word is used for the teachers). This revealed the internalised aspect of ‘Adab’ (respect) which, according to Muhtamims and teachers, is the main feature of Madrassah education (Winkelmann, 2005; Bano, 2010). The teachers argue that students are kept busy so that they do not find time to think of any worldly issues like fashion or music or other related issues. All
the worldly attractions (fashionable clothes, jewellery, watching movies/dramas, listening to music, sketching) were considered un-Islamic by the teachers, Muhtamims and the students as well. The students also affirmed/appreciated their time table by saying that it did not give them chance to think about any worldly matter, even their free/break time was also planned. They even did not have time to think about their families. As one of the students in Peshawar said:

“when I came here almost 3 years back, I was missing my family in the first week, but as soon as the day long routine started, I had no time to miss my family. Secondly, I was fond of music and I was, you can say, addict of listening to radio, but now Masha’Allah, I got rid of that habit, and it is also due to the tough routine of Madrassah.”

This quote reflects, Foucault (1975) would argue, the discipline-mechanisms. That is how the panopticon like institutions operate to discipline the bodies and the subjects. My observations highlight that disciplining in Madaris was not restricted to the teaching methods only; rather elusive form of disciplining was there as well. The entire atmosphere in Madaris was reminding the students and teachers of their being different and superior to the outside world because they were socialized in Islamic traditions and values. The students were learning about their lives, their own selves on one hand and about the ideal of ‘Islamic womanhood’ (Winkelmann, 2005) on the other hand.

4.5 Repetitive Exercises and Tasks

The timetable also included the repetition of the lessons, both spiritual and physical. For example, sitting in the class rooms, the students were reciting the Qur’an, and trying to pronounce it correctly. This exercise continues until they learn it and recite it correctly. If any of the students fails to correct it on that day, she has to repeat it on the next day and in the free time or early in the morning when she wakes up for the morning’s prayer. In the first half of the day, students take classes of different subjects i.e. Tafseer, Nazira, Fiqah, Hadith etc.; and in the second half they revise the daily lectures and try to memorise whatever has been taught that day. In the evening, they have a session in which they recite and repeat different Azkaar/Tasbehaat (supplications), taught different Ibadaat (prayers) and religious norms like the proper way of Wazu (ablution). Along with it, they have lectures of Adab which comprise different lessons like how to greet someone, how to behave in a gathering, recitation of supplications when wearing a new dress, shoes, entering a place or leaving a place, starting a journey, taking food, water, and follow other small daily routines.

To get the maximum accuracy and proper internalization of the norms, Foucault regards repetitive exercises as important in any disciplinary environment. It is considered by him as an important aspect for imposing the disciplinary power on the subjects and internalizing the prescribed norms. According to Foucault, education initially aimed to provide a comprehensive nurture/socialization of poor and ignorant, which later on used in utilitarian terms as a way to produce useful individuals in the society; both economically and socially (Foucault, 1995: 210-211).

Thus, the disciplinary mechanisms suggest that school children are the best means/option to access their family and parents. Similarly, the religious groups aim at disciplining the masses through a ‘strive to eradicate places of ill repute’ (Foucault, 1995: 211-212). Similarly, Madaris aim at countering the effects of modernity by applying the disciplinary mechanism and access to community through their students.
As observed during the fieldwork that weekly and monthly seminars/lectures, arranged by Madaris, invites the community (parents/relatives of students and teachers) and disseminate the teachings to the larger society as well.

4.6 Internalization of Norms

Madrassah education stresses upon the importance and need of ‘Adab’ and norms that not only re-integrate the social fabric but also can cure the ‘ills of modern world’. In Madaris, it was observed that two things, pardah (veil/veiling) and obedience/modesty are the essence of religious education. Starting from the dressing of students to their dealings with people/society, eating habits, and even their prayers routine are all focussed upon in Madrassah. This, when look upon sociologically, reflects what structural functionalists claim as the purpose of education (see Henslin, 1997).

The students were dressed in blue or white traditional attire of Pakhtun society (Shalwar; a loose trouser, long shirts reaching knees with a large head scarf that covers the head). A difference observed in both of the study areas was their view/approach towards pardah and style of veiling. In Nowshera, the students and teachers wore the head scarfs (called Dupatta in Urdu) tightly around their heads and face, following the conservative and strict version of Islam. While, in district Peshawar, Dupattas were put loosely around the students’ and teachers’ heads, revealing relatively liberal approach to the concept of pardah. The dress code of Madaris actually highlights the norms of the pardah that are being internalised through daily routines where the students are required to follow the modes set by the Madaris owners and Muhtamins. Students are trained to be modest, simple, polite and obedient because these are considered pre-requisites for ideal Islamic womanhood. Talking in front of their teachers in loud voice is considered disrespect of the teacher. In one of the group interviews, in the presence of teachers, I asked the students to give their views but they remained silent, when I asked them again they replied: “How can we talk in front of our teachers” when their teachers allowed them to speak they said: “Whatever our teacher replied, the same is our answer”. When replying to the different questions, students looked down to floor, as a sign of respect. Even they were taught not to take tea or food before their teachers start. The norm of respect is so deep that the students keep standing unless they were asked to sit. They remained in long veils even inside the Madrassah. One of the students in Nowshera asked me whether I came there without wearing Burqah, upon my affirmation they said:

“You did an un-Islamic and sinful act; the outsiders and strangers were looking at you when you came without Burqah, you were watched by namahram,31 which is a sinful act, and you will be asked for it in the hereafter”.

I replied that I came by a car and secondly, my shawl is covering my whole body so how can one see it? They replied: “We do not know but teachers said that only Burqah can cover a body properly”.

31 Namahram is an Arabic word used for a person of opposite sex and outside one immediate family.
It reveals that they have a blind faith in whatever their teachers and Muhtamims say, without analysing it, or using their own knowledge about that concept. With the repetitive exercises, the students follow the teachings unconsciously. They are attuned to obey without question. It is paramount to respect elders, Muhtamim and his family, considering their words to be always correct, final and hence to be followed in letter and spirit. Moreover, certain ideas are also internalised by the students, for example, hatred for the secular/Western world, and that all non-Madrassah studies are immoral, baseless and unbeneﬁcial: and believing that students in secular schools will be asked about their time which they wasted in such studies in the life hereafter. These responses create a question- whose knowledge matter? Who create knowledge? How the knowledge is taught as the objective and authentic knowledge? (see Ullah, 2012). The point to be ponder upon is that, should these Madaris be taken as inculcating the original divine message or the divine message with Muhtamim’s subjective interpretation.

4.7 Access to Limited Knowledge

Girls are culturally considered to remain at home; therefore, the scope of their education is limited to her duties as a wife, mother, daughter, sister. Female Madaris owners/managers modify the curricula according to their own thinking and perspective. Even studying in the same Madrassah, males and females have different educational patterns, curriculum and setup. The actual syllabus of Dars-eNizami is modiﬁed for girls by the Madrassah Muhtamim. One of the female teachers in Peshawar elaborated the reason for this difference in curriculum in the following words:

“our prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) did not approve different types of education for boys and girls, but our teachers considered that women did not have much time. They have to marry soon, and hence their education is selective and it is minimised to few important chapters of the main course books. It is enough for women to teach them about being a good Muslim lady, their duties and rights and how they will spend lives in a Muslim society. In simple words, all the required and necessary knowledge is imparted to them in just few years of madrassah education”.

When I asked why it was necessary that the Muhtamim modiﬁed the syllabus for the girls, she replied “yes, he is an Alim, and he knows better what is good for us and what is not”

When Muhtamim was asked the same question, he replied:

“when we take a girl of grade 10, she is 15 years old and after spending six years with us in Madrassah she becomes 21: that is the marriage age. If she continues her study, her home and marital life, which is her top priority will be disturbed that is why, the curriculum is different for girls. Some subjects like logic, philosophy are offered to boys only as these are tough and girls cannot understand it and secondly, they do not need these subjects as they should know the necessary subjects which help them in their lives.”

So the girls are taught selected chapters from the books considered necessary by the Muhtamims.

The interviews show the power relations and the stronghold of the patriarchal structure which is deeply rooted and reproduced by the norms and the environment in
the Madaris. The sentence ‘Whatever the Muhtamim says is correct’ shows the blind faith in Muhtamims and this is quoted by the teachers and the students as rationale for various deficiencies in educational knowledge offered to girls in these establishments.

Farooq (2000) argues that Madaris use both direct and indirect methods for the disciplining of students. They not only utilise the classrooms but also use many understated methods, like manipulating the Madrassah environment to create docility by continuously teaching girls the patriarchal interpretations and the perceived ideal Islamic womanhood. At the heart of this idealised version of femininity is a pure, unquestioning and obedient woman—something akin to what Foucault described as the ideal of the panoptic institution: the creation of docile bodies, whose docility is the product of the internalization of powerful discourses which serves as surveillance. In Madaris, there is a combination of continuous surveillance and indoctrination in a total institutional setting over a period of six years resulting in the ‘end product’ which is docile Muslim women. By docile Muslim women, I mean women who does not question the unjustified control and power; the one who does not do independent thinking (see Smith, 1990).

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter develops a link between Foucault’s panoptican and female Madaris. The chapter argues that institutions are designed to socialize girls under unquestionable structures designed by Mutamims. The buildings of the Madaris are constructed and arranged in such a way that optimizes the impact of surveillance. The process of moulding personalities in the functional process and norms of institutions are designed to construct subordinate female personalities over a prolong period of six years. The prolong engagement of female with religious knowledge in the hegemonic culture produce docile female. These women accept the male dominated culture and legitimize their, as well as other women location in it.

Chapter 5 Female Madaris: Perpetuation of Patriarchy

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was an attempt to establish a link between female Madaris and Foucault’s panoptic was established. It explained how selected curriculum is instilled in the controlled institutions under consistent surveillance through repetitive exercises. The chapter argued that how women are constructed a subordinate category in relation to male. This subordinate category reflects what Foucault referred to as docile bodies.

The current chapter attempts to examine the patriarchal interpretations/teachings of Islamic knowledge in female Madaris. It further highlights the underlying patterns/communal obligations, pushing managers of the institutions to correspond. It is also aimed to analyse the power structure inside the Madaris and its role in the perpetuation and power distribution in society. This chapter is an effort to explain the
notion with the help of primary data and establish a link between the primary data and
the assumed/popular perception of the concept.

5.2 Patriarchy, Pakhtun Culture and Female Madaris

Maine (cited in Coward, 1983) wrote that patriarchal family was the universal part of
human society extended from family under the father’s rule. With growing intensified
division of labour, social institutions especially religion and economy played a pivotal
role in establishing this rule which has been termed as patriarchy
(meaning the rule/domination of male not only ‘father’ now). This is why males are
regarded superior and enjoy powerful/prestigious status over females in the private
domain of home as well as in the public domain of economic activities.
Patriarchy is a cultural norm in Pakhtun society where females are limited to the
private sphere only. Women are entrusted with domestic duties of child
bearing/rearing, cooking and washing. They observe restricted mobility and they
cannot establish relationship with men outside their immediate family. Pakhtun culture
is generally associated with a spirit to maintain the traditional status quo. Pakhtun are
by default vigilante about their womenfolk and their possessory attitude let them
allow females reluctantly to take admission in schools. Khan (2008) suggests that this is
a precautionary practice adopted to safeguard their womenfolk from the adverse
effects of modern world. Secular education is viewed as a legacy of British colonial rule
over the subcontinent and hence, a source of westernization/modernization. Parents
prefer to educate their female children in gender segregated educational institution,
female Madaris are one of such trends. In female Madaris contact of opposite sex is not
allowed, except some of lectures that are delivered by male teachers through loud
speakers in the courtyard of female Madaris.

5.3 Impact of Patriarchy on Power Relations through Female Madaris

Patriarchy is based on hierarchal system of unequal power relations where men have
control over women’s productive and reproductive capacities. It imposes a system of
roles, practices and expectations associated with each sex which, in turn, reinforces and
reproduces the unjust power relations between men and women. Being a dynamic
concept, it has been omniscient throughout the history. The nature of women’s
domination/suppression varies from one society to other and it differs as a consequence
of local, national and regional changes in social structure (the religious, ethnic, caste
and class differences) and the socio-cultural practices. Patriarchal societies proliferate
the philosophy of motherhood which confine women’s mobility and assign them with
the responsibilities of procuring/nurturing children.
Patriarchy is analysed by various feminist scholars on different aspects. They
challenged patriarchal knowledge, ideology, values and its practices (Walby, 1989).
Patriarchal constructions of knowledge perpetuate patriarchal ideology reproduced by
educational institutions, knowledge systems and media, all of which work to strengthen
male dominance and authority. Patriarchy is indirectly articulated through symbolism,
reinforcing the inferiority of women like legends and images. In these symbols, women
are portrayed as self-sacrificing, self-effacing and ‘pure’. In rituals too, the role of
women is represented as a faithful wife and a devout mother (Desai and Krishnaraj,
2004: 299). Furthermore, patriarchal constructions of gender relations are legitimized
not only by religious institutions but also through formal schooling (see Ullah, 2013). However, most religious practices confirm superior position of male. Similarly, laws and norms regarding family, marriage, divorce and inheritance are described/explained in such a way to give upper hand to men over women. Almost all religions (including Islam) endorse patriarchal values and its teachings are interpreted and controlled by men of the upper caste and class (Ahmad, 2013). Although Ahmad and Ray present the relationship between patriarchy and religion in the lines above, but my findings disassociate from their perspectives on upper class, caste control, and interpretation of religion/perpetuation of patriarchal values through religion. I argue that caste/class system has a distinctive role upon religious interpretations in societies like India where the religion is restricted to the upper classes/castes but in Islam, no such provision is given to any class who may monopolize religion for the perpetuation of class interest. In Pakistan, Mullahs and religious owners who belong to the middle/lower class are the interpreters of religious teachings. They interpret religion in the light of local culture; for example, they strictly believe in the imposition of *pardah*, which restricts women’s’ mobility to the private space. This in turn, maintains the gender separation of public and private spheres. Such interpretation of ‘*pardah*’ by Mullahs helped to perpetuate women empowerment in Pakhtun society. In a society, gender ideology is created and reflected in multiple ways (Hussein, 2004). Feminist theory maintains that stronger patriarchal attitudes in a society are linked with a higher level of prevalence of male dominance towards women in society (Brownridge, 2002). *Pakhtun* culture has erected male dominated structures and institutions both inside and outside the home. As Walby (1990) describes two types of patriarchy i.e. private and public in the following passage:

"Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of women’s oppression. Public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state. The household does not cease to be a patriarchal structure in the public form, but it is no longer the chief site. In private patriarchy the expropriation of women's labour takes place primarily by individual patriarchs within the household, while in the public form it is more collective appropriation. In private patriarchy the principal patriarchal strategy is exclusionary; in the public it is segregationist and subordinating ... In form all the remaining [six] patriarchal structures are present" (Walby, 1990: 24).

