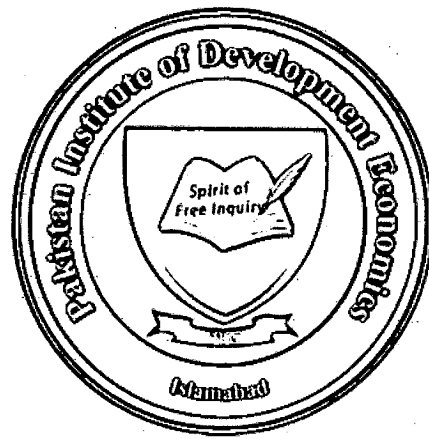# HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN:

*A Self-Empowerment and Gender Perspective*



By

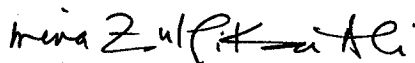**Saira Zafar Khan**

**Department of Development Studies**
**Pakistan Institute of Development Economics,**
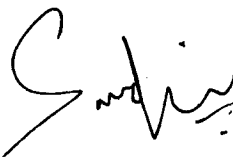**Islamabad.**
**2015**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled *"Higher Education for Women: A Self-Empowerment and Gender Perspective"* submitted by Saira Zafar Khan is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.

Supervisor:

Dr. Mina Zulfikar Ali
Visiting Faculty
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
Islamabad

External Examiner:

Dr. Saadia Abid
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
Quaid-i-Azam University
Islamabad

Head of Department of Development Studies:

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali
Assistant Professor
Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
Islamabad

# DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the women and men I have ever met, and will ever meet, who **read** and **listen**.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to understand the intrinsic value of higher education in personal empowerment of women students. It takes into account formal education (curriculum) and extension of formal education (co-curriculum activities) at post-secondary level, in order to gauge its role in raising critical consciousness and enhancing empowerment in women pursuing higher education. This study reflects on personal dimension of women empowerment, identifying it through power's conceptualization, within Women Empowerment Approach and curriculum content as knowledge issue.

Theoretically it is based on the model of personal empowerment, along with generative power modes concepts- power-within and power-to. The postmodern school of thought on education, in terms of knowledge, critical consciousness and delivery; is an additive in understanding the role of education for the receivers in this study. Also, gender theory which relates to gender equality in access to education and access in education informs the theoretical base of this study.

Employing Explanatory Sequential Research Design, quantitative and qualitative data have been used to expound on the importance of curriculum practices and co-curriculum activities during academic years and their impact on the propagation of women empowerment and critical awareness.

Analysis indicates that higher education in Pakistan needs a thorough inspection of content and determination of common goals and targets for achieving true women participation.

Keywords: self-empowerment, critical consciousness, higher education, development, gender.

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## ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **WID** | Women in Development |
| **WAD** | Women and Development |
| **GAD** | Gender and Development |
| **WED** | Women, Environment and Development |
| **PAD** | Postmodernism and Development |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| **SAPs** | Structural Adjustment Program(s) |
| **DAWN** | Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era |
| **CEDAW** | Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| **HEIs** | Higher Education Institution(s) |
| **DAIs** | Degree Awarding Institution(s) |
| **HEC** | Higher Education Commission |

# CHAPTER 1
## INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH, ITS THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUAL CONSTRUCTS

## OVERVIEW

Nineteenth century following into twentieth century came with an acceptance of women into the higher education system as a result of active feminist campaigns and determination of women all around the world[1]. Over the time, different socio-cultural, political and ideological factors played their part in determining the provision of higher education and women's access to it (Leathwood and Read, 2009).

According to Noureen (2015), women have made substantial progress in academia since the beginning. Many social changes have taken place in twentieth and twenty first centuries which have changed the expectations of men and women and challenged the identity of women in a society. This has not only affected the educational achievements of the women but has also improved the opportunities offered to them.

Nidiffer (2003) points out that gender is holistic and persists in today's higher education throughout the world. Gender constructs are responsive to social contexts and can change over time. Higher education is one of the primary institutions that shape social attitudes towards women and gender. Therefore, it needs to be contemplated that the very institution that holds promise for developing both knowledge and mankind in a society is not marred by gender discrimination.

The topic of this research indicates an attempt to study formal education (curriculum) and extension of formal education (co-curriculum activities) at post-secondary level, in order to gauge its role in raising critical consciousness and enhancing personal empowerment in women students. This study reflects on personal dimension of women empowerment, identifying it

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[1] For further details please see: Dyhouse, C. (2006), Students: A Gendered History, Routledge; and Badran, M. (1995) Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

1

through conceptualization of **power**, within **Women Empowerment Approach** and **curriculum content as knowledge** issue.

## BACKGROUND

Over the past two decades research has ensued discussions about challenges to the higher education in terms of social inequalities (Leathwood and Read, 2009), and gender inequities. Social Researchers, along with feminism advocates, have started to look into the matter of quality of higher education in midst of globalization and competitiveness to ascertain its efficacy for gender equity.

Since knowledge has lost its essence as a "public good" and has been transferred into the category of "marketable units of commodity" (Leathwood and Read, 2009), higher education has lapsed at the counter of social inequalities, oblivious to social and cultural objectives (Naidoo, 2003) while pursuing national and global competitiveness. Therefore, gender equity remains a luxury of thought.

It can be seen that women's ingress to higher education has expanded significantly since the 1990s in most parts of the world[2], with women being more in number at undergraduate and graduate programs, scoring educational achievements and marking their presence in public spheres. This increased number of women, however, does not convey the accurate account of women's progress (Leathwood and Read, 2009) or empowerment through higher education.

In Women and University Curriculum (Beijing Conference, 1995) the unanimity occurred at three core aspects related to women in higher education:

1. offer stimulating role models for women students;
2. encourage and build their confidence;
3. Present male-dominated careers in a light which is more attractive to women.

Moreover, since development theory acknowledges that the gender dimension has become a key factor in any solutions proposed for global problems, and as many higher education

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[2] Please refer to appendix Ai, table 17, for a table showing world statistics on higher education.

institutions are now engaged in far-reaching curriculum innovation to keep abreast of social change, the omission of this aspect is no longer acceptable (Yates, 2006).

As higher education is expanding out and up in all developing countries (report on World Higher Education, UIS, 2014) every possible effort has to be made to make it inclusive of women at all stages of planning and execution. Empowerment of women is a well contested field of development and higher education is taken as an unequivocal contributing factor. However, the potency of higher education for women all around the world needs to be assessed through the analysis of the gap of what women are taught in the name of pedagogy versus their expectations, as per the modern times seek from it to achieve their gender as well strategic needs.

Over the last decade Pakistan has too shown outgrowth in higher education. With HEC (Higher Education Commission) in working, not only the number of universities has risen but has also ensured access to a larger proportion. Now a larger number of students, male and female, graduates from Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) every year[3]. Research is central focus along with expansion of fields for students to choose from and to fulfil country's requirements of skills with respect to the global technical and professional environment.  So far the participation and access of women to higher education is merely a number count. It needs to be seen if this expansion of higher education has burgeoned the capacity of education for self-development of women by providing access to curriculum alongside access to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Such information can be achieved through communication among all levels of decision-making and stakeholders. As the requirements of knowledge economy are on constant influx, women themselves should be regarded as a worthy source of information and must be asked of their opinions and views. Moreover, the examination of the process of empowerment must occur repeatedly and frequently to make sure it is in existence and is helping women become change

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[3] Please refer to appendix Ai for Table of Enrollments by Degree Levels and Table of Enrollments Gender-wise over the years.

agents rather than following past legacy of being passive recipients of development enterprise. However, no golden rule can be followed to determine outcomes.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After access to education, access in curriculum (Simmonds, 2014) is imperative for women students. If education is to have any value for women, it must be a means to raise their consciousness; most educational systems do not provide a climate for such thinking skills to develop (ISIS, 1983). As stated in chapter two, current education system to date maintains the system of inequality and biasness which undermines the achievements and potentials of women. Since education is the most prospective feature of a developing society which can either stifle or stimulate empowerment of women, it matters what knowledge and skills women are being given access to, what are they being taught about themselves and their capabilities, their role in the society and their relationships (Yates, 2006).

As the current enrolment rate of female students in higher education institutions has risen to 46% in Pakistan (HEC, 2014), it needs to be seen if educational content is adequate in helping them become change agents in their societies, by offering them a tool for consciousness raising and action.

Education in Pakistan, like other societies, is deeply oriented by traditional culture and is persisted with biasness of knowledge (Malik and Courtney, 2011). A lot of research depicts that it shapes boys and girls differently (Qureshi, Pirzado and Nasim, 2007). Malik (2005) reiterates the need for curriculum evaluation through his research. He presents the perpetuation of gender inequality through education system- textbooks and curriculum, teaching and faculty behaviour. Similarly, Saigol (2011) narrates that in Pakistan at higher levels of education, curriculum and textbooks are not conducive to women empowerment for they disseminate the patriarchal gender divide.

In this study I have tried to investigate the access in curriculum of women students in higher education. It attempted to unpack the nature of innate value of knowledge to raise the critical approach in women and its ability to address the gender imbalance.

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## AIM OF THE STUDY

This research aims to conduct a comprehensive study of the personal experiences of women to assess the contribution of higher education curriculum and co-curriculum in the lives of women pursuing degree courses, in the local universities, in terms of critical consciousness and self empowerment; using a personal dimension for empowerment and power in its productive, generative form.

The status of empowerment has been assessed using personal empowerment model (Rowlands, 1995) while women empowerment, postmodern school of thought on education and gender theory provide a base for analysis and formulation of recommendations.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The prime objective of the research is to understand the process of Personal Empowerment along with critical consciousness development through curriculum and co-curriculum, experienced by women who were currently pursuing higher education in the large universities of Islamabad. Specifically:

1. To explore the meaning and status of personal empowerment of women students in higher education institutions, using the Personal Empowerment Model (Rowlands, 1995).

The personal empowerment model developed by Rowlands, provides a set of five core values (self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of self, sense of agency and dignity) that are a constituent of an empowerment process at a very basic, individual level. Critical consciousness for gender issues has been added as a constituent part of core. Further, it highlights certain inhibiting and encouraging factors. These factors are based on the context of Honduras women but generate a category for analysis when replicated by other researchers.

I have used this theoretical model and localized it for women pursuing higher education in Islamabad. This model has helped in analysing the views of these women as recipients of higher education and their assessment of its curriculum and co-curricular contents for delivering them the five core values. Moreover, the inhibiting and encouraging factors' discussion can help

bring into light the personal and social conditionings faced by these women, gender aspect in terms of gender relations inside and outside home and achievement of gender specific needs.

2. To explore the role of higher education curriculum as knowledge in promoting education as a gender issue.

Higher education in Pakistan has come a long way in terms of knowledge economy and gender equality. However, it needs to be determined if expanding higher education has only resulted in acquisition of improved literacy skills at post secondary levels or it has empowered the recipients as well. Moreover, another issue of rapid expansion of higher education in developing countries has been a mere increase of access to higher education institutions but lack of quality education (World Bank, 2013).

In my research one of the significant objectives remains to identify the contribution of higher education in the lives of women as facilitating them to become self-empowered, as it is the starting point in the long process of empowerment, and to see if acquisition of education enables them to understand gender aspect of their lives and deal life accordingly. I have defined the scope of gender aspects as dealing with men inside and outside home and progression towards gender strategic needs.

3. To understand empowerment approach to development as a planning tool for women in higher education and identify areas for action in revising curriculum.

Development is after all a debate and effort for change. Process of empowerment is a major constituent of the processes of social change and every study of empowerment needs a context. It provides spaces for women to exercise power and the changes brought in by empowerment can be seen conveniently (Rowlands, 1995). The issue with empowerment remains that it is dodgy to reflect principles of women empowerment in practice. This study is a theoretical and intellectual enquiry of the concepts to enable an analysis of practical implications of its use.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following research questions are addressed in this research:

1. To what extent does higher education trigger and promote personal empowerment of women students during the degree programmed?
2. Do curriculum and co-curriculum in higher education cater to gender aspects in delivering knowledge?
3. How can it be made a more conducive instrument for creating spaces for women to experience and practice fluid, generative power?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- With reference to Pakistan this study is foundational, there exists lacuna in research studies related to analysis of women empowerment through higher education using power and self-empowerment concepts.

- This study probes the role of higher education in developing critical consciousness among recipients and forwarding women empowerment. In an effort to achieve the MDG of gender equality in higher education by 2015, policy makers seem forgetful of the crucial aspect of "quality" of education. This study bases its analysis on the quality of higher education content that is required for building conscious and personal empowerment in women students. This study relates the importance of curriculum practices and co-curriculum activities during academic years and their impact on the propagation of women empowerment and critical awareness.

- By exploring the personal views and experiences of women in higher education, this research might prove helpful in informing policymakers and curriculum-revision committees at state and institutional levels about the requirements of higher education curriculum in developing critical consciousness of women and empowering them to think and act for the betterment of the society.

## THEORETICAL BASE OF THE STUDY

The personal empowerment conceptualization by Jo Rowlands (1995 and 1997)[4] along with power modes provide the theoretical base for this study. Moreover, the Conscientization approach of Paulo Freire (1960) is an additive in understanding the role of education for the receivers. The postmodern school of thought on education as knowledge and delivery is founded on the educational approaches of Freire. Also, gender theory which relates to gender equality in access to and access in education, in terms of curriculum, informs the theoretical base of the study.

## THEORETICAL MODEL FOR PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Figure 1 is the personal empowerment model given by Jo Rowlands (1995) which differentiates between process of empowerment and the changes that may result because of that process. This is a dynamic model that helps in a detailed analysis.

**Figure 1**

### Personal Empowerment Model
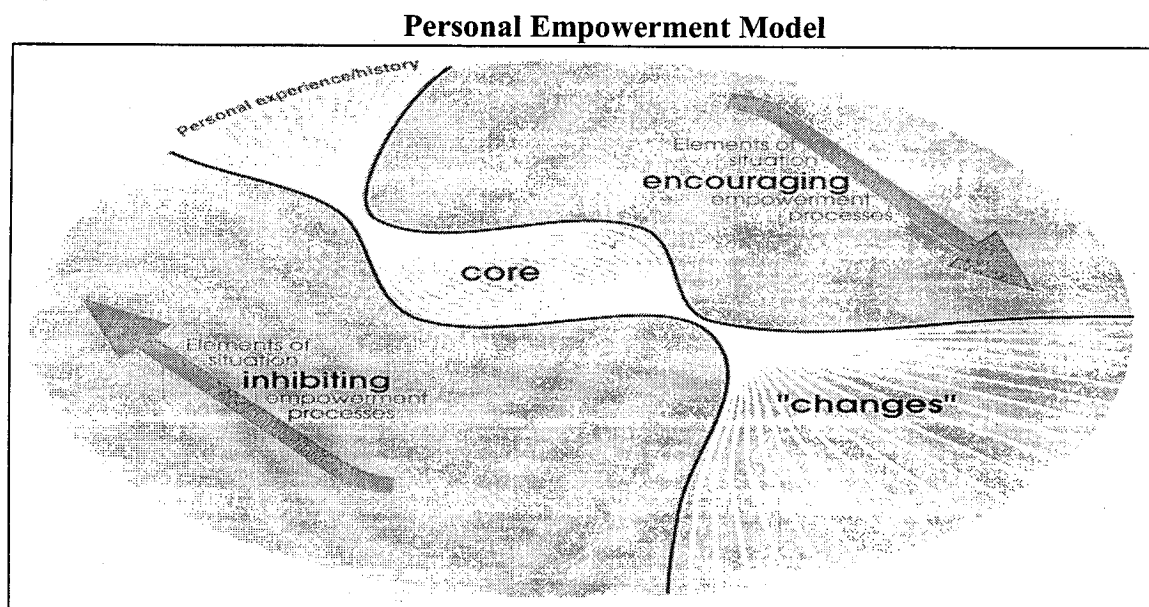


Source: Rowlands, J. (1995), *Empowerment Examined: An Exploration of the Concept & Practice of Women's Empowerment in Honduras.*
Page: 184

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[4] Readers interested in a detailed reading of the model and its use please refer to the original reading Rowlands, J. (1995), Empowerment Examined: An Exploration of the Concept & Practice of Women's Empowerment in Honduras.

You may also consult Tasli, K. (2007), A Conceptual Framework for Gender and Development studies: from Welfare to Empowerment.

Rowlands (1995) undertook a case study approach for analysing the process of empowerment and its conceptualization among Honduran women who participated in two distinct programs PAEM (Programa Educativo de la Mujer- Women's Educational Program) and Urraco Health Promoters Training Program. She interviewed and observed women in both groups and analysed the changes in them. She relied on women's own experience and life history to come up with a list of elements that highlighted the aspects of their lives which were changed or affected as a result of becoming part of the mentioned groups' activities, namely weekly meetings.

After interviewing women in Honduras, Rowlands formed a list of elements and catalogued them in three groups: contextual, structural and psycho-social. Psychological or psycho-social elements exhibited the most consistency and informants expressed these as the areas of most change.

Rowlands (1995) then moved forward with a dynamic model which accounts for the variations and simultaneously includes the analysis of 'interaction' and 'interrelation' of the various elements of the process of empowerment. This model in many ways, if not completely, enables the researcher to present the complexity of the various variegated elements; given that neither the relationships not elements themselves are static. This three-dimensional model, nevertheless, does not imply any linearity of the process of empowerment nor does it suggest the three parts being independent of each other. Rowlands (1995) outlined the core values in this model and then figured certain encouraging and inhibiting factors that influenced the empowerment processes of women of Honduras.

Each process of empowerment is defined through a use of set of core values, which are the end products of empowerment (Tasli, 2007). Core values for personal empowerment include self-esteem, dignity, self-confidence, sense of self in larger groups and sense of agency. A surge in these core values shows that the process of empowerment is taking place in the given context. While the inhibiting and encouraging factors help picture local forces that shape the processes of empowerment. For personal empowerment, the author has deconstructed the core values and provides a set of qualitative indicators that can be used for analysis. Any change depicted in these indicators can tell if empowerment exists and to what extent. These indicators are based on women's abilities and critical consciousness; capabilities that are required by women to lead

their lives independently, consciously and in a creative manner (Tasli, 2007). These qualitative indicators can bring a better insight into women's feelings and view and can be measured through qualitative instruments such as interviews, group discussions and participant observations.

I have used this model for the basis and analysis of my study for several reasons. Its three-dimensional approach caters to the need of my study to enquire the process of empowerment that is expedited by education in an adult's life in light of changes and reasons. It refers to the personal growth and development of the self which is followed by empowerment of community and society at large. This model also provided an opportunity to merge two theories espousing the need for change agents- postmodern view of education and women empowerment framework.

A detailed discussion under the conceptual framework heading explains the contextual use of this model and its adaptability for the current study.

**Theoretical Underpinnings:** Accompanying the preceding theorization of personal empowerment this study entails the concepts of power, post-modern education approach and gender theory for women education.

Power as an explanatory and determining term imbedded in empowerment concept also needs due attention. For this study I have referred to the conceptualization provided by Rowlands (1997) and is discussed in the key concepts section.

The ideology of empowerment has its earliest roots in Paulo Freire's educational approach (1960s) of Conscientization. It refers to the awakening and development of a critical vision; it enhances the capacity of critical thinking in the oppressed and is the first milestone in the process of empowerment (Barosso, 2002). Dighe (1995) says it is important to distinguish between literacy for empowerment and literacy for domestication. Any educational endeavour that does not provide women consciousness raising and participation, along with the necessary literacy skills, only serves to reinforce the existing structures of power, the domestic role of women and thus, does not facilitate a change in social relations and personal growth for women neither within nor outside their homes. Therefore, emphasis should be on awareness raising

through education and not on mere acquisition of literacy so that women can work for the betterment of their social statuses.

Finally, Gender theory on education equality also forms the basis of analysis and theorization of concepts for this thesis. Gender theory demands a fair curriculum which is inclusive of women and their issues. It suggests that the educational content needs to be deliberated with women as equal beneficiaries and should be able to reform their internalized oppression. The most powerful demand on development policy related to gender equality throughout the first wave of feminism critique on development remained to be equal recognition of all citizens (men and women) in terms of access, progression and completion of education (Unterhalter, 2008). Since the Women's year 1975 conference, curriculum has been a salient feature of educational reforms to counter the unequal outcomes of education imparted to women (Yates, 2006). Therefore, in a discussion of education and empowerment process of women, curriculum cannot be bracketed out.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN: USING SELF EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER LENS.

Every social concept holds a wide array of events and human experiences and behaviours (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Theory and research objectives inform a researcher of the variables, constructs or factors involved and a conceptual framework helps display, align and better understand the correlations between the core elements.

As figure 2 shows, I began with a rudimentary, theory-driven framework, for comprehending the factors and their interpersonal relationships, which were elaborated and described in nature as part of the final discussion and indigenous model formation for the thesis.

**Figure 2**

**Conceptual Personal Empowerment Model for Women Students in Higher Education**
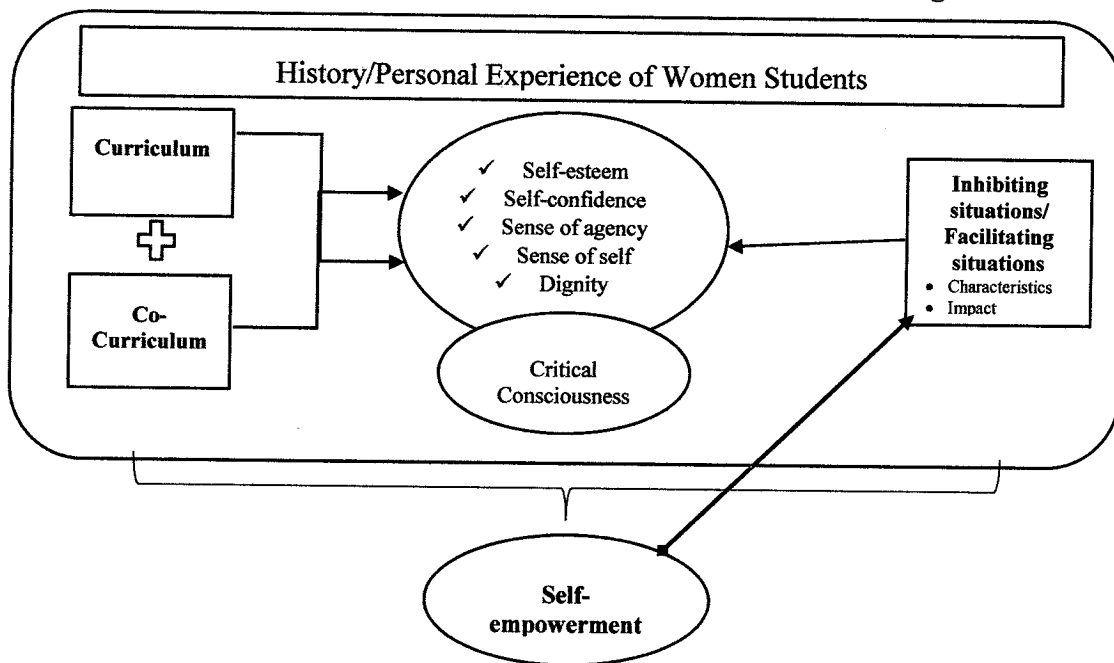
This concept framework attempts to show curriculum and co-curriculum activities as the actors in higher education for building self-empowerment in women students. For both actors their content is analysed by asking respondents for their views and examining the responses of the academic board members. Another important feature are the inhibiting and encouraging conditions. As outlined in the original work, these describe all elements of women's personal experience that impact their achievement of self-empowerment. The yellow bold arrow reflects the impact of self-empowerment on the inhibiting as well as encouraging factors. It relates to the fact that once aware and empowered how women deal with the gender conditionings of their lives. Also, it implies an ongoing process of empowerment which feeds back into the situations it arises from.

There are a number of ways in which this framework varies from the original one other than the self proclaiming contextual differences. This was necessitated by the fact that Rowlands (1995) was dealing with a limited population which was exposed to an external influence in form of a development agency's intervention.

Since this study is strictly concerned with the inherent value of education and tends to steer clear of many material factors that do exist and play a very significant role as separate elements as well as factors impacting the correlations and interactions of other elements. Original model has been helpful in developing a conceptual framework conforming the psycho-social factors of personal growth through education and exercise of power-to and power-within. Education is a key to unlock the latches of internalized oppression, and moulding self perception; it creates numerous everlasting spaces for practicing fluid power which is not a zero-sum game.

Moreover, Rowlands (1995) realizes that every individual possesses a prior history and never enters into the processes of empowerment with a blank experience card. However, she took prior experience at one point in time to keep things simpler and only related it with the impact it has on the core development. Current study captures the views and experiences of women students in second half of their post-secondary degrees at higher education institutes; this makes them exposed to modification and personal growth and empowerment processes of education for at least fourteen years and in an average age of 23 years. This made it necessary to consider the prior experience and existing history as a major determining factor at each of the three levels of analysis. Also, pre-tests and initial discussions revealed a heavy bias towards social legacy, path dependency and following-norms attitude of the students. Therefore, in the revised model prior history and experience are represented as the boundary wall that is major defining factor for most occurrences.

Rowlands (1995) explains how without core an individual is not able to take, create and exercise power except through manipulation or power-over. With the five given elements of the model I have added the element of consciousness raising for a) education as the factor of enquiry develops critical consciousness/awareness raising among the recipients and b) for gender conditioning and achievement of strategic needs, consciousness raising has to be part of the core of the individuals; especially if the individual has to be able to move off the 'gender-assigned' roles and perceptions that her context and culture have given her.

# DEFINING KEY TERMS

## 1. EMPOWERMENT PROCESS

*"Empowerment is a process of **awareness** and **capacity building** leading to greater **participation**, to greater **decision-making** power and control, and to **transformative action**." (Marilee Karl, 1995)[5]*

This research banks on Karl's definition of *Empowerment* with added explanation of *Conscientization*- it centres on individuals becoming subjects in their own lives and developing critical consciousness- that is, an understanding of their circumstances and the social environment that leads to action for change (Rowlands, 1997).

In this study, empowerment is further categorized as a *process* as literature shows agreement by many scholars[6] on empowerment being a long-term, open-ended and a dynamic process. It does not have clear beginnings, middle or end; it cannot be defined through specific activities or end results and involves deep and broad changes in societal structures (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). Razavi and Miller (1995) term it as a social movement which cannot be engineered. Similarly, Kabeer (2001) describes empowerment process as a complex phenomenon which has several routes and multiple dimensions. And each process is unique with respect to the factors that hinder or facilitate it.

The process of empowerment for women entails a cognitive aspect (Dighe, 1995) which requires women to recognize their status quo and the ideology of women being submissive to men and its seepage into the sociocultural norms (Batliwala, 1994). Mosedale (2005) records that empowerment in education and alternate Development (informed through feminism) are

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[5] Marilee Karl, also co-founder of ISIS international, presented this definition of empowerment in her book *Women and Empowerment* which was a final instalment in the Women and World Development Series. Karl used numerous examples from around the world to present the nature and extent of women's disempowerment and the efforts they have been making on their own for creating a world that exercises power in a more equitable manner and benefits all. She has been acclaimed for her simple and uncomplicated definition of empowerment which encompasses a huge range of activities that women can undertake for fashioning of a just world.

[6] Moser (1993, 1995 and 2007), Dighe (1995) Oxaal and Baden (1997), Rowlands (1995, 1997 and 2005), Kabeer (2001 and 2005).

All these scholarships are part of this thesis at various places.

correlated as both involve a certain level of **personal development/empowerment** in the long, open-ended empowerment process.

## 2. PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

It is the basic form of empowerment which is about convening a sense of self-confidence and capacity and eliminating effects of internalised oppression (Rowlands, 1995). Achievement of personal empowerment does not invariably conclude achievement of empowerment on close relations or community empowerment. Core of every experience of personal empowerment is inhibited and/or encouraged by various factors which then influence and bring about changes.

➤ Core: "The core of the empowerment process involves fundamental psychological and psycho-social processes and changes…" (Rowlands, 1995).

Core elements of the women personal empowerment, according to the original model of Rowlands (1995), include development of self-esteem, self-confidence, and dignity, sense of agency and sense of self in a wider context. These elements ascertain the existence of empowerment process taking place; an increase in their status shows changes as a result of development of core are taking place (Tasli, 2007).

This study will take all these five elements combined with critical consciousness of social settings onto consideration for appreciating the role of higher education in women empowerment process and any increase in these will signify existence of personal empowerment and personal development among women students.

➤ *Inhibiting situations*: any situation that inhibits or limits the lives of women in pursuing personal empowerment come under this umbrella.

➤ *Encouraging situations*: any number of situations or activities that enhance and aid women in achieving the potential core elements are included here.

For both categories, special attention will be given to gender related factors concerning women students' lives in terms of achievement of education.

## 3. EXPLANATION OF THE TERM POWER

Power-to is productive power which creates new opportunities and actions without domination (Rowlands, 1997; Rahman, 2013). This power fosters decision-making authority and problems

solving attitude (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). It is the ability to inspire an activity, it is a generating power that relates to creating new opportunities (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). Also, it is related to power-with as it calls for sharing. Power-with finds a common ground and builds collective strength. It is, thus, closely related to collective empowerment (Tasli, 2007).

Power-within is often described as self-confidence, self-awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individuals can recognize the power relations in their lives and based on this they act accordingly, in order to bring change or to influence the existing power structures (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). An important quality of power-within is that it regenerates and enriches itself; it cannot be given or generated on behalf of others (Kabeer, 1994). Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) define it as self-respect and self-acceptance.

A dominant theme of Foucault's philosophy has been the interrelationship between knowledge and power. Building on Foucault, Development describes Power as Knowledge. Knowledge brings legitimacy and authority to the actions of an individual. It enables her/him to functionally interpret the context she/he lives in and making changes in existing power relations possible. Foucault believed that knowledge is inextricably tied to power while he described power to be "permanent, repetitious and self-reproducing" (Buckley, 2000). His contention is that the revolutions in knowledge of discourses have led a new human interaction structure where the enlightened exercise power-over the target groups (like the sick for medical doctors) (Gunaratna, 2013). Development discourse, too, created and intervened upon the target groups such as the third world, backward economies, agricultural economies, poor women of underdeveloped countries and so on (Gaventa, 2003).

Many feminist writers, too, followed in Foucault's wake to explicate meanings of power in terms of gender as Foucault also brackets power with its 'energy' classification of the term (Rowlands, 1995) or generative form.

As this thesis relates empowerment to education and development, concepts of power-within and power-to conform to its theoretical base. Equitable notion of power-within is taken as a starting point which then leads to power-to followed by power-with. The path winding from power-within and merging into power-to marks an acquisition of new potentials. Empowerment in this premises deals with more than simply bringing a previously cut out group

into the decision making circle. It subsumes an entire progression of leading an individual or a group to being able and to recognize themselves as able to proficiently participate in the transformative procedures, beginning with decision making.

## 4. AWARENESS-RAISING/ CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

It is also referred to as conscious-raising (Tasli, 2007) or critical-awareness and aims at developing a critical-consciousness in women (and men) so that they move from a position of unquestioning acceptance of the social order to a critical perspective on it (Kabeer, 2001). One of the main instruments of the empowerment approach is awareness-raising. The process of awareness-raising should aim at altering women's self-image and their beliefs about their rights and capabilities; challenging the sense of inferiority; creating awareness of how gender discrimination acts on them; recognizing the true value of their labor and contributions to the family, society, and economy (Batliwala, 1994). Awareness-raising, as a strategy, aims at altering the self-image of a woman and builds her confidence. It helps her discover and polish her capabilities and forms and repairs consciousness within her that enables her to act as a change agent for herself and the society. It encourages women for collective action.

As Batliwala (1994) says that knowledge opens up a whole new lot of avenues for women through which they can make informed changes in their personal and public lives. Consciousness raising is an important step in the process of women empowerment to foster women's critical thinking and capabilities. This will help women analyse the world order they live in conceptualize socio-cultural changes they require and then toil for that conceptualization (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

In this study, awareness-raising has been taken synonymous to critical-consciousness and reflects a part of the core development. It shows education for awareness building is most appropriate for a model of empowerment that constitutes generative form of power, and in its productive form that power strives for a better self-image and development and nurturing of skills and capabilities that are necessary for personal growth and societal change towards equity and positivity. This traverses along other core elements adopted from the original model of empowerment (Rowlands, 1995) especially the sense of belonging and dignity so for purposes of analysis of this research critical consciousness is identified as awareness of one's social surroundings in terms of gender demarcations that exist within the society and awareness of

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one's place. Moreover, as education is in limelight, critical consciousness has to be a central theme despite the aspect of enquiry.

## 5. Higher Education

Internationally, it is defined as a period of academic learning when students are working towards a degree course (as opposed to a certificate) by following a certain curriculum and exacting applied works e.g. dentistry. It includes degree/professional courses as well as vocational education and trainings at universities or similar establishments. It is broadly referred to as "all post-secondary education" (Task Force on Higher Education, World Bank, 2014). Higher education involves teaching, curriculum, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, exacting applied works (internships or residency programs) and research. The time for higher education is ideally between 15-24 years of age. In Pakistan, students either opt for a degree college education for two years and then transfer to university education for further studies or opt for university degree directly after higher secondary level. Generally, the age cohort here, then, starts from 18 years.

In this research higher education applies to the degree courses (taught and research) provided at HEC recognized universities only. Moreover, it takes into account only curriculum and co-curriculum activities part of higher education as units of analysis.

➢ Curriculum: this includes the text books and content delivered in formal class settings.

➢ Co-curriculum: all activities, learning experiences, educational opportunities and programs in extension to the formal learning experiences during a course or academic degree are known as co-curricular activities. They complement what students are learning in classrooms and provide students with experiences and knowledge that are in liaison with their academic course learning. These activities may or may not be graded, may take place outside of school premises or school timings and may be organized by a third party.

Specified in the realm of this research, curriculum is the course content of compulsory courses required for degree. While co-curriculum activities are defined as those activities and events which are an extension to the degree programs and are compulsory for all students to attend. These may be graded and may be held outside university premises by a third party. A Power as

Knowledge and power-within and power-to scan makes it necessary to question the role of curriculum and co-curriculum content. This pertains to what knowledge is delivered as educational content and in what way that knowledge is constructed (Simmonds, 2014). Here Co-curriculum does not include any extra-curricular activities taken by the students because activities like sports and arts bring an entirely other dimension of self-growth and grooming and needs a particular set of tools for analysis. It will not do justice to add them here and treat them in a singular lens ignoring the intricacies. Moreover, pre-testing and groundwork on the sites had given me a hint that not many women students participate in sports and other activities outside the norm of regular university curriculum that takes them away from university routine on a regular basis and carry no academic credit.

Similarly, as the informants' profile in appendix C shows, only one fourth of the female student body (11%) participated in some sort of activity outside classrooms. Modest discussion and observation related to the topic provided reasons of low observation of extra-curricular activities ranging from lack of facilitations and motivations on part of university management and high rising demands of academicians for maximum output from students. Since these activities carry no academic reward themselves and take considerable time of a student involved, they remain a neglected part of our academic lives.