Drawing on Walby, it may not be out of place to assert that female Madaris perpetuate patriarchy in the public domain and prepare graduates who nourish and reinforce private patriarchy. The point to be noted here is that female Madaris strengthen unequal power relations between males and females. As discussed earlier, females are kept under control in many forms, i.e., as mother, as sister, as wife in private life as well as in public sphere being an employee, student, etc., working under the unquestionable authority of male. Female Madaris are gender segregated public institutions designed to perpetuate patriarchy and confine the role of women. Initially Madaris were established only for male. These institutions taught religious knowledge to male students but male teachers only. It was in the late 1970s, exactly the same time when second wave feminists were raising their voice in the west, that trend of female Madaris accelerated in Pakistan
Reforms made by General Zia-ul-Haq in the constitution worked as catalysts for their mushrooming. The female Madaris are mostly established as sub-sections of male Madaris that are run and managed by common male Muhtamims who run male Madaris, usually coassisted by his female family members (his wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law). Curriculum setting, teacher’s recruitment and hostel management are also some of the duties performed by the male Muhtamims. Similarly, the new Madaris, that the new graduates establish are also monitored/supervised by the same Muhtamims and their team.

The Madaris working for years produced many batches of young female graduates. However, they are not given the license or permission to run a female madrassah and work as a Female Muhtamim. Those who have started their own Madaris work under the guidance of Muhtamims of their parent Madrassah (from which they have graduated) or they have to work under the supervision of their fathers, brothers or husbands. The female graduates are not considered worthy of taking any initiative on their own; and secondly, they are culturally bound to be under the supervision of a male member of the family. They are not allowed to work on their own or to take any decision for themselves; rather they must seek guidance from a male, as all their decisions ranging from their education to marriage must be taken by a male member of the family.

5.4 Male as Wiser than Female: The Muhtamim’s Perspective

As stated above, the Muhtamims are the owners, managers, administrators and teachers in Madaris. They live within the Madrassah boundaries and manage all matters related to the institution. The Muhtamims argue that they are equipped with more capabilities to select best possible course of action for women and they design the syllabus according to the perceived needs of women, in order to enable them to play appropriate role in the society. Such mentality is evident in the following passage from one of the interviews with Muhtamims in district Nowshera:

“we have developed the curriculum for female students by ourselves, because the Dars-e-Nizami includes various difficult subjects that the girls cannot understand fully, even if they pass examination in the subjects, it would be difficult for them to teach these subjects so we replaced it with the easy ones.”

Muhtamims actually consider themselves as the best decision-makers for women. They think of themselves competent/capable for deciding best course of action for girl students. Another Muhtamim of a renowned Madrassah of Nowshera said that female students cannot understand some subjects, therefore, their curriculum is restructured by the Muhtamims and owners. The same stance is reinforced by another Muhtamim in district Nowshera in the following words:

“these ladies cannot learn some subjects like logic, philosophy. So we removed those from their syllabus, and also shortened their study duration, as they have to get married soon.”

These responses, albeit not directly but indirectly, reinforce the biological difference theory of gender differences. This belief in the biological theory of gender qualifies Muhtamims to decide every aspect of women’s lives ranging from nature/scope of the
study to future prospects at the completion of their education. The female teachers in Madaris despite their knowledge about rights and status as a woman, agree with what male Muhtamim asserted. A teacher in district Nowshera said:

“Maulana sahib\textsuperscript{32} considered many subjects and books of Dars-eNizami, as unnecessary for girls. In his opinion Dars-e-Nizami is difficult for girls and they cannot even understand various books offered in this curriculum. If a student cannot read and understand these books completely, so how would they teach them? Therefore, he (Maulana Sahib) developed a new curriculum for girls Madrassah. Although, most of the teachers and students were ignorant of the fact that the syllabus they considered as Dars-eNizami is not Dars-e-Nizami in fact.”

The teachers and students blindly believe in the Muhtamim sahib’s saying and accept them as ultimate truths. They never try to understand the logic/rationale behind the propounded ideas; rather they seem flat characters who do not possess the potential and hence, do not bother to analyse such sayings in the light of Quran and Ahadith. The Muhtamims amend/change the curriculum of girls’ Madaris, limiting the scope of their education, and astonishingly, this act is being justified by the teachers and students as evident in their arguments.

The traditional curriculum of male Madaris is amended by the Muhtamims for girls in the light of perceived needs/objectives. However, I noticed that no single curriculum is entertained in all female Madaris in both districts under study. In some Madaris they just took few chapters from the original books taught traditionally in male Madaris, while others had changed the nature/scope of books altogether. One of the Madaris in Nowshera has changed the whole curriculum and the Muhtamim has developed a new curriculum for girls. The Muhtamim held that some of the books in old Dars-e-Nizami were difficult and irrelevant for girls, so they replaced those books with some simple ones. In contrast, Madaris in Peshawar taught the same books as they were teaching to male students limiting it to a few chapters in each book. The Muhtamims of the Madaris justified this by saying “the important chapters are taught to girls, removing the unnecessary subjects/chapters from their syllabus in order to avoid the wastage of their time”.

Thus, the curriculum of female Madaris is totally modified by Muhtamims according to their own personal understanding and thinking, and hence, maintenance of patriarchy in female Madaris is day clear from the discussion.

5.5 Good Muslim Woman in Muhtamim’s Perspective

In the Madaris, the male heads define each and every value of the religion at both private and public levels. For example, the concept of ‘pardha’ for women is defined and presented by the Ulemas in the light of traditional outlook/approach towards women in the fast growing trend of globalization. “Muslim women should be in veil, obedient, submissive and respectful” one of the Muhtamims in district Nowshera (who

\textsuperscript{32} Sahib is an Urdu word, which means Mister in English. It is used as a symbol of respect. Here it is used with Maulana (religious scholar) to denote respect to Maulana
belonged to Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam[^33] (F) said during an interview, when he talked about the logic behind opening of a female Madrassah. He further said:

> “nowadays the traditional norms are disappearing from our society; most of the females of our society get influence from western culture by not following our real social values and norms. They do not obey their males whether he is a father, a brother or even a husband, which is a sin.”

The Muhtamims canonised obedience as the foremost duty and virtue of a good and blessed Muslim lady. They believed that the value is threatened due to acculturation of western norm of so-called freedom/empowerment. As a result, the trend of living independently is fast growing in women, which is against their real culture. Another Muhtamim in district Peshawar put the same argument and linked the establishment of Madaris with this issue. He said:

> “Our society is getting worse and our life is getting miserable because our females have lost their original and real character, hence, we have opened the institutions to teach them how a Muslim woman should live her life.”

Explaining the reason of opening female Madaris they (the Muhtamims) said that women have set out for career building. Employment is, according to Muhtamims, contrary to fragile biological/physiological nature of women and Islam put this tough responsibility of providing financial resources to family on men. Women are best suited for domestic duties at homes where they are safe from the various hazards of outside society. This idea was inculcated in the minds of the staff and students of the Madaris who considered earning as men’s duty. Responding to a question of women’s employment, a female teacher in district Peshawar replied:

> “Muhtamim sahib says time and again that earning for women is out of question. It is a western trend and Islam regards earning as the duty of male members of a family. The place of women is at her home where she has to take care of her husband and her children, nothing else.”

Although there are various examples in Islamic history that wives of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) ran successful businesses and worked in different public spheres. However, such ideals are overlooked in Madaris. Parallel to Muhtamims, the same response was articulated by female teachers and students, who believed that women should stay at home and they need not go out of home, in order to intact the sayings of their Muhtamims. Irrespective of what Islam taught/said about this issue, the females

[^33]: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) is a conservative religious political party in Pakistan. It has three different offshoots. The largest and influential bloc is known as JUI (F) which is led by powerful cleric Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman.
looked surrendered to commands of the Muhtamims. These responses affirm the findings of previous studies (see Ullah, 2007).

One of the students, who had joined Madrassah after completing bachelor degree in mainstream education system, expressed a shift in her thinking in the following words:

“When I was in school I had the dream to be a well-educated lady and to run my own business, but when I came here my mind totally changed and now I think if I have had to work, it will be in Madrassah only or I would not work” (A student of Madrassah in district Nowshera)

The patriarchal interpretations of Islamic teachings are categorically reinforced that the students cannot even think beyond the taught lessons (their curriculum). It focuses solely upon making the students ‘good Muslim ladies’ who are obedient and submissive.

The curriculum and teachings of the Madaris look self-contradictory. The curriculum, as stated above, reproduces patriarchal norms justified through Qur’an, Hadith, and Sunnah. Although they have been taught about (Sunnah) the life of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and how the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) spent their lives, being ‘good Muslim ladies’. They are being taught about their (family members of Prophet Muhammad’s [S.A.W]) roles they played in their time, like businesswomen, religious scholars, narrators and social workers. Similarly, history of Islam is replete with examples where women played an important and integral role in Muslim society. They proved themselves as good warriors, narrators of Hadith, philosophers and teachers. But in today’s Madaris the females are portrayed in dull colours only fit for subservient and dependent positions. In contrast, the Madaris truncated the status/role of a woman to home, alienating her from outside world and keeping devoid of getting higher studies like logic/independent reasoning. The teachings are suffocating the critical thinking and reasoning; this is why the students can’t argue the contradictory nature of the teachings. Madrassah graduates are provided with limited scope of only working as teachers in the religious institutions. A student from district Nowshera, imbued with the idea, told:

“I personally do not want to do any other job accept serving in a madrassah. Teaching in madrassah is the only perfect job for females and it would be against the teachings and wishes of our teachers and Muhtamim sahib to do any other job or work somewhere else.”

Although the discussion clearly exhibits that the Madaris students are restricted to teaching in Madaris, and/or to open up their own Madaris only; yet even doing so, they must work under the supervision of their male members of the family, which reproduce the patriarchal patterns where men are the guardians of women; a system where women are unable to do anything by themselves and they need support and permission of their men (father, brother, husband). Female madrassah graduates are prohibited from teaching in any other educational institution (government or private), nor can they do any other job except teaching in Madaris. The structures perpetuate patriarchy not only in the public sphere but also in the private sphere as this strengthens patriarchal control in all household affairs as well. They are inculcated with the idea of male supremacy, where females have to obey the male members of the family. They are
trained through lessons emphasizing that ‘the real Muslim lady’ is one who obeys the male members of her family especially her father, brother and husband. A Madrassah graduate and current female teacher in district Nowshera explained the narrative of what is considered to be appropriate ‘work’ for Muslim women, articulated in the light of religion as:

“It was the desire of my husband that his wife should serve in Madrassah her whole life, and I wished to marry a religious minded person who would not stop me from serving religion, so we got married.”

They are taught through the curriculum that males are superior and females are bound to obey and respect them. This male dominancy is propounded by different angles in different ways. Not only the Qur’anic interpretation in these Madaris is patriarchal rather the connotation of the concept ‘Adab’ entails to be submissive, obedient and polite to men. The definition of the concept is further supported by the patriarchal teachings/interpretations of Islam. As one of the students in Peshawar district said:

“Of course, males are superior to females; they have more rights and high status in family. Even in the Qur’an they are regarded as superior (reciting a verse from Qur’an the meaning of which is) male are stronger and above female. In some place it is said that if bowing down would have been allowed to anyone except Allah, women would have been asked to do it to their husbands.”

I argued with the student that this saying, she referred to, was actually about provision of security to females. I tried to highlight that Islam treated women equal to men and I referred to one of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) about gender equality. The student did not agree to my stance and took me as a secular student, who did not know anything about Islam and its teachings, so she supported her argument by saying:

“the Muhtamim sahib cannot be wrong as he is Aalim and he did not say all these things from his own but these are written in sacred scriptures. He is being taught all this by his teachers who were also great Aalims and now the Muhtamim is transmitting all that knowledge to us.”

Discussing the issue in detail, the students not only reiterated the superiority of males; they also affirmed that Islam gave women rights, but, they could not ask for/demand for the rights because it was against their culture. The important thing to note is that the students were taught about women’s rights in Islam; nevertheless, they are warned against the prevailing societal structures and norms that are patriarchal in nature and where women are subordinate and submissive. A student in a Madrassah at district Peshawar argued:

“Islam gives rights to women, equal to men in education, property, marriage consent, but Pakhtun society does not consider these rights appropriate for women as this society considers male more important and superior to female.”