## 6. GENDER ISSUE

Gender is described as a socially constructed term that defines the roles and relations between men and women. Unlike sex, it does not refer to the biological references but sprouts from the social and cultural connotations. One of the earliest definitions of the term gender is provided by Whitehead (1978) as he distinguished gender from sex. He elucidated sex as a "province of biology" which is fixed and has unalterable characteristics while, gender is the "province of social science" as its characteristics can be shaped by historical social relations and interactions. This shows that gender is a social and cultural construct (Razavi and Miller, 1995) which defines the positions of men and women in relation to each other within household and society. Moreover, its mutable features change across cultures and are influenced by socio-economic factors (Tasli, 2007).

For this study, women empowerment is the gender issue in consideration. This leads to the conviction that along with being a class, ethnic and racial issue empowerment of women is also

a gender issue and an issue of transforming social relations. As literature has revealed that even at the most basic level of personal empowerment practice women do encounter power relations and gender conditioning as obstacles; it is mandatory to conceive this issue under the premise of gender analysis (along other dimensions) to reduce the obstacles (Rowlands, 1997). With respect to gender, curriculum and co-curriculum's inclusion of women issues, women as role models and information on gender discrimination will be deliberated.

**Gender Interests: Strategic gender needs** are the ones that women identify on the basis of their position in the society, which then assist women to work towards a more equitable relationship with men in the society (Moser and Tinker, 1994). While Molyneux (1985) explains **practical gender needs** as a product of female subordination, that do not challenge the prevailing forms of relationships between men and women therefore, they do not entail a need formulated by external intervention such as the strategic needs. These needs are formulated directly by these women and they primarily are a response to an immediate perceived necessity which is identified by the women themselves in the given context; for example *food* to feed her hungry child.

In this study, for analysis and planning process, interest is defined as a prioritized concern (Moser, 1993) and can be translated as needs. As Molyneux (1998) demonstrates that although needs and interests are conceptually two different philosophies but in planning process they come closely together. This study analyses strategic gender interests with higher education as an intervention to provide men and women with equitable opportunities and resources. Comprehensively, strategic gender interests/needs are taken as a consequentiality of education aimed at awareness raising and represent a flow of power and exercise of generative power for progression in one's status.

## DELIMITATIONS

The scope of the study has been restricted by the researcher in following ways:

1. This study strictly builds around the concepts and discussion of self empowerment of women, many a time not reflecting on the co-existing and correlated processes of collective and close relations empowerment. This is to set the scope of this study to

understand the starting point which is foundational in the following.on-going processes of empowerment in a woman's life.

2. Similarly, it does not narrate or rely on the impact of economic situation as the main or primary discerning factor; this thesis believes and promotes the intrinsic value of education and its inherent ability to develop a conscious being with capabilities, who can work for change and development, engage in civic responsibilities and share power dynamics equitably without any material urge. Literature[7] has shown that despite having money and owning financial assets women do not experience empowerment in many other aspects of their lives such as mobility, health and reproductive decisions and so on. Likewise, many at times women with monetary assets and earnings are at same pedestal as women without any financial income to their name. Economic class structure is a major contributing factor when it is operating in creation of opportunities portfolio but many cultural and social factors impact the processes of empowerment and restrict opportunities for women in public spheres in a patriarchal set up like Pakistan's. Therefore, in this study I have tried to show the importance of education for women in terms of developing the self perceptions, positivity and critical thinking; enabling them to create their own spaces, generating ideas and holding opinions. It does not extend the discussion to what they may have or may achieve due to their economic status but to what they can be and what they can create due to their personal growth.

3. Only general universities are taken for data collection though higher education is being delivered by a variety of Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) in Pakistan and hence in Islamabad. General universities are defined as those that offer a wide variety of subjects and courses for students to choose from instead of specializing in only a few specific courses in a specific field. These are often known as multi-school universities. This was necessary given the time and resources' constraints. Moreover, general universities provide a wider perspective as they cater a large student body from various parts of the country, and at times from the world.

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[7] There are many studies carried out on economic empowerment of women and it's impact on their lives. Some examples I went through afe: Hulme & Mosley (1996), Mayoux (1999), Hunt and Kasynathan (2000), Johnson (2000), Mayou (2002), Datta (2003), Rao (2003), Galab and Rao, (2003).

4. Equity challenges in higher education include the nature of classroom activities and interactions, the curriculum content and the methods used for delivering content. Gender equity is also effected by teacher's behaviour and the behaviour of male and female students within classroom. All these aspects are interwoven and collectively shape the minds. In this study however, I have focused only on the curriculum content discussed in class and its impact on women students' development of core and ability to bring changes. It does not take into account extra-curricular activities or the pedagogical issues.

5. Electronic data collection was used where required to ensure maximum information.

## LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study that have been outside the researcher's control are:

1. The availability of students and access was controlled by the administration units.
2. Information given by the administrative units cannot be counterchecked.
3. At some instances, it was felt the number of students enrolled was not reported accurately. Therefore, the statistics for sample collection are considered as estimations and not exact figures.
4. Time taken at each site varied with respect to sample size, access and mobility.

The limitations of data collection and analysis have been discussed in detail in Chapter 3, Research Methods and Procedures.

# CHAPTER 2
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1. WOMEN'S STATUS IN DEVELOPMENT: JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

To understand development thinking and policy approach related to women, this section attempts at briefly reporting the location of women and their involvement in development. Loosely, it portrays two development eras: pre-war and post-war era of development; the latter being discussed in terms of the decades that witnessed certain *feminist development frameworks*[8]. Emergence and progression of Women in Development (WID), women and Development (WAD), Gender and Development (GAD) paradigms have been discussed followed by rights-based and capability approaches.

It also attempts to briefly cover the major events, in a chronological order, of the development discourse to guide the reader into understanding the mind-set of development practitioners and policy environment when prominent feminist/ gender debates emerged and their effectiveness in rescheduling development as a process of wellbeing and human development.

Pre-war era is marked with development initiatives that fundamentally ignored women. The imperialists popularised the concept of development through colonization. Scott (1998) argues that during colonization period, development meant creating colonies and organising European labour and market forces by using non-European colonies. However, this concept of development then underwent numerous transformations as the socio-political world scenario altered (Islam, 2009).

Later, development (of the colonies), as an idea, started taking roots in the colonial powers' discussions as the natives had begun to demand rights such as right to education, political participation among others (Escobar, 1997). However, the development debate, approach and

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[8] Over the decades feminist theoretical frameworks and development frameworks got interlaced and produced feminist development frameworks, which have evolved over the time in their own capacity, and provide a planning field for conceptualization and operationalization for development approaches towards women (Moser, 1993; Parpart et. al. 2000).

practices that were initiated as a response to these demands remained ethnocentric. McMichael (2000) stipulates that patriarchy and ethnocentrism have always been part of development discourse which weaved in the threads of power and control into the development process.

After World War II, development emerged as a focal discursive issue as western politicians and experts identified certain conditions- poverty and backwardness- in Asia, Latin America and Africa as a problem. A new domain of thinking and experience ensued and was named **Development** which was to be a strategy to deal with the aforementioned problems (Escobar, 2011). This led to a rudimentary division of the world into first, second and third world countries, on the basis of their level of progress- into and towards modernity (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009). Truman doctrine (1949) officiated a new era in understanding and controlling world affairs which was intended to create conditions necessary for economically-lower-strata countries to replicate features of the advanced societies of the time. These features being high levels of urbanization, industrialization, living standards and material productions and widespread adoption of science, farm technology and modern cultural values and education (Escobar, 2011).

Development was largely interpreted as a linear process where a nation moves from underdevelopment to development; that is, from a traditional institutional setup to an industrialized setup mirroring the first world (Johnston, 1991). Parpart et. al. (2000) support the argument that the development initiatives were just another means for modernization theory practice which was characterised by complete espousal of western technology, beliefs and institutions. The western development specialists defined westernization as modernization, therefore; it was assumed that development was a linear process of change and the traditional societies could flourish by adopting modern values, technologies and institutions as represented by the west. Also, Peet and Hartwick (2009) postulate that modernization came with an inherent message that "if you want to develop, be like us (the west)". With the end of colonization, beginning in late 1940s with the independence of India; and the end of World War II with USA emerging as the hegemonic power, modernization paradigm inherited USA as the new benchmark for countries trying to modernize. USA with its height of power and prosperity was eager to reconstruct the war-torn world, create and expand markets and the flow of raw materials (Islam, 2009).

The newly formed states, in yearn for political legitimization adopted western notion of model (Islam, 2009) and hired the same development experts to help them develop economically which was to ensue prosperity. Parpart (1995) describes these experts as people with "special technical knowledge" (as cited in Peet and Hartwick, 2009) who knew how to solve the problems of the developing world, with Western Enlightenment thought being the sole basis of their expertise. In the following two decades, these experts designed projects that aimed at modernizing the colonies. The early post-war conventions and development debates were too freshly out of colonial (imperialist) oven that they failed to address context specific agenda. Correspondingly, women and their issues with respect to changing world scenario and gender specific needs of women were neglected. Kabeer (1999) presents a view that women's needs were never a priority within the early development enterprise as it was only inclined to cater to the broader categorizations of the community, such as the poor and the landless. The rationale behind development efforts was not determining and utilization of the compatibility of the colonies with modernization process but the question was how quickly this transformation can be achieved (Parpart et al., 2000). Women were assumed to be part of the benefits that will be enjoyed by men and the possibility of them not being benefitted by development was hardly deliberated upon (Kabeer, 1999). There was almost a non-existent debate on whether this prosperity will be equal for all economic sections of the society, races and gender groups. Escobar (1997) describes this development as ethnocentric, technocratic, top-down approach which treated people and cultures as abstract ideas that can be defined and framed into progress reports through statistical representations. On a different level, Islam (2009) stipulates that the post-war development assumptions and practices had been a national enterprise of USA which represented a historical choice rather than an inevitable unfolding of human progress.

Development based on this standpoint proved unfruitful over the decades but seldom had an effect on the practitioners' motivation to industrialize the third world. Development failed to incur the results of advancing the poor in developing world while critics started to focus on the flaws of ideology of the development practice (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009).

> *"For instead of the kingdom of abundance promised by theorists and politicians in the 1950s, the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive*

*underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression." (Escobar
(2011), Encountering Development, pg.4)*

Development paradigm advocated industrialization and modernization till the 1960's but later, the world went through a series of different approaches to development. In 1960s trickledown effect [9] remained the leading phenomenon while 1970s witnessed domination of two major concepts: distribution with growth and poverty alleviation through Basic Needs Strategy. 1980s followed with the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and the falling faith in market forces' solutions led to alternate development through managed market approaches in 1990s. These macroeconomic approaches attempted to control and regulate trade, exchange rates, financial flows and foreign direct investment (Islam, 2009) but 1997 came with Asian financial crisis that again refocused around SAP arguments for growth. Then materialized the human development approach, within the Capability Framework of Amartya Sen and Martha Nasbaum.

With every development debate came a critical feminist re-examination of the development theory being employed. Scott (1995) argued that modernity theory incites a dichotomy of society where traditional values come in private sphere right along with feminity, family and backwardness, while public sphere is the distinguished male-oriented, progressive sphere. According to Scott (1995), modernisation theory presented a power struggle between rational modernity and traditional feminism (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). It represents development that requires man to evolve as an industrial, optimistic, rational being who is able to be part of the new mechanisms of decision making and power (of the state). Hence, modernization protocoled manhood; women were invisible and used only as a scale of a country's backwardness (Scott, 1998). Women and household were considered the chip of the shoulder so modernization required men to subordinate nature, women and tradition (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Similarly, Scott (1995; cited in Peet and Hartwick, 2009) argues that dependency theory upheld the dichotomous view of modernization theory and portrays industrialization, a part of public

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[9] It is an economic phenomenon whereby economic growth benefits are trickled down to the lower-income masses through the accumulated wealth of the richer class.
For interested readers: Aghion, P., & Bolton, P. (1997), A Theory of trickle-down Growth and Development. The Review of Economic Studies, pp. 151-172.

sphere, important for economic development while ignoring social struggle between men and women.

In response to criticisms and reconsideration of development theories, feminists and development activists attempted to reformulate development so that it knits together human community in its totality, in societal as well as productive dimension. Mainly, feminism and development interact in five broad frameworks:

1. Women in Development (WID)
2. Women and Development (WAD)
3. Gender and Development (GAD)
4. Women, Environment and Development (WED)
5. Postmodernism and Development (PAD)
(Cited in Peet and Hartwick, 2009)

In consensus with the latitude of this thesis, the following literature review covers the shift and emergence of WID, WAD and GAD frameworks over the period of time in detail only; power relations, women status, gender roles and gender relations have been the foci for each framework discussed.

## DEVELOPMENT POLICY APPROACHES TOWARDS WOMEN OF THE THIRD WORLD

The policy shifts in approaches towards women mirrored the general trends in the Third World development policies. As the development paradigm moved from modernization policies of accelerated growth through rapid industrialization to trickle-down effect in 1960s as a prominent feature of development (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009), followed by growth distribution and basic needs strategy for poverty alleviation in 1970s, and then employed compensatory measures through Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in 1980s; the approaches towards women also altered from welfare to equity to anti-poverty (as identified by Buvinic (1983)) and later to equity and empowerment approaches (as identified by Moser (1993)).

The oldest development policy approach for females of developing world, introduced and evolved in 1950s through 1960s, is termed as the **Welfare Approach**. Its rationale towards women lies in the Residual Welfare Model- styled by the colonial authorities while they ruled over the colonies (Moser, 1993), and the post-war development agencies (Tasli, 2007). In

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accord with this approach, women were considered to be most traditional and backward in the less developed economic south; without any consideration given to the social anthropology, historic legacies of the regions, diversity in gendered roles, domestic and family organization and non-uniformity of social and political life. Moreover, women were deemed passive beneficiaries of development (Moser, 1993), and the most resistant to change (Parpart et. al, 2000). Welfare approach assumed women apart from development; motherhood was taken as their primary role in the society and child rearing as their most effective role to be performed for economic development.

This approach was famous between 1950 and 1970 (Tasli, 2007), and still remains popular as it does not challenge the traditional role of women nor does it attempt to change it (Moser, 1993). The policy frameworks based on welfare approach aims to meet practical gender needs of women as mothers through top-down hand outs particularly related to food aid, malnutrition and family planning (Moser, 1993). Power structures, men-women relationship and other factors affecting fertility and female education are thoroughly overlooked. Women are identified as a vulnerable group which is dependent on food aid (Weeda, 1987), and are a prime target of welfare programs that are focused on nutritional education (Moser, 1993). Health programs under Welfare Approach distribute food along with nutritional education to mothers and consider women primarily responsible for limiting family size. Post-war development agencies and NGOs identified women only as wives and mothers and constructed policies that focused entirely on social welfare such as nutritional education with little or no focus on their productive role- for market or subsistence (Razavi and Miller, 1995). With the passage of time, welfare programs for women have widened in scope but major concern remains meeting the practical needs of women related to their reproductive role as later, female education started being stressed; but again within the domain of motherhood (reproductive role), as a means to reduce infant and child mortality (Moser, 1993).

The welfare approach towards women camped at the development arena till the '70s; however, it was characteristically being challenged on the grounds of gender needs of women and their participation in development. Modernization theory's failure surfaced along with the various evidences of the adverse impact of third world development projects on women (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha and Ponnuswammy, 2009).

Women participants of the independence movements of the newly established states considered themselves to be a part of the process of building these newly formed nations along with men. This conviction, followed by a series of seminars conducted by these females around the world, aimed at adopting strategies for reaching their goals. Simultaneously, the western feminist movement rekindled in 1968 and despite its focus being internal, the women in position started supporting the civil rights movements throughout the world and also demanded development agencies a fair distribution of grants between men and women of the third world (Parpart et. al, 2000). Also, Boserup (1970) came up with a cross sectional study of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean that showed the disruptive effects of colonialism and modernization. Boserup (1970) concluded in her study that the economic survival and development depends heavily on reversing the growing trend of men having exclusive right and access to financial resources and on the extent of integrating women in the development process. Boserup's study proved pivotal in bringing into limelight the sexual division of labour and the gender differentials of development and modernization strategies (Rathgeber, 1990). It showed how modernization of farm equipment displaced women from their productive role in the fields and led to their weaker economic and power status, thus neo-colonialism leading to decline in women's stasis in developing countries (Moser, 1993). According to Razavi and Miller (1995), Boserup's study showed the emergence of dichotomy in African culture as sophisticated technology and farm machineries which were part of development (industrialization) wave resulted in a modern cash crop farming for men and a traditional subsistence farming for women. This traditional sector came along lower income, status and power for females and backslid their productive contribution to invisibility. Newer technologies were directed towards men therefore, educational expansion, especially at secondary and tertiary levels, benefitted women at a much lower scale than men (Rathgeber, 1990).

In the same year, inspired by the research of Boserup (1970), a network of female development professionals in Washington D.C. coined the term **Women in Development (WID)** which was to bring international attention towards the growing research on third world women to advise policy making. WID focused on economic contribution of women- this later led to high profiling of women's education and employment related policies (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha and Ponnuswammy, 2009)- and challenged the assumption of modernization bringing gender equality (Moser, 1993). Further, Moser (1993) discusses that third world women were the

primary contributors of the basic productivity of their communities but their economic contributions, particularly in agriculture, were not recorded anywhere- national statistics or development programs.