The students understood the unequal treatment by the patriarchal set-up of the society but they believed that they cannot change it. They knew that existing structures and patterns of the society are a hindrance in getting their due rights but they seemed

34 The words ‘Aalim (scholar), faqeeh and mujtahid, carry the same meaning: refer to a person who strive to reach the shar’i ruling and has the ability to derive shar’i rulings from the evidence.
helpless. They admit that Islam gives rights to women but the society has its own structures where elder males decide everything. They understand how strong these structures are in some areas where even getting education, which Islam regards as the duty of every Muslim man and woman, is not permissible to girls.

Another student in district Nowshera said:

“Female education is looked down upon in many families even today; it is considered the right of male but for female getting education is just wasting time, as she has to get married soon. Therefore, she does not need higher education.”

Although some of the students were critical of the patriarchal structure of Pakhtun society, but they despite of understanding Islamic perspective, cannot ask for their rights. They understand that inferior status of a female in the society is not portrayed by Islam, rather it is the product of Pakhtun society. One of the students in district Nowshera argued in this regard:

“Pakhtun society considers female as inferior to male, so there is no concept of equal rights in this society for male and female. Female is subordinate and she must obey male and is to be passive; it is how a Pakhtun society wants its female to be.”

The traditional normative practices of Pakhtun society are reflected from the above arguments of the students. Although the Madaris educate students in Islamic tradition and teachings of Qur’an, yet they are indoctrinated to follow the societal norms of Pakhtun society. They know about their rights, duties according to Islam, but they are powerless to change the prevailing societal structures. Admitting such situation, one of the student from Peshawar argued:

“well, it is difficult to change Pakhtun society. As it is male dominated and we or our students can not directly change such thinking, but we can just communicate them such teachings of Islam but cannot impose the teachings.”

The powerlessness of women can be demonstrated more precisely by studying the concept of taking consent for marriage. Islam gives equal opportunity to male and female in choosing their life partners (see Badawi, 1999), but Pakhtuns consider it their disgrace to ask their female while deciding about their counterparts. They do not allow women to take part in any kind of decision making process, because female are considered irrational and headless. In this respect, a student in district Peshawar opined:

“Islam asks to take consent from both boy and girl before marriage; if the boy or girl does not agree, the marriage cannot take place. But in Pakhtun society, taking consent from daughter or sister is considered unnecessary. It is considered as the matter of honour for male, so they decide the fate of female without asking them.”

The students and teachers elaborated that in our society females are considered incapable to take decisions and that is why they are not allowed to take decisions. Female are even considered intellectually inferior to male as one of the Muhtamims in
district Peshawar suggested with regards to the differences between male and female teachers:

“females do not have that much command on the subjects as male teachers have, because male graduates to the level of mufti\textsuperscript{35}, which is not offered to female so they (male teachers) can teach in a better and impressive way.”

The above argument of the Muhtamim clearly shows the discrepancies between male and female characters. From the above discussion we can see that Madaris act as an institutional framework for the promotion and reproduction of patriarchal structures. Such patriarchal structures modify the curriculum of the Madaris and paint the life style of Muslim women in particular colours. The practices are similar to the Arab society where patriarchy has different shapes as Joseph has outlined in a study of patriarchal structures of the Arabs (see Joseph, 2010). In Arabian countries, patriarchy is operative in various aspects of life in shape of private patriarchy, religious patriarchy, political patriarchy, economic, social patriarchy and they have deep imprints on the lives of women in particular and on the society as a whole (Joseph, 2010). Patriarchal patterns are perpetuated and maintained through social institutions where religion plays a key role.

The same trend is observed in female Madaris under study. Madaris also try to maintain the patriarchal/male hold in almost all spheres of life. The Muhtamims or Madrassah owners interpret the religious teachings in a manner that suits best their self-interest. They enjoy the ‘religious power’ over the rest of the society in general and their students in particular. This is why they have complete autonomy in taking bold decisions like setting the curriculum based upon their own individual rationale like, Dars-i-Nizami is taught to male students and it is considered inappropriate for girls.

By analysing the statements of teachers, students and Muhtamims we observe the reproduction of social, economic and religious patriarchy through formal and informal structures of the Madaris. The gendered power relations are accepted by the women. Although, gender equality is a tenant of Islam, yet it is disapproved by Pakhtun society because of predominant social, economic and political patriarchal norms. Hence, Islamic feminists criticise the duality of the issue. According to the feminists, although they do not want to be labelled feminists, Islam does not restrict women; rather it has given rights that are equal to male; however, the Madaris have adopted the ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ in the words of Mir-Husseini (2006). She argues that these fundamentalists actually advocate ‘Islamic traditionalism’. They consider ‘fiqah’ which is patriarchal interpretation of Islamic teaching and a code of conduct written by humans but considered holy/divine. Girls studying in most of Madaris are trained in the same traditional way. They are not allowed to question things. They are not encouraged to ask questions—if they do, they are made to feel as if they are questioning Islam itself. They are reared on the patriarchal fiqah tradition, which is a social construct/human product, and which is treated as almost as holy as the Qur’an itself. Though the students are well aware that Islam is not against the rights of women and it allows

\textsuperscript{35} Mufti is an Arabic word, Mufti is a professional jurist who interpret Islamic Law.
women to enjoy all human rights, and treat them almost equally, yet they believe that the superiority of male is established by Islam in many areas. They accept the local ‘male-made’ interpretation of Islamic teachings as well. The critical thinking of the students could be developed but the acceptance of the ideological and local interpretations make them ‘docile’ yet not fully ‘indoctrinated’ and passive. They know that different rules, principles and laws are modified by male members (as they believe that males know everything and are best decision makers). Therefore, some of the Islamic laws/principles manipulated by male are in favor of society as a whole and womenfolk in particular. The young graduates and students were of the opinion that Islam is an egalitarian religion; however it is the society and their Pakhtun culture that makes men superior to women.

5.6 Conclusion

The above discussion, with the Madrassah stakeholders, unpacks three key points. First, the curriculum is designed by the Owners/Muhtamims of the Madaris based on what they think is right for female students in Pakhtun society. They do not actually allow girls to engage in the higher levels of Islamic education, because girls do not have time to complete higher education as they have to get marry early. After marriage, women can’t spare time in their busy schedules of domestic duties. The Muhtamims openly admitted that ‘they knew what was best for the girls and what was not’. Female students are taught only simple/easy subjects related to the daily life of the family in these 5-6 years and those subjects which develop critical thinking are taken out of the syllabus. In contrast, male students are encouraged to study logic and engage in ijtihad. It is the most discriminating characteristic of the curriculum of male students which helps them in sharpening their capabilities and writing their thesis (Muqala in Madaris language).

Secondly, the environment inside the Madaris reproduces patriarchal dominance through encouraging students to internalize the normative structures of the society. They inculcate in the minds of the young girls that women possess deformed biology/physiology, unfit for taking decisions on their own. The institutions are designed to infuse obedience to and acceptance of male dominated familial and social structures. The Madaris are established for the purpose of programing the minds of the female students within patriarchal frameworks both in public and private spheres.

Lastly, as noted above, the young graduates and students are well aware of the expectations of Pakhtun society from girls; so they are socialized to accept it passively. They argue that Pakhtun society is male dominated where they can’t stand for their rights. They also know that it is not Islam, rather their society is reluctant to give them rights but still they are destined to stay submissive, obedient, and silent in front of their fathers, brothers and husbands.

36 Ijtihad, Arabic in its origin, used as an Islamic term meaning independent reasoning.
Chapter 6  Religious Education VS Secular Education

6.1  Introduction

The previous chapter attempted to establish a link between female Madaris and Pakhtun culture. The Pakhtun society is characterized by patriarchal structure and it has deep imprints on all social institutions, including education. Pursuing knowledge has been an essential part of the Islamic tradition. Islam has always emphasized two types of knowledge, i.e., divinely revealed knowledge that comes from God and worldly knowledge that is discovered, invented and created by human beings during their interaction with nature as well as among themselves. Islam considers both to be of vital importance and directs its followers, both men and women, to go and seek knowledge (Boyle, 2002). According to Islam, acquiring worldly knowledge is also important because it supplements the knowledge revealed by God in the Qur’an in order to enable Muslims to lead a disciplined life in this world. In this chapter, I first present a brief history of Islamic Madaris so that to trace their emergence and the justification for the segregation of secular and religious education. I then move to examine the views of Madrassah stakeholders in the target areas focusing on their views regarding Islamic and secular education, their differences and the relevance of both for females.

6.2 History of Segregation of Secular and Islamic Knowledge

Mosque has been the central learning place – the first school in Islamic history. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) used mosque to pronounce the revelations and its interpretations (Munir, 1987). It was mosque where Qur’an was compiled. Initially Muslims used to come to mosque for discussing/solving their problems in the light of the newly revealed knowledge. Thus, it got the status of first school in Islam.

In early days of Islam, knowledgeable people used to spent most of their time in discussion and debates in an effort to expand their information of Qur’an and those who could not manage to give time to this process of teaching-learning, resorted to mosque for getting assistance in understanding issues related to daily lives in the light of Qur’an.

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) when Muslims failed to find precedents of solving a particular issue in the divinely revealed knowledge of the Qur’an, the Muslim scholars referred to the practical life and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) (Ahmad, 2002; Anzar, 2003). It established the tradition of following the Sunnah, (practices of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.) and Hadith, (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.). However, when the message of Islam spread to other regions, a need for a class of Muslim experts emerged for writing textbooks on Fiqah (Islamic jurisprudence), Sunnah, Hadith, and Tafseer (the
interpretation of the Qur’an) to satisfy to the needs of non-Arab Muslim populations (see Blanchard, 2003; Ahmad, 2002). It was this growing need of Arab and non-Arab population that led to the tradition of Madrassa. Sole purpose of these Madaris was to preserve religious values through uniform teachings of Islam.

It is believed that Fatimid caliphs established first known madrassah in 1005 AD in Egypt (Anzar, 2003; Haqqani, 2002; Ronald, 2001). The early Madaris focused on preparing students for two types of duties: scholastic theology – to produce spiritual leaders – and worldly knowledge – to produce government servants to be appointed in various countries of the Islamic empire. Thus, Madaris in addition to providing Islamic knowledge, imparted secular education in the fields of science, philosophy, public administration and governance.

Majority of the Madaris during the subsequent centuries remained the learning centers. They trained a large number of famous scholars and thinkers who contributed to worldly or secular knowledge too. Ijtihad – independent reasoning – was a distinctive aspect of these Madaris (Anzar, 2003).

After the defeat of the Muslims empires by the crusaders and political rivalries among Muslim leaders, learning and scholarship went into a state of decline. Ulema of the time rejected the idea of getting worldly knowledge and independent reasoning. This U-turn was meant to regain the old level of spirituality which according to Ulema, was the basis of earlier Muslims power, respect and honor. The historical downfall of the Muslim world caused the change in the focus, spirit, functions and philosophy of the Madaris all over the Muslim world. Many of them restricted themselves exclusively to the teachings of Islam and disseminating Qur’anic verses and their interpretation. Ulema used the verses from the Qur’an to justify their position of restricting themselves to the Divine knowledge only. They believed that the worldly knowledge should either be banned or should be studied in the light of the Qur’an.

In India, British colonialism had great impact on the scope and focus of Muslim educational system. British rule narrowed the scope of Madaris and restricted them to religious affairs only. This very downfall limited the scope of Madrassah education to the poor and religious families only. New British education system brought two separate strands where people from affluent families were educated in secular institutions and rendering Madaris to address the poor.

The British rulers also introduced the idea of segregation of state and religion, which was taken equivalent to deviation from the religious values and teachings by the Muslim leaders. There was no place of Religion in new system of governance, which was considered a threat to Muslim code of conduct. This led to tensions and resistance movements against British government policies. At this time, Madaris decided to launch a campaign against the increasing influence of British culture and education system.

In a response, dire changes could be observed in Madaris of sub-continent. Madaris in sub-continent underwent drastic changes. Although, slight changes in the curriculum of Madaris in Arabia are also reported, yet it continued teaching secular subjects in Madaris till date, following the essence of early madrassah in Baghdad. Al-Azhar education system in Egypt corroborates the above statement by complementing secular subjects to the otherwise Islamic education system (Haqqani, 2002; Anzar, 2003).

The Madrassah, as discussed in the earlier chapters, is an entity in itself having its own curriculum and pattern of education. These institutions were against the secular
education and the subjects taught in secular educational institutions. *Madrassah* owners regarded these subjects as unimportant for female *Madrasah* students. The *Muhtamims* were very critical of imparting secular education to *Madrasah* students in general and female students in particular. After being asked whether they offer secular subjects in *Madrasah*, one of the *Muhtamims* from district Peshawar, who belonged to a Deobandi series of Madaris, replied:

“do they (mainstream educational institutions) offer *Fiqah, Sirat* or *Qur’anic* studies in Home Economics College or in University of Peshawar? Do the students of Law College or Sociology Department study these subjects? No, because they do not need these for their degree so these are not included in their curriculum. Similarly, our graduates and students do not need secular subjects, although they are taught the subjects like Urdu, Mathematics, Arabic, which is enough for them. Secondly, girls should get married after completing 5-6 years in *Madrasah*. And giving them opportunity for further education would affect their marital life, which is their top most priority. Therefore, this education is enough for them”.

The *Muhtamims* considered secular subjects like English, social studies, Science subjects (like Biology, Physics, and Chemistry) unnecessary for *Madaris* graduates and declared non-religious subjects as wastage of time. For *Madaris* students, particularly girls, Islamic subjects are considered necessary and important. They are taught basics of Urdu, Arabic and Mathematics in the first year, because the books which are taught in *Madrasah* are either in *Urdu* or *Arabic*. Therefore, it is considered necessary for the students to learn reading and writing in these languages.

The *Muhtamims* not only opposed the teaching of secular subjects in *Madrasah*; they also criticized the structure of secular educational institutions as well. They argued that, being an organ of the Islamic country, the institutions must offer religious subjects as major part of their curriculum. *Muhtamims* and teachers showed disgust and dislike for secular subjects and secular educational institutions because they considered them working on Western agenda. They held it useless for Muslim women, because these (subjects) are worthless for women not only in this world but in life hereafter. As all of the *Muhtamims* very firmly asserted during the interviews “*Madrasah* education will help the students, teachers and parents in this world and in the world hereafter”. According to respondents, the main aim of educating a Muslim woman (female student) is to teach her how to spend her life inside home, serve her family members (especially male members who are considered to be the *Naib*37 of Allah on earth) and obeying Allah.

37 *Naib* is an urdu word for a person who is bestowed by Allah with authority to rule over a specified group of people. Here *Naib* is used for male, who are considered to have authority and power over female.
6.3 Immanent Vs. Transcendent Education

Islam is a complete code of life explaining what is good or bad. Thus, curriculum of Madaris is designed to enable women to differentiate between good and bad. Madaris owners had a particular mind-set about the worldly affairs and educational system. Anzar (2008) in a study on the pedagogical practices of Islamic Madaris argued that such institutions in Indian Sub-continent (includes India and Pakistan) had excluded secular subjects from their curriculum, assuming its origin to be Western and, hence, a threat to Islam and its ideology. Anzar’s claim and finding are affirmed by this study’s findings. One of the Muhtamims in district Peshawar while explaining the aim and purpose of Madaris, said:

“Islamic Madaris have the aim to impart religious knowledge and teach Islamic sciences for better understanding of the concept of human life. While the secular schools and educational institutions are imparting the skills only that are just for earning livelihood in this world. With these skills how will they (the students) know their base, their origin and their real aim of being sent to this world, when they study just worldly issues? Masha’Allah our students know all this, they know how to spend life according to Islam and the purpose and aim of their lives. When you meet both graduates, you will feel that there is a marked difference in their outlook, way of talking, behavior and manners”.

The Muhtamims bitterly criticized the modern secular education. They were of the opinion that the scope of secular education is very limited as it (secular education) just caters for worldly affairs. Secular education teaches baseless things, having little utility for the students. While the Islamic education has a broader vision, teaching not only about issues of present life but matters related to life hereafter as well. It not only makes a student able to live a life as successful member of the society but also enable her to know how to succeed in life hereafter i.e. they know how to earn blessings of Allah for the coming life and how to obey Allah’s orders. The same argument was also put forth by another Muhtamim in district Nowshera:

“Islamic Madaris and especially our Madrassah aim at teaching the best curriculum which enables women to live a successful life and become good Muslim ladies. Our graduates know how to spend their lives according to the teachings of Islam and also know their duties. Schools, on the other hand, do not offer Islamic knowledge. Can you name a single school that offers such subjects? No, you cannot; it is because these institutions focus on this world. Their teachings are only for living in this world. But Madrassah curriculum is fulfilling Allah’s command and is a source of success in this world as well as in the life hereafter”.

Thus, the Muhtamims have divided education into immanent (secular) and transcendent (religious). They are actually opposed to the immanent/ secular subjects which in their view have very little importance for humans. They argued that Islam had been declared a religion for all times and for all people in Qur’an. Therefore, they regard religious (Islamic) knowledge as everlasting and more beneficial for humanity.

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38 Masha’Allah is an Arabic word, means all praises be to Allah. It is mostly used when a person praises something.
The five years curriculum of these Madaris comprise recitation and memorizing sections from Qur’an, Tajweed/Tajwid (methods of recitation of Qur’an), Tafseer (exegesis), Fiqah (Islamic Law), Islamic History, Sirat/sirah (biography of the Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W.]), Hadith (sayings/traditions of the Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W.]). Along with the major subjects, daily azkaars, readings for girls like Fazail-e-Aamaal\(^{39}\) (the virtues of daily actions), Bahashiti-Zewar\(^{40}\) (ornament of heaven/heavenly ornaments) are the part of their routine activities. However, it has been observed that the number of subjects offered in the Madaris differed from the course of contemporary Dars-i-Nizami (see chapter 2 for detail) listed by Malik (1997) and Farooq (2005) in their studies. The Muhtamims argued that many books of that old curriculum were difficult for students to understand, therefore, they were replaced and the syllabus was revised keeping in mind the shorter duration of female students.

Sikand (2001) stated that inside madrassah, girls do not waste any single minute; they have something to read/recite all the time. ‘Islamic womanhood’ model is kept in mind while designing the curriculum (Bano, 2010; Winkelmann, 2005). Like Winkelmann’s study the Muhtamims and teachers of the Madaris under study considered Islamic subjects to be the only beneficial subjects for girls. They thought that religious education would help women lead a pious life in the mundane world. They held that secular subjects were unimportant and misleading. They did not like even to compare both types of education, as one of the Muhtamims in district Peshawar said:

> “in my opinion, it is a big insult to consider the 11-12 years of religious education equivalent to the Master’s degree of secular education. The secular education is for the fulfillment and earning of secular and material needs as food, clothing and money only, whereas religious education is a source of success in this world, and world hereafter. We groom our students in such a way that they do not use their education as a source of earning, rather it is their religious and moral duty to serve the religion Islam and strengthen our own system”

Like most religious scholars, the above mentioned Muhtamim was also critical of secular education. He condemned the recent reforms by Wifaq-ul-Madaris, as insult to religious education and Madaris. In Zia-ul-Haq era, the Madrassah degree was declared/regarded equivalent to Master’s degree in Islamiyat or Arabic (Bano, 2007: 50). This was an undesirable decision in the views of Muhtamims which would have negative impact. However, it was astonishing to know that male graduates were allowed to utilize these equivalent degrees for acquiring jobs in secular educational institutions but female students were not allowed to do so. This, when look at with a critical sociological lens, justifies that male certificates from madrassah are credential that can be used for getting job in the public domain, whereas that of female are certificates which qualify them as best woman for the private sphere of home. This further enables me to argue that male graduates possess what Bourdieu (1988) call ‘cultural capital’ where that of woman are not.

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\(^{39}\) A booklet, comprising supplications of daily routine, written by Islamic Scholars

\(^{40}\) An advisory book, especially for female, written by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi in late 18th century, including advices for daily activities ranging from daily practices to maintaining relationships
The female students are cautioned on the same lines about the uselessness of secular education, even those madrassah students, who had never been to schools/colleges were criticizing schools/colleges as being places of aimless knowledge. As reflected from the views of students, they also criticized secular education. Students argued about the difference in both educations as the following words of a student show:

“one is worldly and the other is divine; this is the obvious difference. There is no comparison between the religious and the worldly things. Here in Madrassah, every moment of the individual is spent in the way of Allah, serving religion. There is little chance of deviation from the commands of Allah. We have been regular in prayers, recitation of Qur’an and supplications from the time we entered Madrassah”. (A student at Madrassah in district Nowshera)

According to Madrassah graduates and students, in Madaris the curricula followed, is ‘divine’, (they mostly refer to Qur’an, Hadith, Sunnah), while in schools and colleges secular/worldly subjects are offered only. As discussed earlier, Madrassah education stresses upon specific daily routines. Female students take their teachers’ words and perceptions as the final and ultimate realities. Believing in the daily routine and norms of the Madaris as the only right way of life, students of Madaris consider those girls sinful who do not follow these norms like prayers, pardah, supplications and many others. They think that secularly educated girls know nothing about religious practices. Like Bano (2010) and Winkelmann (2005), my study exhibits that people involved with Madrassah, consider students of secular education as sinful who waste their time in useless undertaking. The secular education is perceived to be of little use in life, especially for girls. Another student in district Nowshera, stressing upon the Madrassah education, said:

“For girls, Madrassah education is very necessary and compulsory because it teaches girls how to be good Muslim women. It is the only way to make them aware of the right path and teach them how to live their lives according to the Islamic traditions.”

Like their teachers and Muhtamims, the students opine that only Madrassah education teach manners, religious values and right path to Muslim ladies, while secular educational institutions hold such values in little esteem and focuses more on fashion and other worldly attributes. Ironically, many of the students who were talking about these differences did not even know about the curricula, subjects or teaching methods of the secular schools. They based their opinion on whatever they had heard from their teachers and Muhtamims.

6.4 Madrassah Teaches Obedience and Respect while Secular Education does not

According to Madrassah stakeholders, secular education is only a source of earning money. It does not focus on the overall betterment of society. The mainstream educational institutions attach more value to money and economic gains rather than

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41 Pardah/Purdah has visual, spatial and ethical aspects. It includes veiling of women, segregation of sexes and a set of norms and practices that sets boundaries for Muslim women.
religious values and practices. That is why the graduates of mainstream education receive degrees to get jobs only. The Muhtamins, teachers and students were critical of the mainstream education. In their opinion secular education has no role in shaping the personalities of the students in a positive way and in teaching them the manners and equipping them with the Islamic values/norms which are essential for a successful life in a society. Secular education promotes western values of individual freedom which are in conflict with local cultural and religious value systems of Pakhtun society (it is further elaborated later in this chapter) whereas, religious institutions teach how to spend life in accordance with the expectations of Muslim society.

One of the teachers in district Nowshera, illustrated the difference in both educations as:

“one is manmade and worldly while the other is divine. Secondly, as I observe that school education does not impart the spirit of respect and obedience, the example is when I go home, my mother serves my younger sister who is in 10th grade now, while I try to serve my mother. It is the basic difference that secular education does not teach the core values of respect to parents, their actual place in society and the norms which are taught in Madrassah. Here we learn to respect teachers, parents, and elders and show obedience to them. Also Madaris work for spiritual guidance of mankind, that is necessary for successful life but secular education lacks this feature”. Madrassah has been considered by the respondents as a place where the students are taught to be more respectful, obedient, caring because they will receive its reward in this life and in the life hereafter. The whole day, they are given lessons to be obedient to the ‘Creator’ (Allah), after Him to His people including teachers, parents, other family members and relatives as well. According to the teachers and the students, the Madaris train and purify the minds and soul of these graduates; they not only equip them with religious knowledge, they teach them how to serve humanity, respect elders and expectations from them in society- as a daughter, sister, wife and a mother. It is regarded as ‘Adab’ or ‘value education’ by Winkelmann. Winkelmann (2005) states that Adab is inculcated not only through the subjects taught but even through the daily routine activities and one can feel religiosity and Adab even in the whole environment of Madrassah. The Madrassah stakeholders told that they try to bring about wellbeing, prosperity, revitalization/development of individuals and the society as a whole, which they argued is impossible to bring through secular education. As a student said about Madrassah education in district Peshawar:

“There is difference in school education and Madrassah education. The Madrassah graduates are more obedient, respectful and knowledgeable than graduates of a secular school. They tend to be more liberal, self-loving and do not observe pardah as ordered by Islam. Similarly, they do
not have much knowledge about religion and religious practices. We are better equipped with the knowledge of proper ways spending life. As a good Muslim, we know how to deal with our relatives and for us the words of parents and husbands are the final. The school graduates care less about their parents/husbands/in-laws and they are self-centered.”

The discussion clearly indicates the diverging nature of purpose at institutional level. Ineffectiveness of states’ interference coupled with hegemonic zeal confronts both types of institutions in rather conflicting situation. On the basis of utility and purpose the respondents distinguished Madaris and secular schools. Bano notes that the reason of dislike for secular education is the stigma of being liberal and worldly in their outlook where girls enjoy more freedom and experience limited check. My respondents also affirmed these observations about secular education. They all (Muhtamims, teachers and students) had almost the same views regarding the issue. One of the teachers, in district Nowshera, while addressing the same question differentiating their education from the secular told:

“we are very punctual and regular in our prayers while the students of secular education are not. We live a simple life while they are more fashionable and liberal. We fear Allah in our hearts and the whole day we are busy in Islamic teachings while they may remember Allah at the time of their prayers only. We know the correct ways of performing prayers, ablution, taking bath, while they do not care for such important things because these are not taught in schools. Another thing is that we teach our students Adab (manners), although the schools also teach this but do not indoctrinate it in students, while we teach the minute things like how to deal with parents, relatives, in laws, husband and others. We also focus on their personality building: not just giving them the sanad (certificate)”.