One important theme for these women in development feminism was equal opportunities for women in United States (Tasli, 2007), and consequently; in international agenda they demanded recognition of women's productive role and their integration into the economy of developing countries to raise their status (Razavi and Miller, 1995). In this regard, first success for WID came in the name of 1973 Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act: this amendment required US agency for International development (USAID) to focus on those "programs, projects and activities" that tend to integrate local women into the national economies of the developing world to improve the status of women and aid development efforts (Peet and Hartwick, 2009).

Further, an office for WID was established with USAID in year 1974. WID also got thorough recognition and acceptance during the United Nations decade for women (1976-1985) and became institutionalized in United Nations, governments, development agencies and NGOs' systems[10]- WID's main achievement being that women became a distinctive part in development theory and practice (Tasli, 2007). Though the original focus of WID has been economic growth but numerous UN conferences on women issues highlighted the need for policies to shape women's educational and employment opportunities along with political participation, physical and social welfare. As a result of stringent and continuous feminist movements every development agency established programs to improve economic as well as social status of women.

United Nations (UN), within the first year of its existence, had already established a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) dedicated primarily for gender equality and advancement of women. This commission, nevertheless, principally worked on broader legalistic concept of over all human rights (Parpart et. al, 2000). In 1975 UN not only declared it to be the year of women but also held the first global UN's women's conference in Mexico

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[10] For a brief discussion on WID's recognition by governments and organizations please see Andersen, C. (1992), Gender and Development: A Practical Guide, Routledge.

which marked the beginning of the women's decade: 1976-1985. This international conference was themed Equality, Development and Peace which set the tone for all development projects in UN decade for women and made *Women In Development* a specialization of the development field. Moreover, UN put up a voluntary Fund for this decade and the International Training and Research Centre for Women (ITRCW) was established. This led to emerging of numerous women organizations and networks at community as well as national levels. This helped institutionalize the concept of Women In Development (WID) along with brining diversified women issues to international amphitheatre. During the UN decade for women, a normative environment was shaped that provided activists a chance to voice their opinions and share their studies. Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women took place in 1979, which recognized the right of women to receive education and vocational trainings, access credit markets and be an equal part of agrarian reforms (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

WID is a broad based concept that includes a number of approaches for women's development. Many changes accrued in the development policy towards women within the WID framework during the decade for women and shift from equity to anti-poverty approach and then to efficiency approach were witnessed during 1970s to 1980s (Tasli, 2000).

**Equity Approach,** original WID approach (Tasli, 2000), recognizes women as the main participants of development, realizes their roles in developing societies and seeks to meet strategic gender needs through direct state intervention for providing political and economic empowerment to women. It seeks to reduce inequality with men at household and market level and propagates increase in economic growth through greater equality between men and women (Buvinic, 1983). Equity approach focuses on the economic role of females and acknowledged the need of integrating women into the development process through access to formal employment and market. It meets the strategic gender needs through top-down legislative measures. The World Plan Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year was a clear reflection of equity approach.

Along with being unpopular with local governments (who labelled it as western feminism), equity approach was criticised by donor agencies because they perceived it to require unnecessary interference in the host country's traditional settings. Moreover, mere

acknowledgment of equity as a policy for female participation in development did not guarantee its application in the same spirit (Moser, 1993).

This coincided with the early 1970s period when trickledown effect had not worked and modernization theory of increased growth strategies had shown its failure; UN reviewed the results of its first development decade (1960s) and realized that a) the industrialization approach has worsened the living condition of the poor and b) trickle down failed partially due to ignoring women in the development plans and c) women have a traditional importance (Moser, 1993) in meeting the basic needs of a family unit. While in 1972 World Bank shifted from economic growth to eradication of absolute poverty. Therefore, World Bank officially shifted to eradication of absolute poverty and redistribution of growth strategies; UN followed with a shift to basic needs strategy for development plans, mirrored as anti-poverty policy approach for women in development.

**Anti-poverty Approach**, also an off shoot of WID, was a step in a different direction as it focused on the productivity of female workers in particular. This approach shifted focus from reducing inequality among men and women to reducing income inequality among the masses (Moser, 1993). The Anti-Poverty Approach sees women's poverty as the problem of underdevelopment and not their subordination to men (Buvinic, 1983) has been called the "toned down" version of the equity approach from 1970 onwards (Moser, 1993). It banks on the productive role of females and seeks to meet the gendered needs of females through income generation activities. The anti-poverty approach realizes that more women than men reside in poverty therefore, development policies should aim at enhancing the productivity and income level of females living in abject poverty (Buvinic, 1983). Female education and employment are the cost effective measures for poverty reduction and population control therefore women become the "target group" (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

It not only predominantly focuses on the productive role of women while ignore their reproductive roles but also ignores the strategic gender needs. Many employment programs for women which were then initiated by NGOS were mainly run on grants, and remained small in scale. Mostly these programs tended to slot in women in traditional productive activities rather than introducing them to new work areas and modern technologies (Moser, 1993). Anti-poverty Approach towards women corresponded to the Basic Needs Approach for development but

lacked participatory procedures so ignored constraints women experience at the hands of culture induced gendered roles and existing power structures.

**Efficiency Approach,** third WID approach, became very popular especially in post 1980s debt crisis (Moser, 1993). It relies more on development than on women so focuses on effective development coming about as a result of women's economic contributions. The underlying assumption, that increased economic participation of developing world's women results in increased equity, endorsed international organizations such as USAID, OECD and the World Bank to advocate that providing women with a level field to participate in economic activities will eventually result in efficiency along with equity for the masses (Moser, 1993). Efficiency approach, hatched from the neo-classical economic model[11], looks at more efficient and effective development once women are economically contributing. This approach meets only practical gender needs at the cost of long working hours as it relies heavily on women's labour elasticity. Surfacing at the time of SAPs, efficiency approach gained instant popularity among international aid agencies and national governments. This shifted the focus from women to development (Moser, 1993); with economic growth as the main aim of development and women being a mere input factor (Tasli, 2000). Moreover, the indirect impact of SAPs, at the time of its inception, resulted in reduced female access to education and health facilities along with strained household relations leading to more violence and mental disorders (Moser, 1993). This definitely cut back the practical gender needs that were hypothesized to occur through efficiency approach.

This approach is still popular in South Asia and seeks to improve women's contribution to the development process to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the designed interventions. It focusses on all three roles of women though meeting practical needs (Baruah, 2005).

**Empowerment Approach** surfaced in mid 1980s during discontentment period of WID's original equity approach and welfare and efficiency approaches being in vogue at local

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[11] In neo-classical economic model i) Resources are scarce in the world, ii) people are rational, iii) capitalism is the efficient economic system, iv) free markets guarantee self- equilibrating economy with sustainable growth v) government should only intervene in case of an imperfection.

governments and international agencies' spectrum of development practice. This approach, being the central thesis, has been discussed in the following chapter in detail.

The entirety of WID as development paradigm for women has been challenged on the grounds of it being characterized by the modernization paradigm, prominent in the realm of international development. The policy approach for overall development following this perspective, and backed by human capital theory, is massive investment on education and skills system to develop managers with increased efficiency and versatility. Women are, however, not considered a separate unit of analysis in this view and it comes with an underlying assumption that generalized practices would benefit men and women alike while bringing about modernization to the society (Rathgeber, 1990). Young (1993) articulates that WID has incorrectly assumed that women becoming sole controllers of their economic activities will not shape any reaction from men. While Chowdry (1995) points out that WID keeps women within the private sphere and well away from political and economic affairs of societal life whereas all its approaches picture women as victims. Furthermore, Peet and Hartwick (2009) claim WID to have accepted the existing social and power structures and fails to ruminate over the influences of race, ethnicity, culture and class on women's daily life and relationships with men. It failed to consider power relations, gender relations and conflict in examination of women's subordination and only focussed in lack of resources as the main cause of their deprivation (Rowlands, 1995). Also, it avoids questioning women's subordination in the global terrain and fosters practices that ignore indigenous knowledge and differences in contexts (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009). Resultantly, WID provides incomplete analysis and based on that inadequate economic and social policy, to bring about change.

The Marxist feminist[12] critique on inadequacies of WID proclaimed women as a permanent and integral part of development processes which was consistently being underrepresented and invisible due structural inequalities in the societies (Rowlands, 1995). This led to a new School of thought identified as Women and Development. **Women and Development (WAD)** materialised in the second half of the 1970s (Rathgeber, 1990) and derives its essence from the

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[12] Marxist feminism is a branch of feminism that aligns itself to the economic and philosophical views of Karl Marx. This perspective believes women are exploited in the capitalism; both by their husbands at home and their employers at work. It is sometimes also refereed to as materialist feminism, however, some scholars tend to distinguish between the two terms.

dependency theory[13] (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009). It debates the role of women in the process of development marked by exploitation and inequalities that have led women's subordination and this should be the preparatory agenda of all future development efforts that tend to emancipate women. It suggests the importance and distinctiveness of women's work, knowledge and goals and responsibility. Additionally, WAD recognizes that men too have been affected adversely by the social and economic inequalities and therefore, channels some analysis towards men and gendered social relations as well.

WAD perspective gained significant popularity during the 1990s as women continued to organize at grassroots levels (Parpart et. al, 2000). However, WAD, like WID, showed fixation on productive sector and assumed that women's subordination can be eliminated through strategic interventions at economic and political levels rather than influencing gender relations (Rathgeber, 1990; Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009) and failed to address the fundamental factors that shape and maintain gender relations (Parpart et. al, 2000). This approach is also inclined towards a universal solution as it identifies women as a class toning down the differences that exist due to cultural, ethnic, religious and class issues.

1970s also witnessed the emergence of another feminist perspective for development: **Women, Environment and Development (WED)**, which was founded to liberate nature from exploitation and women from marginalization. Certain ecofeminists interested in the understanding of the contemporary world took a disparate approach towards development, environment degradation and exploitation of nature. They considered scientific and economic paradigms to be Eurocentric and androcentric in nature that reinforces neo-colonialism and makes women victims of patriarchal development (Peet and Hatwick, 2009). Likewise, a scientific progress that does not cater to nature's needs and any development effort that does not consider the opinions and choices of humans it is targeting, is an inevitable threat to survival. Initially feminist political ecology[14], constituting gendered rights to environment usage, gendered politics of environment and gendered knowledge; was the main focus of WED

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[13] Dependency theory maintains that Third world has not been able to attain adequate levels of development because of its dependency on the First world.
Interested reader may refer to: Ferraro, V. (2008), Dependency Theory: An Introduction. The Development Economics Reader, pp. 58-64.
[14] For further reading on feminist political ecology and its themes please consult: Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experiences by Rocheleau, D., Thomas-Slayter, B., & Wangari, E. (Eds., 2013). Routledge. London.

which was followed by the notion of sustainable development. This brought on the concept of equity between generations (Peet and Hartwick, 2009) for the use of renewable natural and provided an opening for the ecofeminists to pursue the case of gendered differentiations in economics and development from a different angle.

WID's progress was tempered by another feminist conceptualization that regarded gender[15], rather than women, to be the apropos intellectual emphasis of any research in development discourse. WID identified women's lack of access to resources as the key to their subordination without raising questions about the role of gender relations in restricting women's access in the first place (and in subverting policy interventions, were they to direct resources to women). The work that was under way within various social science disciplines suggested the importance of power, conflict and gender relations in understanding women's subordination.

WID and WAD, both proved ineffective in addressing women's issues, related to household and social reproductive activities, that restrict and determine their productivity, political and social participation and activities that are part of other aspects of their lives (Rowlands, 1995). As discontentment with WID and WAD approaches augmented, many feminist anthropologists started paying attention to the cultural representation of the sexes and its ability to determine the status of a man and a woman in the society (Razavi and Miller, 1995). The shift towards gender from women happened due to feminist writers like Oakley (1972) and Rubin (1975) in the mid '70s (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy, 2009). Alongside, a feminist group at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, U.K., began to analyse women's lower position in the development process along the lines of gender relations between men and women (Peet and Hartwick, 2009).

**Gender and Development Paradigm** emerged in the 1980s, offered a varied explanation of the roles played by men and women, depending on the ideological, historical, ethnic and religious, economic and cultural determinants, in a given society; gender in terms of power relations and regimes was propelled as the major theme of the research conducted on education

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[15] One of the earliest definitions of the term gender is provided by Whitehead (1978) as he distinguished gender from sex. He elucidated sex as a "province of biology" which is fixed and has unalterable characteristics while, gender is the "province of social science" as its characteristics can be shaped by historical social relations and interactions. This shows that gender is a social and cultural construct (Razavi and Miller, 1995) which defines the positions of men and women in relation to each other within household and society. Moreover, its mutable features change across cultures and are influenced by socio-economic factors (Tasli, 2007).

and development (Arnot and Fennell, 2008). Theoretically, it stems from the socialist feminism[16] and links relations of production to the relations of reproduction as they impact women's lives (Rathgeber, 1990); Also, socialist feminism saw women and nature corresponding in terms of producers and reproducers' roles in low income countries (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). GAD came forwarded and tackled women's various roles in the society and their interaction with men as it is concerned with the dynamics and structures of the roles that are performed by women in every aspect of their lives (Rowlands, 1995).

Young (1997) encapsulates men and women relationships as ascribed and achieved relations. Ascribed relations are the ones that are shaped by ones position in the family and are generated through birth or marriage. Relations that are shaped by ones involvement in socio-economic and political life are called the achieved relations. GAD recognizes that these gender relations are the key determinants of women's position in society, not as immutable reflections of the natural order but as socially constructed patterns of behavior which can be changed if desired. Correspondingly, women are deeply affected by the nature of patriarchal power in their societies at the national, community, and household levels. Drawing on the socialist-feminist perspective, GAD argues that women's status in society is deeply affected by their material conditions of life and by their position in the national, regional, and global economies. Women's material conditions and patriarchal authority are both defined and maintained by the accepted norms and values that define women's and men's roles and duties in a particular society (Sen and Grown 1987).

GAD rejects public and private spheres' dichotomy and stresses the need for the state to promote women's emancipation. It goes beyond WID and WAD to question the existing cultural, political and economic structures and sees women as agents of change rather than passive recipients of development assistance (Rathgeber, 1990). It challenges the assumption of women being a homogenous group and women's role being independent of gendered relations. It looked at structures and processes that placed women at a disadvantage and gave

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[16] Socialist feminism focusses on public as well as private sphere of a woman's life and challenges capitalism and patriarchy. It identifies social construction of production and reproduction as the key factors for the subordination of women.
"Socialist feminists have identified the social construction of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppression and have focused attention on the social relations of gender, questioning the validity of roles that have been ascribed to both women and men in different societies... their primary focus has been on an examination of why women systematically have been assigned to inferior and/or secondary roles" (Rathgeber, 1990).

men power and control over women (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Also, it struggles for the re-examination of social institutions and structures and calls for loss of power of the "entrenched elites" which will impact men as well as women (Rathgeber, 1990). Vijayamohanan, Asalatha & Ponnuswamy (2009) express that GAD recognizes the significance of redistribution of power in social relations required to improve women's access to material resources, emancipation and wellbeing.

Within the GAD perspective, the ultimate goal of women empowerment is informed by gender analysis of social relations (Kabeer, 1994) and distinction is drawn between women's interests and gender interests. It takes a holistic view and seeks women as an agent of change and calls upon them as social actors to lead to a structural change, amidst the tangle of external constraints (Young, 1993; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Tasli, 2005).

In order to eliminate gender inequalities and to strengthen position of women, GAD requires political and social-economic institutional change. The most powerful demand on development policy related to gender equality throughout this era remained to be equal recognition of all citizens (men and women) in terms of access, progression and completion of education (Unterhalter, 2008). It calls for institutionalizing the gender perspective through gender mainstreaming, with institutions being family (primary), market, community and state (Tasli, 2005). Another important emphasis of GAD has been on state's involvement in women's emancipation (Peet and Hartwick, 1995). According to Young (1997), state can play this role as a) a major employer and b) a resource allocator. However, in developing countries particularly, women lack representation and say in state apparatus and policy making. Moreover, in developing countries SAPs, privatization and financial crisis have led to weakening of state as a major employer and resource allocator (Tasli, 2005).

GAD, however, is not free from criticism. El-Bushra (2000) emphasizes that the concept of Gender and Development varies according to the agency or policy intervention. On the other hand, Peet and Hartwick (2005) evaluate that it has not been able to steer clear from the modernist tendencies or the notion of "poor women". Anfred (2001) seconds the arguments by concluding that the confusion related to the term gender has resulted in depoliticising women's issues and it appears to be just another means for promoting economic growth in a neo-liberal

economic agenda. Similarly, Rowlands (1995) adds that the term 'gender' can become a proxy for 'women' and can result in facilitating other objectives within the existing ideologies.

With respect to gender mainstreaming, Tasli (2007) points out that not only it is difficult to involve women at all levels of society without structural changes at all public spheres without state's will but also, it is difficult to maintain its edge when it is implemented by governments and development officials in top-down manner.

Since 1990s, many new facets of debate and critique related to feminist thinking and development have appeared at the horizon. **Postmodernism and Development (PAD)** perspective criticizes WID because it seems to be trapped in modernist thought which focuses on market economics and disempowers women. GAD is seen flawed in PAD' perspective for objectification of women as sex objects, victims and a group confined in traditions (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). PAD arraigns Feminist Orientalism[17] as a permanent notion of the contemporary world and insists on deconstruction of development discourses that disempower women. PAD requires development to give women's knowledge of nature a pedestal while acknowledging differences in cultures and identities through establishment of communications channel between practitioners and clients.