Religious education induces humbleness in human personality whereas secular education, according to these students, encourages selfishness that eventually leads to personal concerns only. They argued that secular education leads a person to individualism, which is a ‘western concept’, where no one cares for others but just think of him/her and pursue his/her own personal interest. This is why parents with traditional thinking prefer to send their daughters to Madrassah. Parents want such qualities like obedience and respectfulness in their daughters because these qualities multiply their chances of successful marriage. Some of them preferred Madrassah education due to some financial reasons as well. In addition to these, some people prefer madrassah education due to poverty. A mother said while giving rationale of preferring Madrassah education for her daughter:

“first of all the school/secular educational institutions charge high fees, secondly that environment is liberal so the girls get more freedom and sometimes they become more disobedient as well. Although I have never been to school nor my daughter, but it is what I have seen in homes where I used to go for work. Masha’Allah! My daughter is very obedient and does whatever I ask her to do. She prays five times a day, recites Holy Qur’an and also takes care of observing pardah. She is good in her relations with others too. Her in-laws and her husband are also very happy from her. And I must give credit for these
qualities to Madrassah environment and teachings”. (A mother of a student in district Peshawar)

Parents and especially mothers of the target area were more interested in their daughters to get religious education. Religious education is observed to bring a positive change in the personalities of girls. They are taught ‘Adab’ (manners), religiosity, habit of prayers, humbleness and obedience. The girls inside Madaris learn to live a simple life, to respect and care for their relatives and to develop patience. Mothers, I interviewed, were happy with their daughter’s Madrassah education as they considered it beneficial for this world (as people like to have a daughter-in-law graduated from Madrassah, because of their obedience and submissiveness) and the world hereafter. Similar views were also presented by another mother, when she was asked to compare Madrassah and secular education, she said:

“Of course religious education is better for girls, the first reason is that they need to know how to spend life in the light of Islam, how to make Allah happy, how to keep the whole family happy. In today’s world Madrassah is the only source to rely upon for conserving traditional values. Islamic education is helpful in both worlds, Duniya (present world) and Aakhirat (life after death)”. (A mother in district Nowshera)

These mothers favored Madrassah education for girls because most of them had heard about the negative impacts of secular education and they wanted to save their daughters from the backlash. Secular education, in their opinion, would make girls disobedient, ill-mannered and disrespectful and these attributes would minimize their chances in marriage market. This is to be stressed here that not only men but also women (mothers) contribute the perpetuation of patriarchy. Women, along with men, play active role in other women’s (their daughters) subordination (see Ullah, 2013 for detailed discussion). Same kind of arguments was given by a student in district Peshawar said:

“They (students of secular education) are wasting their time. Because after their marriage, they will have to take care of their husbands and children, so their degrees would go waste. They are not respectful to their relatives and obedient to their husbands as the Madrassah graduates are. Although, students alone cannot be blamed for all these attributes or weaknesses, their education system lacks the capability. They are not taught those norms and values, which are necessary for them to play the role of a good daughter, sister, wife or mother. On the other hand, we (madrassah graduates) have Masha’Allah all these characteristics and we follow all these norms and values.”

The respondents criticized the socializing agents in the shape of secular educational institutions more than the actors. These institutions, in their opinion, are responsible for the deficient personalities of their graduates. Even some of these students regarded secular education a waste of time and energy especially for girls. They argued that after marriage the girls with secular education will face problems as they are not taught about the social aspects of life.

These respondents (particularly of District Nowshera) had negative opinion about the secular education itself. They regarded it useless and unnecessary for girls. According to them, secular education does not impart skills of spending peaceful life, rather it makes the life of women more difficult because it teaches them to go out of home and earn money, which is not the duty of a woman. Home making is considered her sole
duty; showing obedience to males (father, brother, husband or even son). These comments from the respondents clearly show the patriarchal notions of society that are being inculcated directly (through interpretation of Qur’anic verses) or indirectly by their daily routine lectures.

Although a few students showed positive opinion about secular education (most of them belonged to Gillgit, Chitral and Dir districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and had shifted to Nowshera after marriage). However, they esteemed madrassah education as complementary to it for girls. A student in district Nowshera said:

“I was determined to get higher education and that is why along with Madrassah I continued my secular studies as a private candidate and did my graduation. I believe that girls should get secular education but first they must develop the sense of right and wrong and then if they receive worldly knowledge they will be able to differentiate between good and bad.”

A moderate Islamic school of thought validates the importance of secular education along with Islamic traditions. The foremost priority is given to understand religion and then one can study other worldly/secular subjects. It is observed that girls belonging to district Nowshera (whose family of orientation belonged to Nowshera) held more rigid views about secular education and other issues regarding life, whereas, those girls who had migrated to the district from other areas, extended lenient/moderate views. As the students quoted above did not deny the importance of secular education, rather she stressed on the need of getting Islamic education as well.

Most of the students in district Peshawar did not criticize secular education intensively and they admitted the importance of both types of knowledge. They were of the opinion that secular education and/or educational institutions must follow certain rules/guidelines (especially regarding the moral teachings/conduct of students) like Madaris that will make these secular institutions more effective. They did not deny the importance of secular education in contemporary world. However; they considered Madrassah education more important for girls than the secular. One of the students in district Peshawar argued:

“secular education is beneficial for girls but it has some drawbacks. Madrassah graduate observe strict pardah but students of secular education do not care about pardah. Similarly, there is no concept of co-education in Madaris and persistence of co-education in schools/colleges/universities provides more chances of love affairs between the opposite sexes study that not only shifts their attention but also brings disrespect to them. Although both are types of education but one leads them to Islam while the other to the worldly things. One opens the avenues of reality, illumining the purpose of humans on earth; whereas the other inspires to follow the glories and luxuries of this world”.

These students used character building in ascribed Islamic format as a yardstick to explore the outcomes of education. They compared the effects of secular and religious education and labeled the students of schools and colleges more liberal and westernized, who had no affinity with religion. The point to be noted here is that they are shown one side of the coin. Some of them argued that ‘we have heard it, that secular education is not bad, but we are talking about what we have heard from people’. This shows that in such communities (Madaris), there prevailed a negative attitude towards secular education; because by saying ‘people’, they referred to their own teachers and Muhtamims, or their neighbors.
Some of the teachers (especially in district Peshawar) who graduated from secular institutions justified their stance of favoring Madrassah education, on the basis of the purpose of both educational systems as:

“the difference is basically in environments. The secular education does not provide congenial atmosphere for learning. Teachers are not interested in the development of students’ personalities rather they take it as a paid job. Similarly, the students study for explicit reason of getting degree only that may be used for hooking good jobs, which my father-in-law call “pait palate ki taleem” (education for food earning). While in Madrassah, the whole personality of an individual is developed as it is not just for degree or some worldly advantages but it is to understand/follow Qur’an and Islamic knowledge and Islamic way of life. Here, we focus only on building/molding students’ personalities. You would not believe that I have learned in these five years of Madrassah education more than my fourteen years of secular education. As I told you, those fourteen years did not bring any significant change in my life, and in search of satisfaction I came to Madrassah. Now I am very satisfied with my life and with my status of being a part of a Madrassah.” (A teacher from district Peshawar)

The teachers clarified that the basic aim of both these educational systems (religious and secular) is totally different from each other. They did not look down upon secular subjects or education/educational institutions; rather they were unsatisfied with the aim/goals/objectives of these schools/colleges. They were of the view that these subjects did not impart education to flourish the minds of the students or to make them good citizens rather they stressed upon gaining good grades and receiving degrees so that they could earn. The aim of Madrassah education, on the other hand, is to focus on the personality development for the betterment of humanity. According to the respondents, schools and colleges fail to provide a better learning environment, and a chance to pursue education in its real sense; that is to know oneself, the Creator and then to thank the Creator for such a precious life.

Thus, theMadrasah stakeholders had critical opinion about secular education on the basis of its techniques, aims, and focus. They think of secular education that is totally different from their religious education system. Thus they think of the secular education system as inferior.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter reflected the views of teachers, Muhtamims, students and parents. The analysis revealed that these stakeholders consider Madrassah education of an utmost importance, specifically for girls. Firstly, these Islamic institutions familiarize girls with the affiliation of Allah (God) and Islamic codes of life. All those who do not study in Madrassah do not know how to lead a pious life or care for righteous deeds.

Many of these students and teachers had an objection to my observance of pardah and cautioned me that I will be punished in the hereafter. They treated me as a person not following religion in true sense, as per their understanding, and offered me to join Madrassah to make my life peaceful and more productive.

Secondly, Madrassah education trains girls to live a better life after marriage. Madrassah is regarded by these stakeholders as the only place that makes the girls
obedient, respectful and humble. These characteristics are considered essential for a good Muslim woman. And those girls who study in a Madrassah are successful in their lives after marriage.

Lastly, secular education, according to the respondents, is wastage of time, resources and energies. As girls have to get married and their actual place is their home where worldly knowledge is of no use to them because they have to take care of their husbands, children and relatives and all these are not taught in schools. In our local culture, women employment is not considered good, and the mobility of women is also looked down upon. In contrast, the secular education makes girls more liberal, disobedient and selfish: which leads to the disintegration of family as an institution.

Chapter 7 Religious and Secular Discourses of Empowerment

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter evaluated the views of respondents regarding the relative importance of religious and secular knowledge for girls. Most of the respondents held a dogmatic point of view regarding religious education in this world and in the world hereafter. This chapter attempts to juxtapose secular and Islamic empowerment and analyze the interpretation of this term from the respondents’ perspective (i.e. Muhtamims, teachers, graduates/students of Madaris). It highlights the respondents’ views regarding role of Madaris in reinforcing Islamic empowerment. Furthermore, it also describes the views of respondents regarding secular empowerment. Thus, the chapter is divided into two parts: part one discusses the difference between secular and religious empowerment from the perspective of respondents while part two analyzes the role of Madaris in empowering their graduates. It is important here to discuss empowerment briefly for the understanding of this chapter.

Empowerment is a widely used term in different disciplines as per their unique needs and perspectives. Rendering a different meaning for different people, this term has a variety of definitions and meanings (see chapter 3 for detail). However, the current study draws on Lazo’s (1995), definition of empowerment. Lazo (1995:25) defined empowerment as “a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means and resources”. Thus, this chapter primarily focuses to see whether female Madaris enable their graduates to access to and control means and resources available to them in life. It also tries to analyze the social and economic aspects of empowerment. This refers to the ability and right of decision making regarding their (students’/graduates’) lives, determining their status in society and their contribution to the larger society, both social and economic. It is to refresh that the views of the respondents are presented and analyzed in the light of secondary data.
7.2 Secular Empowerment Disturbs Society

Empowerment is considered an alternative word for ‘power’, when used in reference to the marginalized groups. It enables the deprived groups especially women to have share in power (see Baltiwala, 1993 for detail) and control over resources. This sense of empowerment is misunderstood by the respondents especially the Muhtamims. They regarded empowerment as a western and misleading term. As one of the Muhtamims in district Peshawar argued:

“the west is misleading women by telling/showing her the glittering of so called empowerment. What they call empowerment is actually worldly and frothy/ethereal. That has no foundation at all. It is impossible to consider/make men and women equal because they are unequal by birth.”

The Muhtamims quoted different verses from the Qur’an to rationalize the superiority of men over women. They further substantiate their arguments using references from Hadith, that there is natural inequality between the two which cannot be eliminated. They even consider the stance of feminists as unrealistic and baseless. The Muhtamims have a traditional mindset about the place of women in society and they have confined her to home only. Therefore, they regard the idea of empowerment a source of restlessness in the society. The Muhtamims and teachers were of the opinion that western society tries to demoralize and destabilize Muslim society by showing them unrealistic and un-Islamic ways of living. However, Islamic history reveals that woman is awarded a high status in all aspects of life. Islam gives women a safe and respectable place at home and west tries to misplace women from their homes, argued by a Muhtamim. The Muhtamims said that this phenomenon is actually bringing disequilibrium in the social structure. One of them in district Nowshera said in this respect:

“the western concept of giving women power is a shallow concept and a misleading practice actually. The western empowerment only means bringing their women out of their houses either in the name of political rights, employment rights, or others. These are actually the causes of disharmony in society and in homes. Women are made for homes, not for streets and markets, this is the domain of men to go out, earn and participate in other activities (like politics and government). The west is trying to replace these roles and our women are blindly following them”.

The respondents considered women’s freedom, liberty or power (propagated by west), against Islam and the reason of social distraction/disorganization of Pakistani and Muslim society. The Muhtamims were of the view that Islamic (particularly Pakistani) society has forgotten religious teachings due to which Muslims are derailed from the real path of development and prosperity. They said that all the religions ensure harmony and almost in all religions men are considered the protectors of women and children because they are physically and mentally strong. Women, in their opinion, are emotional, physically weak and irrational in thinking. Further, they lack power to
make decision and hence, incapable of individual enterprises. They argued that if women are given liberties it will disturb the home and society instead. Consistent with the argument, a Muhtamim of Madrassah in district Peshawar said:

“you can see that the western woman is unsatisfied although she has got what she struggled for: i.e. right to vote, right to work side by side with men forgetting her domestic duties and enjoying all the freedom they got. But still they are not happy, even the whole society is disturbed and all this is due to the western slogan of women empowerment, women equality”.

The Muhtamims were critical of secular education and females in mainstream educational institutions of the country as well. In their opinion, females of secular education are adopting the same attitude and practices which were the essence of British educational system of 1800s. They held that establishment of schools in Indian sub-continent during British regime was an effort to weaken the religious education on one hand and to divert the Muslims from their real path on the other hand. Furthermore, the Muhtamims regarded the craze of modernization as a reason of overlooking the Islamic teachings and practices, as reflected from the argument of another Muhtamim in district Nowshera:

“it is a very unfortunate situation that our females are inspired by the western society, which instead of empowering, discriminate the females. The inspiration of west gave rise to movements for female rights in our country, imitating the west. But in fact, these activities are exploiting women and their rights. This is all because we have forgotten our religion: Islam”.

Religious institutions under study, regarded the secular education as the main factor in spreading this western ideology in our (Pakistani) society. They were critical of secular education (as described in chapter 6) and regarded secular education as immoral, unnatural and having limited scope, rendering its utility in this world only. They argued that secular education lacks religious subjects; it fails to internalize the Islamic values and norms into its graduates. The graduates of secular education are unaware of religious values, reward and punishment for good and bad deeds and that is why these graduates are attracted to western culture, values and practices. A Muhtamim from district Nowshera expressed the same in these words:

“the western education means liberty and liberty means immorality. Real liberty is given by Islam, which bestows females with all their rights but within ‘limits’. It is very unfortunate that schools and colleges have adopted the concept of western education, most of which is baseless and useless. It does not contain any single subject that can reflect our identity as an Islamic country. No society or organization can give women the status as is given by Islam and our institutions. It is through our students and graduates that we are spreading awareness among masses so that people will be saved from jahanum (hell)”.

The above discussion shows that the Muhtamims criticized secular education as a source of propagating western values/agendas. They declared the concept of western empowerment as unnatural and shallow. They expressed that actually the baseless education system of the west is disturbing the structure of society. The Muhtamims gave the alternate solution of implementing religious/Islamic education. In their opinion,
Islam empowers women in the real sense which is permanent and a source of success in this world and in the eternal life in the hereafter. Thus, they mainly focused upon life after death.

7.3 Religious Empowerment Brings Satisfaction and Equilibrium

Female Madaris and their owners intend to show the real path of ‘empowerment’ to women and save them from the hazardous effects of western education and western discrimination in the name of empowerment. The Muhtamims and teachers opposed the west for misleading Pakistani women by derailing them from the right path. They justified their vision of establishing more female Madaris by arguing that they struggled to train females in the light of Islamic patterns of living. As a Muhtamim in district Nowshera rationalizing the establishment of Islamic institutions said:

“west has an agenda to destroy our society. So they are showing our youth and women a baseless path. Whereas Islam gives all rights to women being a daughter, mother, sister, and wife. In all these statuses they have their own rights and privileges. So to make females aware of their religion and make them understand the difference between right and wrong, we decided to expand our institution and tried to reach the females of our society and show them the right path to spend their life upon”.

Female Madaris are response to the modernity and its effects. This stance of the religious scholars reinforces Bano (2010) argument that Madaris are rapidly growing as a reaction to modernity and western culture. Religious scholars and clerics are of the view that western culture is destroying Pakistani nation especially women and distracting them from their real purpose of life. The Muhtamims displayed a specific mindset about secular education and secular institutions that were why when I, a graduate of secular educational institution, contacted them for this study, they initially refused to give me time (see chapter 3 for detail). During the interviews, not only the Muhtamims but teachers and students of Madaris too tried to prove that I was not a ‘good Muslim’42 and that I must get admission in madrassah to learn the religious etiquette. The respondents criticized my veil (see chapter 3 for details), prayers’ posture and communication style as well. They took all these un-Islamic and contrary to the attributes of a good Muslim lady. They stressed me to spend 4-5 years in madrassah to learn it. In their opinion, madrassah is the only place where women can learn all the necessary attributes of Muslim society. A Muhtamim of madrassah in district Peshawar elaborated the same idea during an interview and told:

“the role of the graduates of Deeni (religious) Madaris is so clear and obvious. They are creating a just society— bringing justice in their personal, social and communal or national relations. They are proving to be the agents of change. In today’s society where we are facing various Fitnas (temptations/tribulations), shayateen (devils), the media sources and the western agents. So it is necessary at this stage to have a strong relation with Allah – the Creator. Only God can save us from

42 By good Muslim they refer to one who “know to obey” and who is socialized in a religious environment only.
such things and help us to live the life which He expects from His creatures”.

Giving their views about the role of Madaris and their graduates, Muhtamims and teachers argued that their graduates are well aware of their due status and rights that Islam gives to women. In contrast, west exploits women in the name of empowerment. A teacher in district Nowshera explored the issue in following words:

“our graduates are well aware of their rights as given in Islam. Islam gives women the right of education, inheritance etc. The west declares itself as the ambassador of women rights but in reality it is exploiting women. They are over burdening women. Sorry to say but they are making them show pieces. So our graduates, when go back to society, can tell their parents, brothers and sisters about it and can also persuade their males to give such rights (but in fact this is not possible for a female in a patriarchal society like Pakhtun)”.  

Although they claimed that their graduates know about their rights given to them by religion; however, when asked from their students about rights of female in detail, during a group interview (with teachers and students), the students were unable to answer, and instead, their teachers answered the question. Although, it is considered a sign of disrespect to speak in front of teachers in female Madaris; however, it was noted that the students were unable to answer those questions regarding women rights even when I interviewed some of them at their homes. Students were not allowed to talk to me in person. They were either accompanied by their teachers in Madaris or by their mothers at their homes.

Their arguments about women’s empowerment were self-contradictory. On one hand, they claimed of empowering women with their rights and at the same time they argued that in a patriarchal Pakhtun society it is difficult to get these rights. When I tried to probe the issue of difference between theory and practice, it unveiled another debate of patriarchal control. Male were regarded superior by Muhtamims, teachers and even by the students. They held that males were superior to women and even Qur’an had declared them superior. One of the respondents in this respect held:

“of course, male are superior to female, so they have more rights and authority over their families than females. Even in Qur’an they are regarded superior (الرجال قوامون على النساء) (that males are stronger and are above female. In some place, it is said that if bowing would have been allowed to anyone other than Allah, women would have been asked to do it to their husbands. Although Islam gives equal rights to women in some cases but still male is supervisor”. (A teacher in district Nowshera)  

These responses show a clear contradiction in students understanding of women empowerment. They believe that they have been given all rights, but at the same time they confessed that getting all the rights in Pakhtun society is impossible. They asserted that even talking against the wishes of male members of the family is least tolerated. A student in district Nowshera considered some of the members of Muslim society ‘kaafir’ (infidel or unbeliever). She said:

“Islam has given various rights to women and a very high status and place but our Pakhtun culture and society does not give it to women. (When asked again what rights have been given to women in Islam, she replied as) many rights are given to women but I do not remember now.
(after thinking deep for a while) yes, Islam gives the right of education and such other rights, but Islam also gives preference to male over female like in Surrah Al-Nisa (34) but not in all situations like women cannot give divorce but a male can give divorce to a woman. Our society does not understand all these things as they do not have religious knowledge. They do things against Islam and those who do not obey Islam are ‘kaafir’ (infidel)”.

This discourse reveals that some students were aware of the status of women in Islam. However, they were also criticizing Pakhtun society, western values and secular education. They suggested that only Islam gave women their due status and they must follow it. But at the same time, they admitted the uselessness of women’s voice for their rights in the prevailing patriarchal fabric of Pakhtun community. This is why; most of the students were reluctant to say anything about their rights and their families. The above debate clarifies that although these Madaris make the graduates aware about their rights and status that Islam gives, but they cannot fight against patriarchal structure of Pakhtun society.

7.5 Role of Madaris in Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women

One of the key focuses of the current study was examining economic aspects of women’s empowerment from respondents’ point of view. They (Muhtamims, teachers and students) totally rejected the economic role of women and said that it was the responsibility of male to earn livelihood. Even the Muhtamims propounded that earning of women is against Islam and one of them while replying to the question of their graduate’s employment said:

“your question is against our teachings because Islam gives the duty of earning to male members of the family and women have to look after home, children and not to go out to earn. It is just the western practice that male and female should work together”. (A Muhtamim in district Peshawar)

This response shows how strongly the Madrassah teachers reject the employment of their graduates in the job market. They, however, were not against their job in madrassah. They said that women were designed to work inside home, rear children and perform domestic duties. They are supposed to socialize their children according to the teachings of Islam and share it with other females who have found no opportunity of getting religious education. She is not supposed to leave this honorable status and choose the hectic job of earning. The same argument was given by one of the teachers in district Nowshera:

“our graduates are illumining the minds and houses through Quran and Islamic teachings. They are spreading whatever knowledge they receive here. They are also opening Madaris in their own hometowns, which have resulted in more than 300 branches of our Madrassah, and this is our greatest achievement. And when they get married, they prepare their next generation in a way that they will be well aware of Islam. The west is trying to detract our new generation very cleverly and silently, we have to take care of them and save them. Our students and graduates are playing a key role in showing people the right path of Islam”.

These Madaris are making good Muslimahs, who can spend their lives according to the Qur’anic teachings and can get success in this world and in the world hereafter.
Teachers and Muhtamims regarded the inculcation of tailored Islamic education as real empowerment. Wife of a Muhtamim in district Peshawar, who had been serving as a teacher, highlighted the role of Madressah in empowering their graduates as:

“their future is bright not only in this world but in the world hereafter as well. They can open their own Madaris; can teach at their own homes if they do not have resources to open a separate Madressah or even can deliver their teachings in a single room, and it is in reality what you people call ‘empowerment’”.

The students were asked about their future plans and they affirmed to follow the mission of their Muhtamims. Their main aim was to get Iijaza (permission) after completing their studies and open up their own Madaris to further the cause of their Muhtamims and serve religion. However, these Madaris would be run by male members of their families like fathers, brothers or their husbands. A student explained the reason for running Madressah under a patriarch in the following words:

“we do not have that much knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, our males have to help us, when we will open up a Madressah. They know better how to deal with people. Secondly, we cannot interact with the male members as Islam does not allow, so ultimately our fathers, brothers or husbands will have to do all this. This will earn them reward in the life hereafter”.

They were categorically told throughout their educational term that females are physically, mentally and psychologically weak. They are incapable to lead an institution, whether private or public. The students are being taught that woman cannot discriminate between good and bad, therefore all her decisions would be taken by males ranging from education to selecting life partner. It is reflected by a student of Madressah in district Peshawar as:

“our decisions are always taken by father or brother, as they know better and they can decide the best. Although Islam gives different rights like education, property, marriage consent, but girls are discouraged to ask for these rights as our male members do not like a female to talk about her marriage or such things”.

It has been internalized in the minds of students that male are superior and they must be obeyed, irrespective of nature of relationships, whether a father, a brother or a husband (as discussed earlier in this chapter). The students had accepted the subservient status in society as most of them gave almost the same response:

“there is no question of equal rights in this society for male and female. Female is subordinated, passive and obeying. In our society it is considered a matter of honour by the male members”. (A student in district Peshawar)

The students are made to accept the subordinate position by proving their subordinate position through the Qur’an and Ahadith, as they were taught only those chapters and lessons from Islamic books which highlight the duties of female and rights of male. And they are constantly told about their position and are being told that the society is patriarchal and male are the decision makers. Even the rights given in Islam are not awarded to females in most of Pakhtun families. This reality is being portrayed by a respondent:
“female education is out of question in most of families and in some families if they are giving education it is up to matric only, a very small numbers of families would allow higher education to females. Similarly in the matter of marriage, consent from female is not necessary and her consent is not asked at all, although Islam gives right and option to female that if she does not agree, the marriage cannot take place”.

7.6 Conclusion

The above discussion show that stakeholders of Madaris have their own idea of empowerment and it differs a lot from that of Islamic feminists and secular empowerment. In secular terms, empowerment refers to the “process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means and resources” (Lazo, 1995). While the Madaris stakeholders’ reject this concept of empowerment and defined empowerment as the ability of women to learn her duties and its proper performance in the light of Islamic teachings. For them, empowering a women means to enable her to understand her position in relation to male members of family and to maintain the power structure of the society (they support it by few Qur’anic verses). All those rights (asked by western/secular women) are regarded to be the basic rights, given to women by Islam but in certain limits; however, the patriarchal structure of Pakhtun society and the patriarchal interpretation of Islamic teachings are the main hindrance in its accumulation. The patriarchs’ seems reluctant to lose their hold of women in particular and of the society in general. The patriarchs are portrayed superior to women which is, supported by quoting and interpreting verses of Qur’an like “male are the protectors of women”. These verses are quoted and used as disciplining and/or controlling strategies. That is why Islamic feminists demand to have an antipatriarchal/egalitarian interpretation of Qur’an. Islamic feminists are of the view that Islam as a religion is not patriarchal. It is the miss-interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith by ‘men’, who made the religion patriarchal for their vested interests.

The Mullahs (Muslim clerics) focus the duties of women and the rights of men in Islamic teachings, although they know very well that Allah Almighty has created them equal. These finding, when looked upon from Dorothy Smith point of view, enable me to argue that men, not women, interpret, explain text and define society and how we think about things (Smith, 1990). Smith further argues that “it is men who throughout the history have been the Bible’s primary interpreters” (Smith, 1990:14). Looking at the findings of this study in the work of Smith, show that like Christianity, in Islam men are the primary interpreter of the Qur’an. it is men who define rules and tell these young girls how should they think and believe about things in this world.
8.1 Introduction

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 presented respondent’s views in thematic form. These views explored the role of female Madaris in detail. These highlighted the stance of Muhtamims, teachers, students of Madaris and their parents in two districts (i.e. Nowshera and Peshawar) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding women’s empowerment. The current chapter analyses the primary data in relation to secondary data along with field observations for the purpose of deriving conclusions. Hence, this chapter probes the views of respondents in the light of such factors like patriarchal structure of Pakhtun society, the status of religious scholars (Ulemas) and its impact upon the functioning of female Madaris established for women’s empowerment.

8.2 Madaris and Empowerment

In feminist writings, empowerment is associated with the distribution, access to, and control of ‘power’ (Batliwala, 2007: 559). It is the process towards egalitarianism as Lazo (1995: 25), defines empowerment as “a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling the access to a control over such means and resources”. Islamic feminism also discusses the issue of women’s empowerment within the framework of Islam (Badran, 1997). Islamic feminists believe in egalitarian nature of Islam, where women are entrusted their due rights. Many Islamic feminists like Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2006), Fatima Mernissi (1992), Asma Barlas (2006) and others have criticized the patriarchal interpretation and patriarchal teachings of Islam. They urge for gender sensitive interpretation and equity based treatment of women in the light of Qur’an and Hadith. Islamic feminists argue that Islam does empower women by giving them their due right as equal members of the society (Kynselihto, 2008; Mernissi, 2000; Wadud, 1987; Naseef, 1999; Wadud-Muhsin, 1999). The main stance of the feminists is to abolish the medieval interpretation of Islamic teachings and reinterpret Islam through gender balanced perspective. Islam has empowered women not only demarcating their duties but awarded them due rights as well. However, this kind of empowerment does not appear in Madaris under study. The popular (feminists’ and western) concept of women’s empowerment is totally rejected by the religious scholars (especially the Madaris owners and managers) because such notion entails equality of male and female in all aspects of life; and it urges women to take stand and demand their due rights as equal members of society. Nonetheless, the Muhtamims consider it a threat to society, but in fact, it is a threat to their hold/dominancy.