Recently, **Rights-Based Approach** has become famous with activists for development process in general and gender equality in particular. It is a conceptual framework and defines human development based on international standards of human rights. This approach seeks to establish an enabling environment in which human rights can be enjoyed as the main objectives of development process. It encompasses concepts of previous approaches (equity, efficiency, welfare, anti-poverty and empowerment) for achievement of human rights in all spheres of life (Baruah, 2005). Therefore, it has a broader spectrum and entails a series of factors such as accountability, rights, participation, eradication of marginalization and discrimination which act as rules and principles. It goes beyond empowerment approach but empowerment remains an essential part of this approach, which is defined as giving people power and capacity to

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[17] For detailed reading on Feminist Orientalism and Postmodern Feminist Development Debates please see: Marglin, F. A., & Marglin, S. A. (1990), Dominating Knowledges: Development, Culture and Resistance. Oxford University Press.

influence better changes in their lives and communities (FRIDE, 2006). Correspondingly, in terms of women empowerment it has made the international community consider improvement of women's socio-economic, political and health status as goals achieved rather than mere inputs in the imposing process of empowerment (UN, 2014).

Rights-based approach to development encourages development enterprise to redefine the problems and aims; and also, to respect individual autonomy of the clients by creating opportunities to participate in procedures (Uvin, 2010). That is to help an individual, the owner of his own rights, become the agent of his own development.

Another new approach, the **Capabilities Approach-** has evolved from the human rights based approach. The Capability Approach was first articulated by economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980s but intumesced into a new paradigm in the early 2000s with Sen's (1999) *Development as Freedom* (Uvin, 2010). It does not specifically target achievement of human rights but focusses on the propitious environment which fosters humans to utilise their basic capabilities and functionalities for betterment (Nussbaum, 2000) in terms of social, political, civic and economic features. According to Baruah (2005), this approach strongly believes in teaming together universal values (such as human dignity and respect) along with local knowledge to ascertain the quality of people's lives all around the globe. It takes development as capability expansion (Wells, *n.a.*) and has been extensively employed in the context of Human Development, mainly by the United Nations Development Program. In this paradigm, rights and development become "strands of the same fabric" as development is defined as processes of social change which are rights-based along with economically grounded (Uvin, 2010). It is a different conceptualization of gender inequalities and takes education to be a facilitator that enhances the endowment set of women. It provides them with the resources and skills which are required by the women to achieve their desired goals in life (Arnot and Fennell, 2008). Nonetheless, despite being theoretically and philosophically attractive, capability approach and development as freedom paradigm lack measurability and translation into policy edicts.

In practice, WAD approach remains pertinent as women of the third world continue to organize at grassroots level to highlight women's contributions to national development and to compel agencies and local governments to take women' issues into consideration. The local

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governments have been keen on welfare, equity and anti-poverty approaches (Baruah, 2005), though; to deal with women, especially in Asian territory. NGO sector follows a variety of paradigms to help women across the globe. However, empowerment approach seems to be a common most applied approach of NGOs, local governments and relief, development and donor agencies (Parpart et. al., 2000).

# 2. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The ideology of empowerment has its earliest roots in Paulo Freire's educational approach (1960s) and the *Participative Approach* of development initiatives in 1970s. It first appeared, in its current conceptualization, in Barbara Salamon's "Black Empowerment" in 1976, but got recognition in development and gender planning in 1989 through Moser's[18] work. Sadan (1997) acknowledges Barbara Salamon (1976), Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus (1977) and Julian Rapport (1981) as the first writers who systematically dealt with the concept of empowerment and influenced its development[19]. These writers brought to light the connection between individuals and community, encouraged contextual analysis and taking into account local knowledge and resources to deal with social situations (Sadan, 1997). Since then, the term empowerment has been used in many contexts, and was agglutinated to various approaches in 1990s (Batliwala and Pittman, 2010), including development, which have influenced its evolution as a concept.

Empowerment has grown into a development fuzzword (Cornwall, 2007), that can be described in terms of change, choice and competency. It is a broad concept which has multiple interpretations and definitions[20]. Each definition or interpretation however, exhibits theoretical or ideological inclination of the users. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social and/or economic strength of individuals and communities; expanding the range of choices that can be made. Gaining the ability to make choices and questioning the status quo is the key ingredient of the process of change, which is an integral step towards empowerment; this often involves the empowered individuals developing confidence in their own capacities.

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[18] Caroline, O.N., Moser prepared Gender Issues in Development: Briefing Note for the World Bank Executive Directors' Board Seminar in 1989. Also, published an article in World Development, vol. 17: Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Women's Practical and Strategic Needs.

[19] For detailed readings: Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities by Solomon, B.B. (1976). Columbia University Press.
- To Empower People, the Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy by Berger, P.L. & Neuhaus, R.J. (1977). Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Studies in Empowerment: Introduction to the Issue by Rappaport, J. (1984). Journal of Prevention in Human Services.

[20] For further information on different definitions of empowerment (and women empowerment) that are found in literature, please read: Agency and Empowerment: A Proposal for internationally comparable indicators by Ibrahim, S. & Alkire, S. (2007).

Friedman (1992) evaluates that empowerment approach presents an attempt of moving away from mainstream development and thus imposed development models of top-down approach. It concentrates on local individuals, context and forms of power dynamics and change. He defines empowerment as social power that can be transformed into political power (Rahman, 2013). Empowerment is a not a sectoral approach nor can it be limited by defining a set of inputs or activities. It is a holistic term that encompasses all sectors of a society and targets all development areas such as education, healthcare, employment and so on (Dighe, 1995). Sadan (1997) refers to empowerment as an interactive concept that encourages 'initiative taking approach' for an individual. Empowerment process for an individual begins with the self-confidence and moves onto societal level for working for change.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

In the previous discussion I have presented a broad overview of the concept of empowerment within Development. But the concept of empowerment in the development arena has been actively endorsed and encouraged by the feminists. Feminists believe in empowerment as an emancipation process for women within development. Feminism also endeavours to fill in the definition vacuum of the term empowerment and have stimulated a number of female-oriented projects along with extensive scholarship on women's empowerment.

DAWN (1988) initiated the discussion of women empowerment as a gender issue and viewed gender subordination as a product of socio-cultural and economic factors which are backed by gendered divisions of labour and roles.

Moser (1993) was the first one to attempt at an understanding of empowerment in power perimeters (Rahman, 2013). Moser (1993) defines women empowerment approach as based on the concept of increasing women's internal strength and independence.

Kabeer (1994 and 2005) deals with women empowerment as a radical transformation between power relations of women and men. She deconstructs empowerment on the notion of power and powerlessness (Rahman, 2013) and also provides three interrelated notions for understanding of empowerment: agency, resources and achievements. Further, Kabeer (2005) also shows the association of empowerment with education and critical consciousness.

Young (1993) regards women empowerment as an ability of women to take control of their lives by setting their own agendas and helping other women too. She puts heavier bets on collective action but nonetheless begins with individual empowerment and leads it to political empowerment on an individual in wider spheres of public and private life. Her conceptualization is also based on 'transformatory potential' of the empowerment process (Rahman, 2013).

Rowlands (1995) presents three operational dimensions of women empowerment, namely: personal, close relationships and collective. And, later, elaborates on this simple model of empowerment by itemising core values, changes and other positive as well as negative impactful factors for each dimension of operation (Rowlands, 1995 and 1997).

This concept has augmented over the years and today presents a fusion of several disciplines and a cornucopia of frameworks, approaches and policy values along with scholarly writings in its domain of theory and practice.

Women empowerment, today, is discussed in many different forms and aspects of development initiatives. With the passage of time, many new facets have emerged and many novelties have been experienced in its evolution as a multi-layered concept of women's emancipation. It ranges from individual, collective, community based to relational empowerment and has many shades streaked on the basis of economic position, health and sexuality, educational attainment, formal employment, legal status, access to human rights, property rights, agency and political participation of women. Many new varied aspects are also being explored such as women empowerment in terms of subjective and psychological wellbeing, market insecurities, family and community power dynamics, democratic governments and so on.

All through the decades, Women Empowerment paradigm struggled for empowering women through greater self-reliance and bottom up mobilization to meet the strategic gendered needs of women; while executing their triple roles in developing states (Tasli, 2007). Its pronouncement by women of the developing world themselves has protected it from being taken as a West induced feminism approach. However, it is challenging; for it aims at restructuring social arrangements and established gendered roles in rigid developing societies.

It meritoriously questions the underlying assumptions of the previous theories concerning the power relations between men and women and also identifies the crucial aspect that women's level of subordination and subjugation varies according to their social and economic standing along with their race, ethnicity and colonial history (Moser, 1993). Therefore, empowerment approach acknowledges the importance of power attainment for women but it defines power as an ability to choose rather than a parameter for domination over men. It aims to help women challenge the oppressive structures in accordance with their level and nature of subjugation. Women empowerment addresses women's suppression at all levels and areas. As gender inequity has become deep rooted within family, socio-economic, cultural and political structures of the society over the time, empowerment approach seeks solutions at each level accordingly (Tasli, 2007).

Moser (1993) states the achievement of strategic gender needs is what sets empowerment approach apart from its predecessors. In identification of practical and strategic gender needs time is not a determinant therefore, empowerment approach defines practical gender needs as a stepping stone for attainment of strategic gender needs (in long term strategies). It identifies the limitations of top-down legislative measures and gives importance to participatory planning processes (Moser, 1993). Education, awareness raising and political mobilization are given as the entry points in empowerment approach framework (Razavi and Miller, 2005). However, the challenging nature of this approach makes it least favourite pick for the development, bilateral agencies as well as national governments (Moser, 1993). And as Rowland (1997) says this approach considers improved conditions of women as an end in themselves, instead of them taken as means to grander development goals.

## HISTORICAL POSITION IN FEMINIST DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

**Empowerment Approach** emerged in the 1980s as discontentment with equity approach rose due to its failure to deal with women's subordination through legislative changes, and WID seemed to be dissolving into Efficiency and Anti-poverty approaches (Moser, 1993). The concept of women empowerment unfolded as the women's movements around the world had started appraisal and debates on the "apolitical" and "economistic" WID and WAD models, which were then most prevalent in development ventures (Batliwala, 2010). Literature on

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empowerment as a concept mushroomed across sectors and geographic regions and actors, just as it had exploded at the time of concept of participation a decade earlier (FRIDE, 2006).

An organization of women, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), was founded in 1984 in India to analyse the conditions of the women around the world and to propose an alternative way of development. Founded to acknowledge and champion the Empowerment Approach (Razavi and Miller, 1995), DAWN questioned the impact of development on the poor and especially on women. Its idea of alternate development processes gives primary emphasis to fulfilment of basic needs and survival of the majority of the world's population. It has strived to tie grassroots initiatives at community level to macro level procedures and challenges the idea of problem for third world women being inadequate participation in the otherwise "benevolent process of growth and development" (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). This new vision of development grounded in the perspective of Third World women, according to DAWN, focusses on the problems of poverty, inequality and the multifaceted issue of use and abuse of resources (Tasli, 2007). Oxaal and Baden (1997) specify the core activities, outlined by DAWN to execute empowerment, have been political mobilisation, legal changes and consciousness rising.

DAWN catalogues empowerment with personal autonomy therefore, it calls for self-sufficiency of individuals and understanding of the affiliation between power and development by the Development industry practitioners and policy makers (Vijayamohanan, Asalatha and Ponnuswammy, 2009).

Young (1993) expresses a view that empowerment approach implicates a radical change in the structures and processes that inculcate women's subordination. Since feminism has never been monolithic in its goals and targets to alternate development (Tasli, 2007), DAWN is a specimen of a feminist development approach that demonstrates that struggle against gender subordination must be accompanied by efforts assigned for elimination of class, racial and national forms of discriminations (DAWN, 1988). It further highlights the issue of gender inequity ingrained in the mind-sets and existing structures:

> Gender-based subordination is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of both men and
> women and is usually viewed as a natural corollary of the biological differences

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*between them. It is reinforced through religious beliefs, cultural practices, and educational systems (both traditional and modern) that assign women lesser status and power (DAWN, 1988).*

In quest of consolidating standards for women's rights the Declaration on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women was drafted which was officially adopted by UN General Assembly in 1967 and a legally binding Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), followed in 1979. It defines the concept of discrimination against women and establishes national action course to end such discrimination and is often described as an international draft of rights for women.

To date it provides the basis for realizing gender equality through women's equal access to opportunities in health, education, employment and political activities. It is a human right treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and counts culture and Traditions as a determinant of gender roles. It seeks for women to enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mid 1980s had brought feminist development school in close proximity with the Paulo Freire's approach of *Conscientization*[21] through dialogue and scholarship. This quintessential interaction led to fashioning of women's empowerment as a political and transformative social concept that protested against patriarchy and struggled against all interceding edifices- race, ethnicity, and class- that dictated the position of women in a developing society (Batliwala, 2010).

Feminist movements in the developing world, specifically South Asia and Latin America, embarked on *consciousness-raising* as an approach and used it to build popular support and movement for gender equality. Hence, by early 1990s different specialized fields of

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[21] Paulo Freire introduced this term in his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and then in his work Education for Critical Consciousness (1973) he further builds on the concept. Conscientisation, popularly known as critical consciousness, suggests an educational and socio-political approach in which masses acknowledge and understand their oppressed state and move towards critical awareness/consciousness.

development and social justice discourses had adopted this concept of women empowerment for social services such as healthcare, education, basic rights and rural development agendas.

At the onset of the first wave of gender values recognition world was divided into capitalist states, the communist block and the third world countries which carried colonial legacy as a chip on their shoulders. Therefore, schooling was often related to aspects of nationalism and understanding national economic growth by shedding light on the existing knowledge about capitalism and communism or as a response to colonial past (Unterhalter, 2008). As a response to educationalists efforts to engage local context in their study in order to bring girls in the education system, a number of international declarations were passed in 80s and 90s that propelled women's education agenda on the basis of two prominent arguments- need of the economy for waged female labour and need of the society for better educated mothers translated into better educated children (Unterhalter, 2000). During this era as the feminist concerns were broadening and taking issues like sexuality, violence against women and education and artistic representations into main considerations. Women had also started to make connections out of their nation states on the basis of their interests and mutual concerns related to gender equality and development policies (Winslow, 1995).

This corresponded with a number of UN conferences that maintained women empowerment for development as their central agenda, discussed a variety of dimensions and helped women empowerment emerge as a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. The world conference provided such females with a chance of an extensive and more conducive interaction with their across border think-alikes and so, these connections started flourishing (Unterhalter, 2008).

In Nairobi the Third UN Women's Conference, 1985, established the first international dialogue on linkages between sustainable development and women's empowerment along gender equality. Women's involvement in environment was accentuated as an area of concern; UNEP responded effectively by inaugurating Senior Women Advisors Group (SWAG) to counsel the organization on gender sensitivity for its environmental programs.

In 1992, The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) advocated women empowerment and decision making for sustainable development in terms of women's participation in local and global ecosystem management for control and prevention

of environmental degradation. A number of advocacy initiatives were decided upon as a follow on to the conclusions reached in the Nairobi conference. This resulted in the well-celebrated "Agenda 21" that presented more than 145 references to the roles and status of women in dealing with environment and a separate chapter that wholly focused on the women's participation in sustainable development planning at all government and UN agencies; levels (UNEP, 2014).

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) addressed the issue of population control as a matter of choice that should be available for women in the context of their health and reproductive rights, hence empowering them to decide for and shape their own lives (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). It was a milestone in the history of women rights and population and development.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD), held in March 1995, focused on women's participation and empowerment to be the sole aim of development policies. The gendered relations and power structures were focused in the report of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and called for an agenda to support power and responsibility sharing (UN, 1995) between men and women at household, national and international levels. It was the largest gathering of world leaders at that time, and in 2000 United Nations summoned a special session in Geneva to assess the achievements made since the social summit in Copenhagen. Women rights activist attended from all over the world to inform the summit that the problems women face should be part of a global agenda. During this session new initiatives were deliberated along with showcasing dedication to social integration and avoidance of marginalization of any section of the community in the decision making processes.

The Beijing women's conference, United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, in 1995 marked the prominence of empowering women in the developing countries as a major policy aim of UN. It advanced strategies for women empowerment through their active participation at all levels of decision making and an equal share of economic, social, political and cultural decision making. It took a leap forward and declared women's empowerment and their right to education as a human right (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005). Women empowerment was declared as the prime area of concern to ensure sustainable, just society; with cultural, social, economic and environmental security for all (UNEP, 2014). Beijing

platform for action was signed by several nations across the world which implied a commitment to achieve gender equality and women empowerment in their countries and gender mainstreaming was recognized as the most effective mechanism for this ambition. During the global five-year review of progress in 2000, also known as Beijing +5, governments reaffirmed their commitment and pledged to accelerate their efforts (UNWomen, 2013).

Same year, as the first international fora, UN Security Council on Women, Peace and Security directed world's attention to effects of war on women and urged the need for bringing women into the decision making experience regarding conflict prevention and resolution.

By the year 2003, UNESCO's reports on gender equality presented the world of researchers with international gender data. This data bank helped point attention to the existing gender gaps at all levels of education and the constraints that made education provision difficult for poor economies namely, limited finances, limited curricular resources, lack of trained female teachers, lack of gender sensitive teacher training and gender transformative pedagogies and insufficient knowledge of the conditions required to promote gender equality (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005).

The ten-year review, Beijing +10, took place in 2005 and the Commission revised two major themes: review of the implementation of the Beijing platform for action and the current challenges and future strategies for the "advancement and empowerment" of girls and women (UN, 2011).