According to the Muhtamims, empowerment means ‘[a] woman equipped with Islamic knowledge’. In their views this enables a woman to know her role as a good mother/wife and restrict her duties her to home. However, my observations and study confirm that it is not the ‘Islamic knowledge’ rather it is Muhtamims’ ‘prescribed knowledge’ that makes a woman empowered in true terms. Islam not only teaches about the role of women rather it stresses about the equal status and rights of women as well (Kortetenne, 2008; Ssenyonjo, 2007; Ferdows, 1983). Mahmood (2005) also notes that the religious scholars are now discussing the issue of women’s empowerment (that was not the topic under discussion until recently among them); however, that is distinct from the liberal/secular concept of empowerment. They
religious scholars (*Muhtamims*) believe women empowerment of women as a western concept which is baseless and ‘frothy’. One of the *Muhtamims* argued that west is misleading womenfolk; what they call empowerment is actually worldly and frothy/ethereal. It illumines that *Muhtamims* approach the definition of women empowerment through their subjective and biased manner. The *Muhtamims*’ definition of empowerment leads me to link Dorothy Smith who argues that what counts for authoritative knowledge in society is determined by standards that privilege men (Smith, 1990).

Bano (2010) also affirms the stance that *Madaris* produce a cadre of socially empowered ladies, through imparting religious knowledge, which teach them about their rights and duties for better life in this world and hereafter. She states that such *Madaris* provide a medium to young girls for social interaction and equip them with different skills like cooking, stitching, communication. However, the current study uncovered the other side of the picture. *Madaris* under study do not provide any opportunity of skill enhancement and focus only on disciplining young girls in traditional ‘patriarchal Islamic fashion’. I used patriarchal Islamic fashion to describe the *Muhtamims*’ interpreted Islamic teachings. Instead of mainstreaming the students in society, *Madaris* socially sideline their graduates, by confining them to the religious dogmas and activities only. In short, it is concluded from the current study that *Madaris* do not empower females in the target districts. Its reasons are manifold. Firstly, the old established institutions do not follow the actual spirit and pattern of Islamic education. Secondly, female *Madaris* are part of the existing Pakhtun culture where they work under patriarchal control. Pakhtun society is characterized by male dominance and uneven power structure among men and women (Oberson, 2002). The overall claim that I make here is that *Madaris* are designed to perpetuate male hegemony. I use the word male hegemony in the same fashion as it was used by Hazir Ullah (2013). He define male hegemony as the domination of men to that extent that no alternative to the present is believed to be possible or even imagined (Ullah, 2013).

8.3 Patriarchal Structure

Patriarchy is a widely discussed term but lacks a uniform definition. Gerda Lerner defined patriarchy as “patriarchy... means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general” (Lerner, 1986:239). Lerner’s definition explains the wide spread nature of patriarchy-male dominance. The Pakhtun society is a traditional, conservative, male dominated society, and Shirabi (1988, 3) considers ‘patriarchy ... [as a] universal form of traditional society’, wherein the authority of almost all social institutions rests with male. Western/liberal feminists (Jones, 1993; Philips, 1993; Eisenstein, 1994) consider patriarchy as ‘power of men over women’. Similarly, in our society from family to politics, all segments of life are under the authority of male where ‘he’ is the owner, leader, commander and protector. Joseph (2010) argues that patriarchy is reproduced in social interaction and is being justified. Walby (1990) asserts patriarchy as a social structure having six elements as under: “… patriarchy is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in
state male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions…. (Walby, 1990:178) ”

*Madaris*, being part of *Pakhtun* culture, are also characterized by being male dominated and patriarchal in nature. Girls’ *Madaris* observe the same patriarchal hold and the reproduction of the old established structures through mushrooming of female *Madaris* noted in the current study. As discussed earlier, *Muhtamims*, who are always male, control and manage all matters like curriculum, time table, finances and so on regarding *Madrassah*. *Joseph* (2010), while categorizing patriarchy at different levels including social, economic, political and religious, argues that religious patriarchy refers to privileging males in religious institutions and practices. In reference to my study it was observed that religious seminaries in Pakistan also privilege men in various statuses and at various levels.

The situation is actually contrary to the claims of *Muhtamims*, who hold that they empower women and give them (awareness about) their rights. As the students argue that they know about rights given by Islam, however, they are told not to raise voice for their rights, because the male are heads of family and they are (in any status) the decision makers destined to be obeyed.

*Madaris* (especially female) are disciplining girl students within patriarchal framework comprising of both public and private spheres. Students of such institutions are inculcated patriarchal social norms and expectations. Although, Islam does not bifurcate the curriculum of education for girls and boys, but the *Madaris* reflect a different picture. The boys are trained in *ijtihad* whereas the girls are considered incapable to study it. Boys are offered the highest degree of religious education and curbing any such chance for female students. The female students are educated in preset syllabus by the *Muhtamims*, with limited scope and rational thinking. Thus the institutions reproduce patriarchy — a part of the local *Pakhtun* culture through the perpetuation of knowledge. *Bourdieu* regards this use of knowledge as ‘cultural capital’ — the ways in which cultural knowledge is used to strengthen the hierarchal position in the society (1984, 1992). The patriarchs of our society are doing the same by using the religious knowledge in the light of culturally established structures through the *Madaris*. *Bourdieu* (1992) regards social capital as another instrument in the hands of ‘elite’ to ensure the ‘right’ people in their group, hence, reproducing the classes in the same fashion. He further argues that educational institutions operate upon established social inequalities and unequal distribution of cultural capital. In his own words:

“… the educational system…legitimize, in a more subtle way the arbitrariness of the distribution of powers and privileges which perpetuates itself through socially uneven allocation of school titles and degrees” (Bourdieu, 1992: x).

The female *Madaris* function on the same patterns and reproduce the specific power hierarchy inside and outside the *Madaris* that has long been established in society the patriarchal power relations. As discussed earlier in this chapter, they have specific rules and norms for their functioning. Through repetitive exercises, not only the institutional norms are inculcated rather the traditional societal values and norms are reproduced as well. *Coleman* (1988) regarded it as an aspect of cultural capital.

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43 *Ijtihad* is an Arabic word for independent reasoning.
Explaining his point, he says that individuals in social and cultural environment are subject to norms, values and obligation. He maintains that these three forms of social capital (norms, obligations and expectations) play an important role in the formation of human capital on one hand and gaining trust of the society as a profitable social structure on the other hand. The Madaris are multiplying due to this trust and the expectation of society for providing an easy access to fruitful (for this world and the hereafter) education of the girls. However, the analysis of the Madaris tells a different story; they fail to fulfill their expected role (empowerment). The reasons are manifold; on one hand, they offer access to partial education (contrary to the curriculum taught in male Madaris) and are taught what the ‘patriarch’ wants them to learn. On the other hand, being a part of contemporary world they are critical of modernity and virtually offer a substitute system of education, but fail to enable their graduates to be useful members of the present society. Here the question arises why the institutions exist and multiply if they are not fulfilling their expected role? The answer to this question is not easy and simple. There are various local, cultural, sectarian and national as well as international factors that contribute to the continuation of these panopticons/total-institutions. Pakhtun society, being religious minded, has a special respect for ‘following and promoting religion’. Hence, Madaris became a part of Pakhtun culture catering equally for the need of poor and rich at the same time. The poor get free education, boarding and lodging; while the rich find a platform for fulfilling religious obligations like paying alms and donations. Different sects have their own vested interest in the promotion and continuation of these establishments, and they consider it source of their power/strength. It is observed that almost every Madrassah supports one religious political party or the other. There are various political figures associated with the Madaris, showing the political benefits of Madaris. They could be a source of a huge vote bank, foreign aid and political hold on the mind of people. Madaris are accused of being funded by foreign donors both from Muslim and non-Muslim regions, which was justified by the Muhtamims by saying that they receive charities from those countries in the same way as they collect charities from local people. However, this point needs further exploration and the ‘real’ aid agencies and their purpose/interest must be researched.

8.3.1 Male Hegemony and Madaris

Male hegemony, like many other Muslim countries i.e., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran and Afghanistan (see Kordvani, 2002; Sachedina, 2003; Moghadam, 1992), is a norm in Pakistan (Isran and Isran, 2012; Babur, 2007), Pakhtun society is not exception (Lone, 2012; Holton, 2011; Ullah, 2013). This male hegemony of Pakhtun society is legitimated not only by the prevailing culture but the social institutions also support this practice (Shukrallah, 2001; Mir-Hosseini, 2000; Ullah, 2013). Being part of the existing culture, female Madaris continue/perpetuate the same notion of male supremacy that is authenticated by the interpretations of the sacred scripts by the Muhtamims, during their education in Madaris. The Madaris are women centered institutions that are governed, managed, and patterned by males (the clerics/Mullahs). As a Muhtamim during an interview said “... from curriculum setting to managing the daily needs, Muhtamims (who are always male) play a key role”. Farooq (2005) argues that the curriculum is devised with a specific mindset, to
craft an amenable/docile mind, which could be favorable to be used according to the Muhtamims’/ulemas’ set agendas. The current study finds the controlled environment of Madaris like ‘total institutions’, where the whole life of the students are planned, controlled and managed by Muhtamims (the patriarchs).

8.3.2 Patriarchal Control of Curriculum

Pakhtun society is still guided by its old established patriarchal setup; where male dominate most of the aspects of life and social institutions and female Madaris are not exceptional to it. The institutions, although established for females, are owned/governed/managed by male Muhtamims. Curriculum of female Madaris is developed and modified by the concerned Muhtamim, in the light of his sect’s agenda. As stated in chapter 2, that ‘Sunnis’ are further divided in various subsects like Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith and each has its Madaris and independent boards of examination all over the country. Although all Madaris under study were Deobandi (the major one among others), affiliated with Wifaq-UlMadaris-Al-Arabia, which follow Dars-i-Nizami (see chapter 2 for detail), however, as Ashraf (2010) and Winkelmann (2005) also stated that syllabi of girls’ Madaris are trimmed by every Muhtamim according to the perceived needs of girls. Ashraf (2010) holds that the syllabus is designed to rationalize their own sects’ beliefs/practices. Girls are taught few selected chapters from the books (while male students study the whole) of Hadith, Fiqah, Sirat and other subjects. It was argued by most of the Muhtamims of the target area that “females have to marry soon; therefore they need only those subjects and lessons that can help them in their life after marriage, as her real place is home”, the same was also narrated/stressed by a Muhtamim in a FGD. The Madaris provide partial knowledge to female students, in order to domesticate women and confine their role to an obedient wife and a caring mother. Although they are taught about the rights and status of women, however, their duties are more stressed; thus, maintaining the mechanism of power structure through modified curriculum that entails Adab and obeying male. The subjects taught in the institutions validate and reinforce the societal norms of male dominancy and women subordination. In other words, they are ‘empowered’ according to the established and pre-decided patterns of existing culture. One can clearly see the patriarchal shades in these total institutions. Students of the institutions are indoctrinated with Patriarchal social norms and expectations. Ranging from home making to marital issues, the Madaris support the male dominancy. The findings of this study are almost similar to that of Farooq. Farooq (2007) argued that Madaris are actually ‘disciplining’ the young girls in order to preserve the ‘other-worldly’ ideology of Islamic tradition. Farooq further mentions that the young girls are the ‘appropriate vehicle’ to preserve the traditional outlook of Pakistani-Islamic society (Farooq, 2007:76). The same trend was observed in the Madaris under study. Through the syllabus/courses and daily routine practices, in Madaris, the concept of life in the world hereafter are indoctrinated on one hand, and the existing structural patterns of the society are emphasized on the other hand. The soul of teachings is the concept of Jaza’ (reward) and Saza’ (punishment) and life-after-death. Madaris control the

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44 Sunnis is the plural of Sunni representing the major sect of Muslims following Saudi Arabia.
45 Jaza’ is an Arabic word for the rewards of good deeds. 48 Saza’ is a term for punishment of bad deeds.
mind and thinking of their students through the ‘hidden curriculum’ of strengthening the patriarchal control more profound.

Contrary to the above position, Bano (2010) asserts that Madaris empower the young girls to open up their own Madaris and socialize them into independent and productive members of the society. She states that the girls open up their own Madaris after returning to their home and run them efficiently. My study agrees with Bano till the point that they have an ‘Ijaza’ (permission letter) to open up a Madrassah but with a condition to keep a male supervisor to manage (act as Muhtamim) and that the newly established institution would work under the ‘Ijaza’ awarding Madrassah. One of the Muhtamims, during an interview, argued that females have limited decision making power, and the compulsion of pardah makes it difficult for them to communicate and interact with male, therefore, they cannot run a Madrassah independently. Similarly, the students were of the opinion that female have certain limitations in Pakhtun culture, subsidizing their status to seek help of males, as running an institution entails many decisions or steps to be taken on part of the manager. Thus, females are given limited/controlled authority.

The current study corroborates the findings of Joseph (1996), where he states that men always performed as religious clerics in Arab as well as in other Muslim countries. In Madaris understudy too, all the Muhtamims were male, although most of them were old established and had produced hundreds of graduates but none of the graduates in any district/city/village worked as a head/Muhtamim. The reason could be as Joseph regarded the “religious patriarchy” (1996: 17) in Muslim world where religious institutions legitimize the rule/authority of male. The new Madaris opened up by the female graduates are under the direct control of Muhtamims of parent Madaris, which serve as a network in those areas, thus broadening their vote bank on one hand and expanding the cause of Deobandi sub-sector on the other.

8.3.3 Vested Interest of Muhtamims

Madaris are largely characterized by multiplicity of purpose. They not only promote the specific mind set of their sect but also cater to the benefits of certain groups of the community as well. The institutions attract the interest of scholars both at micro (Muhtamims, parents, students) and macro level (society at large). The study shows that almost all of the Madaris procured political affiliations and the Muhtamims supported one or the other religious political party in their campaigns. Muhtamims in Peshawar and Nowshera openly declared their political involvement. A Muhtamim of a Madrassah in Nowshera district, while elaborating the role of Madaris and Ulemas very emphatically said “it was Maulana Fazlur Rehman (a political leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI)), the graduate of Madrassah, who confronted General Pervaiz Musharraf (a dictator of his time) and America in National Assembly. No other politician/member of national assembly had such courage”. It is pertinent to note that Madaris have a distinct impact upon national politics in Pakistan (Ashraf, 2010; Rana, 2009) especially Deobandi Madaris are affiliated with two major religious political parties Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and Jumaate-Islami (Qasmi, 2011; Hoodbhoy, 1998) and are being used as hubs of politics by the owners and donors.

Along with the political role, the Madaris also serve as a source of income generation for Muhtamims. Local people help Madaris through donations and zakat as a moral and religious obligation (Fauzia, 2013; Hassan, 2007). Rich or upper class Muslims try
to purify their wealth through philanthropy and consider it their duty to serve *Madaris*. *Zakat* is a major source of income that *Madaris* receive from Muslims within the country and abroad. Similarly, certain donor agencies also provide funds to the *Madaris*. One of the *Muhtamims* in *Nowshera* stated that he had started his *Madrassah* in just one room and then it covered a large area, having separate sections for male and female. He termed it the blessings of Allah and help of Muslim brothers from within and outside Pakistan.

### 8.4 Re-enforcement of Existing Culture

Instead of empowering women, *Madaris* perpetuate and reproduce the exiting power structure of the society. They reinforce the existing cultural patterns of male hegemony and women subordination through pre-set curriculum and pedagogical techniques in *Madaris*. The students are trained in character of Muslim womanhood, who know how to keep their families (especially fathers and husbands) happy. It is a general belief in Pakistani Muslim communities that Allah would not accept the prayers of a wife who does not obey her husband. This belief was held by students and *Muhtamims* of female *Madaris*. One of the students said, “Husband is called a *Majazi Khuda* (Reflection of God or symbolic God) in our society; therefore, it is necessary for a woman to be submissive, polite and obedient to him (husband)”. The 49 students were socialized to accept that Islam gave them rights but *pakhtun* culture/society hindered in getting it.

Although, a little research is being done upon *pakhtun*’s female *Madaris*, however, the present study endorses the findings of Hefner (2004), who states that *pakhtun* culture is being re-produced by its social institutions. Teachers and *Muhtamims* believed that male had been given prime importance in Islam, therefore, females must obey their counterparts in family, irrespective of wife’s comparative higher status in education, wealth and prestige. In a debate on the status of male and female in society during a FGD, one of the students brought a book of *Hadith*, and showed me a *Hadith*, reflecting the supremacy of male over female. Although, the *Hadith*, quoted by the student, referred to a marital issue of husband and wife, but students generalized that to the overall status of female in society. *Madaris* also reproduce the patriarchal normative pattern of the society, leaving no or little space for women empowerment. Thus, the students were socialized to accept the dominant role of male in *pakhtun* society, supporting it with misinterpreted *Ahadith* and verses of the *Qur’an*. Most of the respondents quoted various verses of the *Qur’an* to validate their stance on female inferior position. These quotes and responses of the religious scholars (*Muhtamims*) suggest that women roles, their experiences in the social world, and their place in it is constructed by the interpretation of religious text by *Muhtamims*. The young girls are fixed in the social world through the powerful discourse (see Ullah and Ali, 2012).
8.5 Conclusion

The above discussion highlighted the role of Madaris. It could be concluded, from the above chapter, that Madaris do not empower women; instead they inculcate the existing patriarchal normative patterns. The vested interests of different stakeholders are responsible for the malfunctioning of the Madaris. The study established that Madaris are actually owned, governed, managed, run by males, and hence, undermined the status of women. Consequently, we can say that the institutions are mushrooming in the country extending the causes/vested interests of diverse actors throughout the country.
Chapter 9  Conclusions

In this chapter I am going to sum up the study with an argument that female Madaris operate to produce a young female club that will strengthen and perpetuate the existing patriarchal structure of society. Female Madaris, when looked from feminists/sociologist point of view, are tools in the hands of male (Muhtamims) for the perpetuation of patriarchy and male hegemony. The study findings also unpack that knowledge taught to female students is controlled by men and represent men’s point of view of the social world as well as the hereafter. The chapter also establishes a link between interpretation of religious text and the way it contributes towards their disempowered position in the society. It will be not an impressionistic statement to assert that these institutions create a sort of false consciousness among these young females. By false consciousness I mean that when these young girls accept their inferior position in relation to men and believe that as divinely ordered, they believe in a of false consciousness. The study findings also suggest that the acceptance of domestic ideology and the discourse of an ideal woman (wife, mother and sister) by these young girls due to male interpretation of religious text is the result of productive power in Foucauldian sense (see Ullah and Nisar, 2012; Ullah, 2013). To be brief, following key themes that ensue from the previous chapters are discussed in the forthcoming section.

Proximity between Male Interpreted Islam and Pakhtun Culture

As highlighted throughout the study that there seems a close relationship between the patriarchal and dogmatic interpretation of Islam and pakhtun culture. It needs sophisticated academic research to bifurcate where Islamic injunctions coloured pakhtun-wali and where pakhtun-wali influences Islamic injunctions. The aforementioned claim is based on the fact that society has been practicing Islam on its own terms and ways. Pakhtun have their own code of life-

Pakhtunwali/Pushtunwali-their own created idea of deeds of ethnic pride and selfunderstanding as connoted by the term (Atayee, 1979). Like Islam stresses hospitality, patriarchy, Jihad; same are the special features of pakhtun code of conduct and culture. Similarly, women status in both is more or less the same.

Woman is bracketed either for ‘home or grave’, means her place is in home and has to perform domestic duties. Similar instructions are given to women in Islam.

Glatzer (1998) states about pakhtun and their concept of Islam, “Pashtuns (also written as pakhtun) understand pashtunwali (another word for pakhtunwali) as an expression of practical and true Islam”. Pakhtuns prefer some aspects of the teachings of Islam, i.e., pardah system, because these affirm the pakhtun traditions and values. However, they ignore teachings which threat their supremacy over women such as the right of women’s inheritance and consent at the time of marriage etc. The male segment thinks these in conflict with their culture and a threat to their dominant position. The point to be noted here is that pakhtuns adopt religious injunctions, regarding women rights, which support their existing patriarchal structure. Nevertheless, majority, including the dogmatic religious leaders as highlighted by the study, do not follow the religious injunctions that question their patriarchal position and status quo.
The *Mullahs* and religious scholars remain silent on those features of *pakhtun* culture which are contradictory to Islam, for instance they never raise voice against un-Islamic rituals in marriage, death or birth customs of *pakhtun* as they have their own ulterior motives in these customs. They follow Islam when it favours their (male *pakhtun*) interest and when it goes against them they turn to *Jirga* system - one of the traditional feature of *pakhtun* society for resolving disputes. Just to save their property, they do not hesitate to give their females to the opponent party for resolving an issue. Hence, they promote those social forces which perpetuate the existing structure. Having said this, it is argued that female *Madaris* in *pakhtun* society willingly support the cause. These institutions brainwash young girls on lines that are in congruity with *pakhtun* cultural norms and that helps reproduce the same patterns. *Madaris* make females aware of their religious ‘duties’ and societal expectations of the culture. Although they are informed of their rights but their minds are instilled with belief not to raise their voice for their rights. They are taught that raising a voice for their right is against the notion of an ideal womanhood.

**Perpetuation of Gender Based Relations**

Empowerment of women in Islam means access to prescribed rights in almost all walks of life. However, women’s right to secular education, inheritance and holding religious authority is still not acknowledged by religious leaders/mullahs. For example, they did not consider 
*Al-huda*\(^{46}\) as a religious school. They argue that this organization is run by female. They thought of the founder and head of this organization is damaging the religion Islam more than it serve Islam. *Al-huda* equates women with men and claim for their equal status in society. Giving women an equal status in society and considering them equal of men are against the religious injunctions (see chapter 7). Giving women all the above stated rights and due status weaken the hold of patriarchs of *pakhtun* society, which they never want and will never allow to happen. Although, Islam does not ask men to govern the lives of their women, but the *pakhtun* (who are considered more religious in comparison with the people of other provinces) do so. They control every moment of women’s life from her birth to death. Female *Madaris* under study actually consolidate that patriarchal hold by reproducing submissive, obedient and docile mind and bodies that are easy to be moulded and shaped. The creation of submissive young female club is vividly noticed in the responses of students.

Students of the *Madaris* are well aware that they have enshrined rights in Islam but are difficult to get them in *pakhtun* society. They realize that many norms and cultural practices in this society are un-Islamic but being a part of their traditions, they cannot raise eyebrows against them. Thus, these patriarchal structures are reproduced through the interactional process taking place in these establishments where the actors and the prevailing social structures of the *pakhtun* society are making conducive environment. Although empowerment in secular terms is not included in *Madaris’* syllabi, however, these establishments and its regulating forces have their own meaning of empowerment; they regard character building coupled with religious knowledge as true empowerment. Furthermore, adopting such roles by women will bless them both

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\(^{46}\)*Al-huda* is a chain of female *Madaris* in Pakistan, initiated and run by a female.
The current processes of education go against the claim of Mason (2002), Connell (1987), Spreitzer (1996) Stromquist (1997) who argues that education empower and emancipate humans. The assertion is based on the study findings which revealed that female Madaris, instead of emancipating, subjugate women. They are given education which is controlled by men (also see Malhotra, Schular and Boender, 2002).

The point that needs to be highlighted here is that these young girls are given information not knowledge /critical knowledge which emancipates them. I use the critical knowledge as it was used by Jurgen Habermas. The critical knowledge, Habermas (1996) argued, enables people to understand and analyse social, cultural, political and economic constraints on people’s thoughts and actions. It develops knowledge and discourses that enable them to think of the social world as socially constructed relations that can be changed. Critical knowledge, Habermas asserted, enables us to question and change the power relationship (Habermas, 1996).

These institutions may function as tools of empowerment if run by female Muhtamims with interpretation of religious text from women point of view as claimed by Islamic feminists (i.e., Mernissi, Barlas and Badran). In other words, ruling practices need to be redefined. Ruling practices means who can do what?, how it should be done? how it should be evaluated (Smith, 1990). Looking at these institutions in the framework of Foucault, my assertion is that these institutions are surveillance to keep women discipline in line with patriarchal gender codes. These young girls, who are expected to shoulder the household responsibility, are constantly told that they are inferior to men, they cannot run institution, and they are unable to take independent decision. These discourses discipline their minds, bodies and actions. This, Foucault would argue, naturalizing and normalizing power relation through discourses (Foucault, 1971).

This study concludes that Madaris are actually “social structures” that reproduce interactional patterns and as Goffman argues they ultimately reproduce their own established systems (for details see chapter 3). Madaris perpetuate the same patterns of interaction and are responsible for the stereotype ideological structure and boxed mentality among the students of the society as a whole.

Theoretical Implications

Education is considered as a main source and an effective tool for women’s empowerment (Mason, 2002; Connell, 1987; Spreitzer, 1996; Stromquist, 1997). Empowerment is defined as a process of developing capabilities of individuals, so that they can live a better life (Raynor, 2007) and education is the main source of empowerment (Malhotra, Schular and Boender, 2002). Stromquist (1995a) argues that education challenges the existing social structure and gender inequality. However, this study shows a bit different picture of an educational institution. The study unpacks the educational patterns of female Madaris and their role in women’s empowerment. This
research found that the educational patterns are laid down according to the society’s existing normative structure and gender aspiration. It is evident that patriarchy is being reproduced through these educational establishments and instead of enabling women to question the current gendered practices, they are made to accept this trend of patriarchy. Primarily, Madaris cannot counter the system due to charity/Zakat, which is the main financing, donated by the community. It is pertinent to mention that Madaris in general and female Madaris in particular do not accept the notion of secular empowerment which they consider equivalent to westernization and hence, against Islam.

Islamic feminism highlights gender equity; however, the study finds no such onground application in Madaris or in its syllabi. No concept of female authority in these institutions is observed except paying lip service to women’s rights in Islam, perpetuating women’s subordinate role in society. Although the students knew about their rights but they were forbade raising their voice for these rights being a good Muslim lady.

Thus, the current study is an attempt to open up a window towards the claimed and practised norms in female Madaris of Pakhtun society and uncovered a few aspects. However, the issue still needs further exploration for better understanding of these old established educational institutions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Keeping in view the whole study, its findings and the available literature, it is felt that various aspects of Madaris still need to be explored, which, due to certain constraints, the present study did not address. Being an important segment of our society, female Madaris are still less-researched. Therefore, the phenomenon needs more detailed and genuine scrutiny, based on less sensations and more facts. Various aspects needs attention, however, certain areas recommended for further exploration could be the following:

The financial matters like donor agencies and their agendas behind the donation must be explored in detail, so that the real aim and reason behind the rapidly increasing number of these Madaris could be identified.

Pakhtun code of conduct i.e. Pakhtunwali, must be studied in the light of Islamic teachings so as to discover whether Pakhtuns are more Islamic or traditionalists.

Dysfunction of Durkheimian view of religion in Pakistan should be explored in detail, which will bring to surface the reasons of failure of religion in bonding the society into a single cohesive unit.

Different diversity based researches need to be undertaken on Islamic Madaris and other religion based institutions in the world for the purpose of displaying more holistic picture of the issue of women’s empowerment.
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