The Beijing +15 also reviewed national and regional processes for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and emphasized on ideas and good strategies sharing among the nations to overcome the challenges and obstacles. A number of opportunities were provided for NGOs, member states and UN entities to participate in dialogue and exchange information on practices for women empowerment and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Millennium Declaration and MDGs were embraced by all UN Member States and agencies in 2000. MDGs being a set of quantifiable, time-bound goals to promote gender equality while combating poverty, illiteracy and environmental degradation by the year 2015.

# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT & EDUCATION

In early period of development debate, the issue of gender equality in education was seen in the broad spectrum of needs, rights and capabilities. Basic needs approach was adopted towards social policy as well and it included the view of education as a basic need that should be equally met for individuals. This entailed an implication that gender equality in education would be to meet everyone's (men and women) basic needs for education (Unterhalter, 2008).

The term **needs** then became a concern for basic needs theorists, developmentalists and educationists. Theorists started with the exclusion groups and stated that the entire population in an economy cannot necessarily be productive and an additive to human capital on the basis of their disability, age or simply on grounds of gender, race and ethnicity. Therefore, it is not possible to satisfy everyone's basic needs on the same terms. Stewart (1985) showed that provision of education and health was intimately related to provision of minimum of good life while, Wiggins (1995) associated basic needs to the basic level of human nourishing. Both echoed the sentiment that below a certain threshold level of better living and flourishing, respectively, harm would come to humans in question.

Similarly, feminist identified two categories of women's basic needs: strategic and practical. Practical needs constituted immediate issues of survival like food, shelter and water (Unterhalter, 2008), while the strategic needs were associated with political struggle for transformation of gendered relations in a society (Moser, 1993). Later, definition of strategic needs was expanded to identify the terms interests and rights in its dominion as well (Molyneux, 1998).

Policy language associated with basic needs did not confer with the complexities that came with the definition of the term need in particular contexts or the link between need and rights and also, it was oblivious to the query that whether education made the threshold of basic needs. Therefore, development projects that were associated with gender equality in education came to take basic needs as a commodity that meant provision of four to five years in a school.

Jometian conference (1990) had tried to establish a culture of richer global discussion and dialogue with reference to education equality and its measurement but the conference was dominated by larger UN organizations and their agendas where diverse opinions were not

recognized and assessment of EFA became measurements of commodities (number of schooling years) for provision (Torres, 2000). Jometian declaration (1990) had associated basic learning needs with a wide range of ideas to satisfy such needs. However, UNESCO and national governments focused on attaining five years of schooling for boys and girls, implying that gender equality entails equal requisite number of years in school and nothing else (Unterhalter, 2008).

The concept of EFA shrivelled to schooling for children from the flagrancy of education for all; from universal basic education to universal primary education; from basic learning needs to providing minimum learning needs through a minimum number of years of schooling (Torres, 2000).

The policy language for education in the realm of rights was associated with legality and evoked the notion of citizenship i.e. it was through association with a state that a person had a right to education without any discrimination of gender or race.

Feminist critique highlighted how these international laws and declarations for gender equality failed to address specific women abuses due to ignorance of specifications of gendered relations in societies (Unterhalter, 2000). Schools that were a constituent of the forms of oppression (exploitation, marginalization, violence, powerlessness and cultural imperialism (Unterhalter, 2000) were not likely to ensure gender equality in education as a right of female students.

Basic needs in Sen's (1984) view failed to account for personal differences, while needs implied passivity and were unable to encompass a wider view of development. In 1993 Sen came out with capability approach which focusses on the freedom an individual possesses to choose from a combination of functionings ( beings and doings) to value the aspects of life he/she has a reason to value. He proposed the value term **capability** to distinguish and address individual differences and to distinguish them from a perspective other than legal (Unterhaltr, 2008). Moreover, when evaluating learning, education or schooling, capability approach will set the foci on the extent of freedom achieved by the learners/students which has helped them to or will help them in future to access a number of functionings to attain certain outcomes they value.

## DEFINING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In order to define and understand the term women empowerment it is necessary to define and set the scope of the term *power*.

### Understanding Power

In an attempt to provide a brief and initial groundwork to the understanding of power, this section examines the emergence of the notion of power in academics which is then related to its application and usage in development discourse, broadly, and to women empowerment, specifically.

### Power in Development Discourse

Power came into limelight in Development during 1970s, when the schools of modernization and dependence declared underdevelopment to be a result of poverty and power relations. These theories and the failure of development programs in 80s made bilateral and multilateral agencies focus towards equitable distribution of power-to treat poverty.

Power subsists in every process of transformation and it is always the power dynamics that define the economic, social and political relations, at all levels. Development recognizes power as a key element for bringing about an effective social change. It practices this concept through empowerment: a process that seeks to empower, by confronting inequalities of power and supporting those who do not have it. However, an approach to power is hardly ever explicitly used or analysed in development discourse (Gaventa, 2003).

Power, in context to development, has two distinct categorisations- positive power and negative power. In the negative view, those who do not have power challenge directly those who do and a major transformational change ensues; breaking the status quo of power structures (Batliwala, 1993).

As a positive concept of power, an individual has an active role in development as he has the power-to do, of being capable, and possesses a greater feeling of control over situations.

Many power models lack considerations for power dynamics amongst races, castes or gender; the vacuum for gender issues is primarily filled by a number of feminist theorists (Rowlands,

1995). All previous power discussions are based on zero-sum (Rowlands, 1995); whereas all present theories take a neutral approach to power. A consensus on power analysis shows that with respect to gender, power-over is practiced. Power-over displays domination and is practiced by men over men and women (Rowlands, 1995).

Craig, Mayo and Korten have presented the idea of power for development in terms of two distinctive power classes: variable/ positive sum and a zero sum which was further developed and propagated by Peter Oakley (2001). The positive sum of power assumes that all individuals possess certain level of power which is additive in nature and this power is added to the power of the rest of the community to achieve a common good. The zero sum power implies that total sum of power is always zero; therefore, for one group to be powerful the other groups present in the social settings must lose power.

Karl (1995) remarks that women had started asking for gaining control long ago the concept of empowerment emerged. According to her, earlier women demanded control of their lives inside and outside household, participation in decision making which affected their personal and social lives and participation in government and international development policies. In order to define empowerment, Karl (1995) refers to this demand of women and says that empowerment for women has then been particularly about gaining control and taking part in decision making. Further Karl (1995) conceptualizes *power* in *empowerment* for development agencies and other international organizations in five broad themes:

> ➤ Having control, or gaining further control;
> ➤ Having a say and being listened to;
> ➤ Being able to define and create from a woman's perspective;
> ➤ Being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society;
> ➤ Being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

(Kwapong, 2005).

Jo Rowlands (1995 and 1997) presents a conceptualization of power that has a significant place in analysing power in the development dominion. She differentiates power into four types: power-over, power-to, power-with and power-within. Power-over connotes a vector of oppression and influence (on decision making) to uphold status quo (Batliwala, 1993; Rowlands, 1995; Gaventa, 2003). The other three types of power- power-to, with and within-

imply positive dynamics of power which is augmentative in nature and offers the possibility of forming more equitable relationships. These three dominions of power affirm people's capacity (critical outlook) to act creatively, thus provide a basic framework for constructing empowering strategies (Miller et al., 2007).

*Power-over* ascribes to the zero-sum notion of power; such power is in finite supply (Rowlands, 1997): increase in power of one means loss of power for the other. When people are denied access to resources or the right to make decisions related to their life, *power-over* perpetuates inequality, injustice and poverty. Power-over is responded through compliance, resistance or manipulation (Rahman, 2013).

*Power-to* is productive power which creates new opportunities and actions without domination (Rowlands, 1997; Rahman, 2013). This power fosters decision-making authority and problems solving attitude (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). It is the ability to inspire an activity, it is a generating power that relates to creating new opportunities (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). Also, it is related to *power-with* as it calls for sharing. *Power-with* finds a common ground and builds collective strength. It is, thus, closely related to collective empowerment (Tasli, 2007).

*Power-within* is often described as self-confidence, self-awareness and assertiveness. It relates to how individuals can recognize the power relations in their lives and based on this they act accordingly, in order to bring change or to influence the existing power structures (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). An important quality of power-within is that it regenerates and enriches itself; it cannot be given or generated on behalf of others (Kabeer, 1994). Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) define it as self-respect and self-acceptance.

Building on Foucault, development describes Power as Knowledge. Knowledge brings legitimacy and authority to the actions of an individual. It enables him to interpret the context he lives in effectively which makes changing existing power relations possible. Foucault believed that knowledge is inextricably tied to power while he described power-to be "permanent, repetitious and self-reproducing" (Buckley, 2000). A dominant theme of Foucault's philosophy has been the interrelationship between knowledge and power. His contention is that the revolutions in knowledge of discourses have led a new human interaction structure where the enlightened exercise power-over the target groups (like the sick for medical

doctors) (Gunaratna, 2013). Development discourse, too, created and intervened upon the target groups such as the third world, backward economies, agricultural economies, poor women of underdeveloped countries and so on (Gaventa, 2003).

Many feminist writers', too, followed in Foucault's wake to explicate meanings of power in terms of gender as Foucault too relates to power in its 'energy' classification of the term (Rowlands, 1995) or generative form.

As this thesis relates empowerment to education and development, concepts of power-within and power-to conform to its theoretical base. Equitable notion of *power-within* is taken as a starting point which then leads to *power-to* followed by power-with. The path winding from power-within and merging into power-to marks an acquisition of new potentials. Power-to leads individuals and groups, who are socially constructed as a category, to re-evaluate their self-concept and re-construct their identity/category (Rowlands, 1995).

Hence empowerment in this datum deals with more than simply bringing a previously cut out group into the decision making circle. It subsumes an entire progression of leading an individual or a group to being able and to recognize themselves as able to proficiently participate in the transformative procedures, beginning with decision making.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AS SELF-EMPOWERMENT/ INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

The term self-empowerment can be used for an individual, to a group and also to an entire community, as it is just a basic form of empowerment for any entity that is being facilitated for empowering itself or is discovering empowerment on its own.

In this research, the term self-empowerment specifically refers to the primary form of empowerment (as defined by the Rowlands' (1995) theoretical model) of an individual woman that is a student at a higher education institution in Islamabad. Moreover, the terms self-empowerment and individual empowerment, and sometimes self-efficacy, are used interchangeably. Based on *power within* as the starting point for an individual's empowerment process seeks to define an empowered individual as the one who experiences the sense of self-confidence and self-esteem. She is critically aware of her political and social surroundings and plays an effective and active role in making decisions that impact her life in any way.

Individual empowerment is part of personal development. It entails building of skills and abilities and a positive self definition. New found confidence, self-respect and self-esteem helps an individual redefine a better self-image which is more capable of improving personal knowledge level, resources, abilities and skills and consequently the set of opportunities. The quintessence of individual empowerment is the ability to redefine yourself in a better light and to act efficiently towards life's opportunities (Sadan, 1997).

Self-empowerment, in its simplest view, refers to assessment of one's own self and acknowledging the power within which can help introduce better alterations in an individual's life that are required to enhance her/his choice set and choices, respectively. The concept of women's self-empowerment is based on the idea that women are able to identify the existence of *power within* showcasing that women themselves are the change agents. Also, in the next stage of the empowerment process, self empowerment leads to *power with* which is expressed through collective empowerment and solidarity among women. A recent study conducted by wet and parker (2014) in South Africa authenticate the above mentioned results.

Cognition produces self-acceptance and self-efficacy in an individual which make her believe in her capabilities and her ability to control events occurring around her. Association between self-efficacy and empowerment is so obvious that it is not possible to ignore their positive relationship (Sadan, 1997). Rowlands (1999) says that empowerment is not only access to decision making table, but also a preceding chain of events that make people perceive themselves as able and entitled to be a part of the decision making. Therefore, empowerment is being able to make choices and to be able to shape those choices as well. Rowlands (1997 and 1998) provides a set of core elements for each dimension of empowerment, which help to determine whether the empowerment process exists or not. The personal and unique experience of empowerment of an individual woman involves development of sense of self, confidence and capacity and the undoing of the effects of *internalized oppression* (Rowlands, 1995). Increase in these core values then leads to awakening of sense of agency through which a woman becomes part of her surroundings, interacts with people around her and efforts to become a change agent (Rowlands, 1997).

Young (1993) and Batliwala (1994), both emphasize on the importance of the connection between individual and collective empowerment of women. According to Young, it is important

for development discourse to focus on collective aspects of women empowerment and is supported by Batliwala who shows that collective empowerment is more impactful for protecting individual women rights and bringing about a societal change.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AS A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

Bottom-up approach and empowerment both suggest an inverted pyramidal process (Tasli, 2007); by inculcating participation in its conception and practice, empowerment has been more successful than other development approaches- bottom-up perspective being complimentary to participative approaches in development (Moser, 1989).

Rowlands (1995) explicates on this view and states that women empowerment approach seems to be an off shoot of GAD perspective that is based on 'bottom-up' or 'action-oriented' development strategies. It grew not only in theoretical debate but also through practical experiences of women associated with grassroots activists around the world trying to make change happen. Unlike other approaches, empowerment comes from the third world scholarship and dialogue between development industry experts and grassroots organizations to support and enable women bring change.

Despite being bottom-up in essence, empowerment approach for individuals cannot be entirely free of external pressures and top-down facilitations especially when bilateral, multilateral aid agencies and INGOs are present who are working for the rhetoric of empowerment. As Oxaal and Baden (1997) analyze that empowerment has to come from within to be actually empowering while agencies and organizations can help facilitate its process by creating an obstacle free space; a context where specific actions and decisions are taken for empowerment to flourish.

The multidimensionality of power determines several different and interrelated aspects of empowerment. The bottom-up characterization of empowerment requires external initiatives that eliminate the existing powerhouses that subordinate women. Empowerment, also, works in different ways in different contexts, what may appear empowering in one situation may be of no consequence in another. Nonetheless, according to Tasli (2007), empowerment approach calls for a transformation that begins at the primary or grassroots levels and moves upwards for women to enhance their socioeconomic and political powers.

A stronger civil society appoints a representative and accountable government which is reciprocated by implementing equitable development policies (Razavi and Miller, 1995) and Grootaert (2005) regards State as the key player for empowering strategies to work. The author comments that it is not essentially a ground level, bottom-up process but one in which state plays a significant role. It entails a top-down element of implementation which has to be initiated and ensured by an accountable government. The author also recommends the interaction and coordination at micro and macro levels to eliminate barriers and building social capital for efficient empowering actions.

Tasli (2007) seconds the opinion of expanding top-down along with bottom-up courses of actions for fundamental changes in power structures that suppress women. However, Moser (1993) commented that State inherently lacks the political will to resolve issues related to women's subordination therefore, bottom-up social and political movements of women themselves are the only alternative. According to Dighe (1995), in government initiated and/or funded projects it is important to notice the extent of empowerment that seems acceptable to the government and the 'space' it is willing to provide for females targeted in the program.

## EMPOWERMENT- A PROCESS OR AN OUTCOME

Literature shows agreement by many scholars[22] on empowerment being a long-term, open-ended and a dynamic process. It does not have clear beginnings, middle or end; cannot be defined through specific activities or end results and involves deep and broad changes in societal structures (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). Razavi and Miller (1995) term it as a social movement which cannot be engineered. Similarly, Kabeer (2001) describes empowerment process as a complex phenomenon which has several routes and multiple dimensions. And each process is unique with respect to the factors that hinder or facilitate it.

Understanding empowerment process reigns in the fields of socio-economic, political and cultural relations involving women at both, micro as well as macro levels. Kabeer (2001) relays empowerment as a difficult phenomenon to plan and implement. Saskia Wierenga (1994; as cited in Tasli, 2007), reasons that empowerment is not easy to plan; *planning empowerment* is

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[22] Moser (1993,1995 and 2007), Dighe (1995) Oxaal and Baden (1997), Rowlands (1995, 1997 and 2005), Kabeer (2001 and 2005).

a controversial idea as the term 'planning' implies that the social change nodded for empowerment to occur can be 'engineered, directed or produced at will'.

The process of empowerment for women entails a cognitive aspect (Dighe, 1995) which requires women to recognize their status quo and the ideology of women being submissive to men and its seepage into the sociocultural norms (Batliwala, 1994). Young (1993; and 1992-cited in Razavi and Miller, 1995) argues that it is impractical to assume women being completely knowledgeable about their social, political and economic settings of lives, therefore for women to empower themselves, it is necessary that an external intervention addresses the issue of their internalized gender subordination and lack of critical consciousness (Tasli, 2007).

## EMPOWERMENT AS A GENDER ISSUE

Gender relations, being difficult to untangle understand and address, are inconstant and can vary when in contact with altering socio-economic environment (Kabeer, 2005). Women empowerment is as much related to women as to men. It is a gender issue (Moser, 1993, Young, 1993; Batliwala, 1994; and Rowlands, 1995). An empowerment process that increases burden of any household level on women shows power over in action. The power to and within are generative forms of power which do not overburden or worse-off women from their current level by empowering them at any one aspect of their lives (Rowlands, 1995). Empowerment approach for women has always been concerned about gender issues in development and intervention programs (Razavi and Miller, 1995). Also, as has been discussed in the previous section, women empowerment approach seeks an advantage over its predecessors by integrating gender and striving for achievement of strategic gender needs.

Gender subordination is profoundly engrafted in the consciousness of men and women alike and is continuously reinforced through socio-cultural norms, educational systems and so on (DAWN, 1988). As a gender issue, for empowerment to come through power within and power to conceptualization, efforts must be made to include men in the process so that men help remove the obstacles and facilitate fundamental changes required. Through her fieldwork work in Honduras, Rowlands' (1995) assessment concluded that even the most preliminary form of personal empowerment is confronted by gender power relations.

Flood (2004) shows men as an efficient part of the GAD machinery. He argues that since women interact with men inside and outside their households on daily basis therefore, involving men for women's emancipation can prove feasible. Their involvement makes men understanding to the need of gender relations and responsible for the change as well. Further, Flood suggests that women-focused, women-only programs should stay as exclusive for women as ever with their specific women-only space to uphold support for women's solidarity, leadership, consciousness raising and collective empowerment.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER STRATEGIC NEEDS/ INTERESTS

Identifying gender interests: In this study, for planning process, **interest** is defined as a prioritized concern (Moser, 1993) and can be translated into needs. As Molyneux (1998) states that although needs and interests are conceptually two different philosophies but in planning process they come closely together.

The position of a human being in a society depends on various different factors such as gender, ethnicity, and social class. Consequently, the common interests of a group of human beings can be determined through this variety of different classifications too- class position, ethnic identity and biological similarities among others. The concept of women's interest is therefore, about common interests of a group drawn together on the basis of biological similarities.

Molyneux (1985) argues that the notion of women's interests foists a false homogeneity among women's group and these interests vary significantly in specific socio-economic, class, ethnic and religious contexts. It should be differentiated from gender interests as women may have only general interests in common and gender interests will help indicate all those shared interests that are developed due to gender attributes.

Gender interests are further bifurcated into strategic and practical gender interests.

Moser (1993) defines Strategic Gender Needs as:

> *"Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to particular contexts. They relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over*

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*their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position."*

Strategic gender needs relate to the structure and nature of relationships between men and women. They are formulated from the notion of women's subordination to men and can be identified as needs that arise to create an alternate, more equal and satisfactory society of humans. These needs may relate to unequal status in decision-making process, in the gender division of labour, in ownership and control of resources, or to experiences of domestic and other sexual violence. The nature of strategic needs and how they address subjugation of women vary according to the particular culture and socio-political context they arise in. such needs vary not only across different contexts but also across classes and ethnic groups.

Strategic gender needs are the ones that women identify on the basis of their position in the society, which then assist women to work towards a more equitable relationship with men in the society (Moser and Tinker, 1994).

Practical Gender Needs are defined by Moser (1993) as follows:

> *"Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge the gender divisions of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often are concerned with inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care, and employment."*

Practical gender needs are identified by women themselves on the basis of their socially accepted roles in the society (Moser and Tinker, 1994), within existing power structures. They are derived from the existing conditions of women and the tangible materials that are part of human survival. These needs are formulated directly by these women and they are primarily are a response to an immediate perceived necessity which is identified by the women themselves in the given context. Molyneux (1985) explains that practical gender needs, even though a product of female subordination, do not challenge the prevailing forms of relationships between men and women therefore, they do not entail a need formulated by external intervention such as the strategic needs.

Strategic needs of one do not imply loss of any other. It does not rely on hegemony or domination of one on the other. Education attainment may start as a practical gender need but

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can result in attainment of strategic gender needs/interests depending upon increase self empowered individuals (women) and development of critical consciousness in the masses.

# 3. EDUCATION FOR AWARENESS RAISING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

## EDUCATION FOR LITERACY OR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS?

Education along with the income generation capacity, has been perceived as the key to the golden door of success and equal participation of women in the development process. It is true that women need education to be able to participate in the society, but the nature of this education has not been sufficiently questioned.

If education is to have any value for women, it must be a means to raise their consciousness about the oppressive structures that keep them in positions of powerlessness. Most educational systems do not provide a climate for such thinking skills to develop. When a woman is relatively powerless and is unaware of her surroundings and its structures, education for mere literacy is of little worth. In developing societies most educated women- the leaders, academicians, professionals in establishment organizations- perpetuate the status quo. The reasoning behind this is that if the patriarchal system has worked for them, it should work for all women.

Any consciousness that is structured by power (over) is 'false' and so is 'true' consciousness (Gaventa, 2003). Development of a critical outlook of one's micro and macro actualities or consciousness raising (Conscientization) has been a major contribution of Paulo Freire (Dighe, 1995). It is certainly a significant personal experience in the empowerment process (Sadan, 1997). When empowerment is regarded as primarily an internal process then development of critical consciousness is taken as an achieved goal of empowerment process while considering actual achievements/changes as the ultimate goals of the empowerment processes; critical consciousness is treated as an initial yet significant stage of the process (Kieffer, 1984; Gruber & Trickett, 1987; as cited in Sadan, 1997).

Karl (1995) explains Conscientization as a major step towards empowerment. For women to be able to address gender inequalities, Karl states recognizing that these problems are a result of inherent structural and institutional discrimination is of crucial importance in the framework of empowerment of women. They should also be able to acknowledge their part in reinforcing the modus operandi that taps into the restriction of their own growth (Kwapong, 2005).

Awareness-raising also referred to as consciousness raising, aims at building critical consciousness in masses so that they can question the status quo and move away from the existing social order that suppresses them in one way or the other. Kabeer (2001) says consciousness raising will help women develop a critical perspective on the social order and not to yield to its pressures unquestioningly. Awareness raising should include building a better self-image in women, recognition of their rights and capabilities, gender relations and their role in society, families and economy (Tasli, 2007). Batliwala (1994) recommends women organizations to provide women with a platform to make groups and express themselves freely while Rowlands (1997) suggests dialogue, discussions and analysis for developing critical consciousness in woman.

Awareness-raising, as a strategy, aims at altering the self-image of a woman and builds her confidence. It helps her discover and polish her capabilities and forms and repairs consciousness within her that enables her to act as a change agent for herself and the society. It encourages women for collective action. As Batliwala (1994) says that knowledge opens up a whole new lot of avenues for women through which they can make informed changes in their personal and public lives. Consciousness raising is an important step in the process of women empowerment to foster women's critical thinking and capabilities. This will help women analyse the world order they live in conceptualize socio-cultural changes they require and then toil for that conceptualization (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

So it can be concluded that an empowerment process that is based on awareness building is most appropriate for a model of empowerment that constitutes generative form of power and in its productive form that power strives for a better self-image and development and nurturing of skills and capabilities that are necessary for personal growth and societal change for betterment. And as Dighe (1995) and Kabeer (2005) have depicted through substantial evidences that it is education that can most effectually alter cognitive capabilities. It is education that enables women to gain access to knowledge, information and new ideas (Kabeer, 2005) that can transform their lives by providing them a new perspective on life and a lot of new vistas to explore.

Education being an integral part of human development helps the legatees construct and deconstruct scientific hypotheses and generate a better understanding of the world around us to

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perpetuate progression in every sphere of life. Along with the income generation capacity, education is perceived as the key to the golden door of success and equal participation of women in the development process. It is true that women need education to be able to participate in the society, but the nature of this education has not been sufficiently questioned.

If education is to have any value for women, it must be a means to raise their consciousness about the oppressive structures that keep them in positions of powerlessness; most educational systems do not provide a climate for such thinking skills to develop (ISIS, 1983). Postmodern view of education believes that the current educational system, which is a reflection of the current oppressive social context, is characterized by an inherent biasness which favours whites, males and rich on expense of everyone else. It promotes primarily the interests of those who are in positions of power; therefore, it should be reformed to highlight the achievements (and interests) of non-whites, females and poor (Hicks, 2004).

Existing educational systems have not provided women with the tools to understand and analyse the true nature of social, political and economic systems that govern their lives and oppresses them, and this is why they have failed (ISIS, 1983). If women are to be change agents in their societies, the education offered them must be a tool for consciousness raising and action.

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: AROUND THE GLOBE

## Introduction

Higher education has special tasks and responsibilities which concern men and women equally. Higher education provides experts (in every field) and social and economic leaders a platform for personal and professional training. It gives the leaders confidence and polishes their capabilities with knowledge and technical skills' trainings to cope with the challenges of the present century. It trains scientists, architects, engineers and others to invent, adopt and operate state of the art technology in all sectors. In developing countries trained local experts are more suitable to address and define local problems and contribute to a viable solution. Higher education is also responsible for generating competent teachers for all levels of the education system to effectively meet the requirements of the growing knowledge economies in the world.

Fundamentally development is concerned with expanding choices for the masses. An accessible quality higher education system, offering a wide range of fields to choose from and helping students reach their potentials is therefore a development achievement in itself (Task Force on Higher Education, World Bank, 2000). Higher education is linked with better skills, higher productivity and higher human capacity which leads to an improved, quality living. Education at all levels is essential to transform a society and economy based on manufacturing to enable it to participate in knowledge economy. Over the past decades special attention has been given to primary education; this has resulted in higher education in a perilous state in most of the developing countries (World Bank, 2013).

Higher education for women increases their chances of employment and university provides them space and freedom (Quinn, 2003- as cited in Leathwood and Read, 2009) along with cultural stature (Jansen, 2006). Across the world, more women are participating in higher education than men however, this increase is not seen in all countries and is patchy.

Beijing Conference 1995 and World Conference on Education 1998 initiated the discussion of higher education and gender equality followed by gender equity. Beijing conference highlighted the need for equal access and equal treatment of women in education. Also, it realized the need to create an educational environment in which women and men are equally encouraged to attain

their full potential, experience freedom of thought and enable women to acquire knowledge and skills; educational material has to be free of stereotypical representation of gender and discriminatory notes[23].

World Education Conference focused on policy framework for reducing gender bias from higher education and consolidation of women's participation at all levels and in all disciplines. It also discussed the need to revamp the curricula and research practices to remove gender inequalities and biases at all levels of management. [24]

## Global Context

The most powerful demand on development policy related to gender equality throughout 1970s to 1980s remained to be equal recognition of all citizens (men and women) in terms of access, progression and completion of education (Unterhalter, 2008).

Within higher education, liberal feminists adopted a two pronged approach. On one hand it attempted to reduce socialization effects that reinforced the gendered differences between men and women and implied that women are inferior in their ability to compete and succeed on equal terms. On the other hand, liberalists tried to eliminate the social barriers that prohibited women's full participation in higher education due to different gendered experiences (MacDonald, 2002).

American higher education, from the very beginning, has represented an educational philosophy that has been under influence from the State, historic events and popular sentiments (Leathwood and Read, 2009). It began with an aim of preparing young men for the ministries,

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[23]http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~/media/field%20office%20beijing%20plus/attachments/beijingdeclarationand platformforaction-en.pdf

[24]World Conference on Higher Education, 9 October, 1998. www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm

courts or hospitals; but now has evolved into a broad spectrum of tailored study programs. The female experience of postsecondary education has also grown over the time.

Leathwood and Read (2009) have combined many researches from the globe and show the general trend of increasing women scholarship in higher education and its acceptance in the societies around the world: in northern Nigeria Hausa tradition, religious ideology, colonialism and recent Islamic group's up rising have resulted in a very uneven field for women students but Jordan has experienced a positive impact of Islamist groups on women higher education. Headscarf, private universities and segregated educational provision have made possible for religious families to send their females for higher learning. Likewise, adopting Islamic outlook on higher education has made it possible for Iranian women to attend university in increased numbers than before (Pereira, 2007; Jansen, 2006 and Shavarini, 2005- cited in Leathwood and Read, 2009).

Most of the African states endorse the Rights of Women in Africa (The African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's rights) and specifically agree to all forms of support for elimination of all elements of discrimination against women to obtain education and training. It leaps forward to guaranteeing removing gender stereotypes from syllabuses and media to restrict the perpetuation of gender inequality and protect women. This commitment has resulted in a higher number of girl students opting for higher studies and completing graduate degrees, though fewer proceed to professional lives (Ojobo, 2008).

During Nazi control, women's education suffered enormously as Nazis only regarded women as wives and mothers; only after World War II situation for women students and academics began to improve in Germany (Zimmer et al., 2007). Similarly, Poland also showed a change in attitude towards women's higher education participation after the Second World War, as the new communist regime prioritized them as a means to achieve labour force requirements (Siemienska, 2000).

On the other hand, Silova and Magno (2004- as cited in Leathwood and Read, 2009) show that gender equity and women in higher education have been a myth in socialist system and did not improve with democracy in central Europe and former Soviet Union.

Australia has always focused on efficiency and performance of their markets which keeps gender equity in higher education at bay.

Technology and basic sciences courses still represent minimum participation of women in Asia. Women are more concentrated in arts, education, and medicine and with time they have become a significant population in law studies, management and commerce and agricultural sciences.

In central Asia, increasing number of women in sex industry has reduced their opportunities in higher education. Other Asian countries, like Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Brunei have considerable women population of higher education group in higher education institutions. However, this access appears restricted in other Asian countries. In Sri Lanka women and their parents aspire for higher education as a means to move upwards socioeconomically, but women participation is deterred by limited facilities and only a selective group is able to become part of higher education. The lack of appropriate alternate tertiary education opportunities further enfeeble their attempts to follow their ambitions (Dort et al., 2006).

Philippines has a large private sector that caters to the needs of higher education age group which provides opportunities for many secondary school graduates.

China and Indonesia have focused primarily on primary and lower secondary education while Maldives has no higher education institutes for the secondary school leavers. Japan and South Korea have universal primary education and almost universal secondary education have a lower percentage of women pursuing higher education.

Majority of female population in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Laos, Papua New Guinea and Cambodia are reported to face inferior gender dilemma all their lives. It starts with their birth and continues with their education years. Higher secondary and higher education are not considered necessary for these women in the social norms that ascribes to their roles as wives and mothers only.

Patriarchal attitude and gendered norms and values restrict women's access to higher education. Japan, Korea and China despite liberal educational policies too have restricted access of women

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to higher education due to the patriarchal attitude. Women students need higher scores than men to be eligible for higher education admission in Philippines and china. To address socio-cultural constrictions Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, china, Korea and japan have established a number of women colleges and women universities to help women attain higher education qualification (Leathwood and Read, 2009).

Poverty in Sri Lanka, Philippines and Indonesia further obstruct the chance of women to enter post secondary academy. Sri Lanka offers free education at primary, secondary and higher levels but women from low income households continue to be school drop-outs and women from middle and higher income groups attain opportunities to attend universities and go to an international university for postgraduate courses.

Women from affluent families in Japan prefer private universities over junior colleges while their parents prefer university education for sons and college degree for daughters. Women are sent to less privileged institutions and shorter courses that inevitably maintain gender inequality and reflects in personal and career development of women.

India too presents a dismal picture of women participation in education as it went through nationalism, prominence of religion and resurgence of patriarchal values (Chanana, 2004). The economic decline and resulting poverty in 1990s further tapered women's progress in higher education and labour market. In India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh higher education centres in urban areas and are considered a 'monopoly of the middleclass'. Higher education is a status symbol and is valued for better matrimonial prospects rather than economic or other social benefits (Morley, 2005).

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

### Introduction

Higher Education in Pakistan can be categorized into two main sectors, the universities, which are sometimes also referred to as the Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs) and the affiliated colleges' sector, (HEC, 2015) and a large distance learning program (World Bank, 2014). It is largely a public provisioned service, both in universities and colleges' sector. 57% universities

and 89% colleges are from the public sector catering to 57% and 91% students in that division respectively (PES, 2015). All the public sector HEIs offer a wide variety of subjects to choose from while the private sector predominantly fills niches for vocationally oriented programs mainly in business and technical fields. Also, it plays a significant role in research and learning but a larger proportion of research is mainly generated at the public universities platform (World Bank, 2014).

At the time of the creation of Pakistan there were only two universities, namely University of The Punjab and the University of Sindh. First private sector university, Agha Khan University, was established in 1983 and after 1995 number of universities in both private and public sector rose sharply[25]. Today, there are 171 recognized universities/Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs) in the country[26].

Universities are a significant part of higher education in Pakistan that delivers education for academic degrees in various fields and promotes research and generally corresponds with the age cohort of 18 to 24 years. This sector is offering education for grades 13 and onwards, for a bachelors degree and 17 onwards for Masters/MPhil degrees. PhD is also awarded by the universities. English is the language of higher education in all universities for all subjects while some colleges use Urdu along with English as the language for social sciences.

Education Development Index (EDI) of Pakistan is 0.372, one of the lowest in the region along with Afghanistan, and Gross Enrolment at higher level of education is 10% (UNDP, 2015). The universities have the least share in education system i.e., 0.06% but the overall percentage of students in HEIs has been increasing over the years. This upward trend also comprises an increasing number of women accessing HEIs. Degree colleges show a participation of 24% by women while universities' data shows an almost 50% enrolment of women (PES, 2015) at HEIs.

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[25] http://www.hec.gov.pk/Stats/Documents/1973_statistical_booklet_on_hec(2001-02to2003-04).pdf

[26] Information last accessed on 7th September 2015 from http://www.hec.gov.pk/Ourinstitutes/pages/Default.aspx

Higher education has been a neglected area of Pakistan government but in early 2000s began a transformation. Not only government spending on higher education was increased but also a stronger commitment to the sector became evident with the establishment of Higher Education Commission (HEC) in 2002.

HEC is an autonomous body responsible for distributing funds, provided by the federal government, to universities/DAIs and certifying their degree programs. Colleges are funded by provincial governments but follow curriculum of the HEC funded DAIs that they are affiliated with. HEC has now started to fund private sector universities through a number of avenues as well for research and infrastructure facilities. It is working meticulously to ensure quality, access, governance and good management of Higher education in Pakistan.

## Women Education, Empowerment and Gender

Female education in Pakistan[27], like the overall education system, is a legacy of the colonial rule; it was introduced in 1854 and developed sluggishly till the independence year. At the time of the inception of Pakistan there were only 82 female secondary schools, with 11% female teachers and 13% girls enrolment (FBS, 1958). Since then many efforts have been initiated or at least discussed but female education has lagged behind marginally with respect to men in many aspects.

As apparent, the relative ratio of girls was low at all levels and showed a dismal picture at the higher education level. Political upheaval of the country further abrogated the girls' education

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[27] This part is a brief discussion of all educational reforms and their provisions for women of Pakistan. It is based on a varied material read by the author. For detailed study one can consult:
- Pakistan in Perspective 1947-1957 by Ahmad, M., (1997), in Education by Raza, R. (ed.) Oxford University Press pp. 238-275
-The Modern Pakistani Woman in a Muslim Society by Chipp, S. A., (1980), in Chipp, S. A. and Green J. J. (eds.) Asian Women in Transition. Pennsylvania State University Press.
-The Crisis of Education in Pakistan by Hayes, L. D., (1987),
-The Nation-state, Educational Rhetoric and the Construction of Gender in Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan by Saigol, R., (1995), ASR Publications.
[19] - Women and the State in the Third World: Some Issues for Debate in Rai, S. M. and Lievesley, G. (eds.) Women and the State: International Perspectives by Rai, S. M., (1996),
   - For a brief review please see: Nationalism, Gender and Education: Evaluating the Place of Female Education in Post-independence Pakistan by Qamar Naseem. www.eoc.org.hk
   - Female Education and National Development: As Viewed By Women Activists and Advocates by Saleha Parveen 3Bulletin of Education & Research June 2008, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 33-41

in the country along with poverty, lack of female teachers and limited access to educational institutes due to long distances and lack of infrastructure. Educational Acts lacked compliance and even if all girls were willing to attend schools/colleges/universities there was just not enough space to accommodate the students.

The founder and first Governor General of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah, was a *modernist* who envisioned a just society that would provide women with equal opportunities. Therefore, first educational conference (1947) in Karachi comprised of women's committee which gave a heads up for the improvement of female education. It also recommended provision of universal, free and compulsory education, expanding facilities to cater to girls/women and improvement of university education. However, educators and bureaucracy were deficient in progressive approaches and failed to realize the potential of education for development. Resultantly, at the crucial time of building a base for modern education nothing was actually conceived or done.

A bisection of educational system had taken roots by this time, the private secondary schools by local bodies and the Orthodox Muslims' school by religious organizations. The latter were predominant in the rural areas and were prejudiced against women education; further marginalizing rural women.

All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) began in 1949 by a group of modern educated women of Pakistan, chaired by Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan. It was an influential organization, which claimed to be apolitical and undertook numerous projects aiming at welfare of women and promoted women education through establishment of schools and colleges.

In 1959 (General Ayub Khan's reign) National Education Commission made some pertinent revisions of the entire educational setup including questioning the nature and the purpose of the education for women (Noreen and Khalid, 2012). The report had a special section 'Women Education' reserved for women education, specifically to address the problems of women education. It accentuated the importance of educating women as teachers, doctors and nurses, and training them as secretaries and office mangers was advised followed by the need to revise curriculum in order to include new century skills and spiritual needs of the masses. For higher education of women the teaching of fine arts was recommended and participation in any

organized national program was made mandatory. These programs were designed for nursing and adult education and trainings in civil and military defence. These recommendations proved unsuccessful at the national forum but present a picture of the engendered educational policies in Pakistan. A closer look will, however, reveal that all these policies sustained the status quo and subscribed to the traditional role of women as homemakers, secretaries, nurses and school teachers.

Simultaneously the Five Year Plans, first (1955-60) as well as second (1960-65) and third (1965-70), instructed the government to work for increasing women's access to education at all levels and to train female teachers for schools, specially at the primary levels. The third five year plan entailed the assessment of the low participation of women in education, provision of scholarships for girls and common schools for boys and girls. Also, it suggested working with local women organization's to ensue an attitudinal change towards women education.

Educational reforms under Noor Khan's (then Minister for Labour and Education) supervision did not focus on women education but did restate the need for trained teachers especially at the rural locales. Meanwhile women organizations like APWA kept working for their aims. And subsequently the second phase of educational reforms ended with a modest change in the status of women education with respect to enrolments and overall educational achievements of women.

The Education Policy 1972 aimed at achieving universal primary education for both boys and girls and equalizing access of girls to education but at the higher education level there was no provision related to women education. However, this policy period witnessed an increase of six public universities with an overall higher enrolment and a 2.3% increased participation rate of women in higher education (Isani, 2001). In 1979 the Education Policy came with the aim of harmonizing education all through Pakistan with respect to Islamic ideology and modern knowledge. It moved with the proposed change to 3-tier educational system and degree colleges were made part of higher education. As a highlight all university curriculum was recommended to be revised, co-curricular activities were to be promoted, libraries were to be equipped and expanded and only women universities were to be established over the coming five years. Moreover, post graduate classes were to be introduced at women degree colleges.

The 1992 policy envisaged to transform higher education as demand oriented study programs for the seekers and all curricula was to be reviewed to bring it in line with modern knowledge and disciplines (Isani, 2001). However, the new curricula and institutional changes did not appear inclined to consider gender as a possible inclusion.

The Education Policy of 1998 was announced to serve for twelve years, concluding in 2010. It identified the existing approach to education as 'simplistic' and a mere 'expansion' of the existing structure. It reiterated Pakistan's commitment to international forums and made certain new targets to exhibit compliance (Ahsan, 2010). This included more emphasis on the women education.

Education Policy 2009 addresses the gender dimension of higher education in Pakistan but lacks any support in terms of curriculum revision or expanding facilities to include women in higher ranks. It discusses many pertinent issues related to higher education system but no strategy is defined to develop higher education as an explicit tool for empowerment or awareness of women.

Even today access, retention and completion of higher education is an issue for Pakistani women. With 1998 education policy's focus on increased access to higher education, the establishment of women universities for enhancing women's access to higher education institutions has helped many women enter higher education. However, the pool of women eligible for higher education remains limited due to gender disparity at primary and secondary levels.

At higher education level, one can still observe a limited participation of women students in fields of science and technology and a lower self esteem in women students due to societal attitude of negativity. Similarly, research shows that lack of universities' commitment in promoting women in all fields results in underachievement of their potentials and a decreased number of women pursuing careers. Although there is gender parity currently at higher education institutions, as HEC has worked hard for improving accessibility of higher education for students, and women are achieving better grades than men, most of the women do not opt for employment after completion. Out of the 24% working female population in Pakistan only

2% (Human Development Report, 2014) hold positions as legislators, managers and other senior officials of Pakistan.

Conclusively, as all efforts have always been focused on welfare rather than development, women have not achieved success in empowering themselves nor the rigid private public dichotomy of the society led women become part of the public sphere. This further caused reticence of women empowerment in public and private sphere with male domination as a permanency.

Educational policies have been a flag bearer of the colonial past for women in Pakistan. They stereotyped home economics, child care, teaching and nursing as the feminine fields necessary for women to be trained as mothers and housekeepers. Political male elites intended the core of women to stay unchanged and this has been achieved through education which reiterated the status and role of women in the society. Modernity did encompass women but left the dichotomy of public private sphere untouched which preserved male dominance.

Even for professional training, medicine and teaching have always been preferred for women in higher education as sex segregation is part of the society and female nurses and doctors serve to satisfy the medical needs of women. Therefore, this empowerment is restricting women as gender divisions are a strong part of the society.

Despite considering them a resource in development, women's roles have been restricted by the patriarchal, traditional society. They have been educated primarily as mothers and housewives and this mind set is hard to change as the educational system reaffirms the dominant social political ideologies, norms values and beliefs (Saigol, 1995). Political will and execution of policy have always been a weak link in taking measures for women education.

However, with globalization and initiatives of HEC a trend change can be observed in terms of gender division of professional fields, subject choices and career options but a lot needs still to be administered to make women an effective part of Pakistan's development.

# CHAPTER 3
## RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

## OVERVIEW

This chapter entails the research design of the study, including the methodological underpinnings. It describes the locale of study and informs about the informants' selection and data collection and analysis. Strong consideration has been given to ethical issues concerning data management and are presented in this section in detail.

## LOCALE OF THE STUDY

Islamabad[28]covers 906 Sq.Kms. and has a population of 805235 persons (53.93%males and 46.07 % females). Islamabad has a rural population of 276055 (34.28 %) and a larger urban population of 529180 (65.71 %). Also, it has the highest percentage of literate adults as compared to all other cities of Pakistan[29]. Adult literacy rate is 84% with 91% males and 78% females. In urban Islamabad 95% males above 15 years are literate while percentage of literate women is 84%. Rural Islamabad has 82% literacy for men above 15 years of age and 69% for adult women. City's unemployment rate is 11%.

In 1960 capital of Pakistan was shifted from Karachi to Islamabad therefore, administratively it is federally controlled even though it is a part of Punjab province. It is a planned city with rising population, economy and urban development.

Islamabad is known as the most assorted metropolitan city of Pakistan in terms of its population composition. Its pleasant temperature, lush green scenery and undulating landscape along with excellent basic infrastructure has invited the largest expatriate and foreigner population into the city. This city presents an ethnic mix of populations as a large migrant population that has come

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[30] Demographic information has been taken from Federal Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan website. http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//tables/District%20at%20glance%20Islamabad.pdf

All data is based on the 1998 census, with only an estimated data set available for the city.

[29] Please refer to appendix Ai for a table of adult literacy in Punjab.

from all parts of Pakistan and from other countries too. Mostly local migrants are from Punjab but a substantial number of people have come from Khyber Pakhtun Khawa, Sindh and Azad Jammu Kashmir as well. Smaller number of residents has emigrated from Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Baluchistan and Gilgit Baltistan.

Urdu remains the predominantly spoken language within the city while English is also commonly used. 72% of population report Punjabi as their mother tongue while 11% population is Pashto speaking natives. 10% are Urdu speakers, 1% Saraiki and Sindhi and 7% account for other regional languages. Islam is followed by 95% of the population, 4% is Christian community and 1% other religious minorities reside in the capital. (TheCapital, http://www.islamabadthecapital.com/islamabad/demographics/)

Also, a gradual increase in its business and commerce activities has attracted labour force from throughout Pakistan, including larger cities like Lahore, Karachi and Quetta. It is also the main diplomatic boulevard of the country with all major embassies, consulates and missions. It has long served as a resting spot for all tourists heading up north and a host to a large student body which comes from every corner of the country to be part of the degree awarding institutions within the capital territory.

14 universities are chartered under government of Pakistan and are recognized by HEC in Islamabad. These universities offer a vast variety of academic fields for students as well professionals to choose from. Most of the universities offer hostel facilities; this accommodation may or may not be within the university premises and may be managed and operated by a third party. There is an influx of students in Islamabad HEIs from other parts of the country as many universities offer quotas and merit and need based scholarships. Moreover, they hold a better position in ranking of HEC and growing trade and commerce within the city provides students a chance to find a prospective job for themselves as well.

This study has been carried out within Islamabad. The general universities selected from the HEC listing are all located in the urban region of the city. This aided in easy access due to close proximity. The five sites are chosen keeping in mind the concept building sampling to be followed in the research. These five sites are higher in HEC ranking of general universities of

Islamabad so serve as information rich sites where students come for undergraduate, graduate and doctorate degrees along with professional diplomas and executive courses. For most of the faculties and programs admissions are offered only once a year but in some instances biannual admissions are also called. These universities serve a large base of students and professionals and provide fitting environment for skills and knowledge nurturing. As general and large universities of Islamabad, each university enrols a minimum of 7000 students and offers a well built campus and research facilities to the students. These universities are known for international and national conferences/workshops, being participants of national level academic competitions and conducting annual job fairs for the student body. Men and women have equal chances of being selected for admissions and are given choices of every subject the university has to offer. As two of these universities offer international language courses for professionals, it gave an opportunity to interact and obtain a different dynamic of higher education and women empowerment from international students.

# MAP OF ISLAMABAD



Islamabad City.

Taxila Valley

Margalla Hills

Simli Dam

Zone III

Zone I

Zone II

Zone IV

Rawal Dam

Rawalpindi

Zone V

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| site I | | | |
| site II | | site IV | |
| site III | | site V | |

N

*Not to scale.
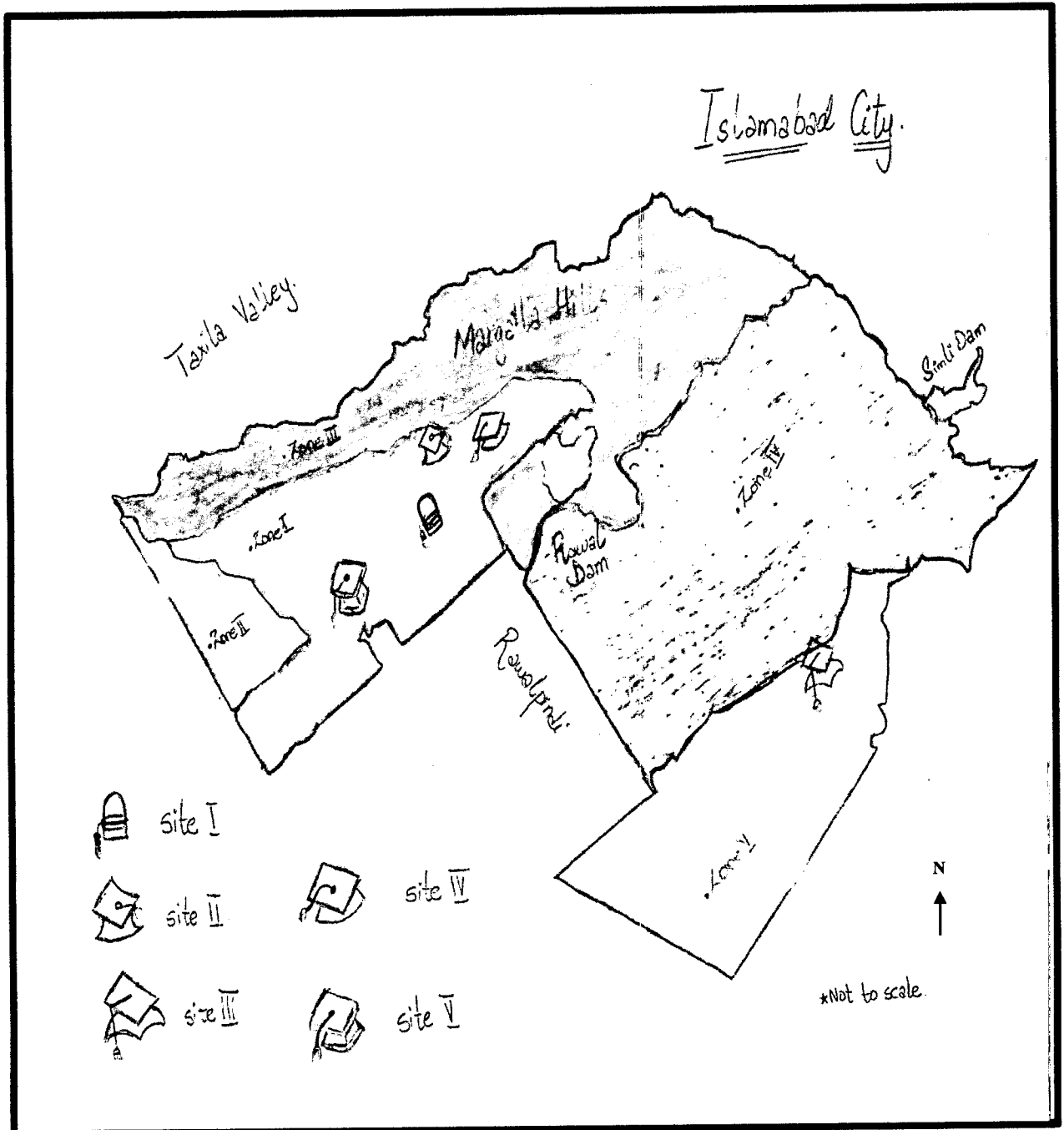
# RESEARCH PROCEDURES

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study customs Explanatory Sequential Research Design (ESRD), also known as two-phase model (Creswell, 2012). The overall design has been consistent with the contextual keystones of the research objectives; it demonstrates mixed methods research for better comprehension and for tackling the research from various angles. It has used the predictive power of quantitative data for generalization along with in-depth insight provided by qualitative data for a comprehensive understanding of the under observation concepts.

As this study deals with a psychological, people-oriented, educational issue it needed the combined strength of both types of data. On one hand quantitative data helped to gather descriptive information and examine relationships between different elements of the model and helped form a generalized assessment, and on the other hand qualitative data gives strength to context and the personal lives and experiences of the informants. It aids in understanding of the empowerment processes and emphasizes the voices of the participants.

## RATIONALE

Rowlands (1995) thesis has been a contextualised conceptualization of the term empowerment for the Honduran women who were exposed to a development project (external intervention) for sometime. It was one point in time research and had a smaller universe therefore the researcher opted for an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon through case study and in-depth interviews approaches combined with observation of their weekly meetings and daily routines. Similarly, researches that study the impact of higher education on the personal lives of women have often opted for interviews and case study approaches of a smaller sample while considering social and cultural context of the women. Majority addressed middle-aged working women and used semi-structured interviews as the research tool. Previous research has followed a path of inquiry which aims at analysing the impact of higher education on the lives of women specifically in terms of economic empowerment. Therefore, their overall research designs have been exclusively qualitative while researches related to curriculum of higher education have been studied majorly through document analysis only.

There exists voluminous precedence of using mixed methods approach for educational impact on self-image and relations to the public and private spheres, psychological studies of empowerment and educational research on academic materials and teaching techniques. On the other hand, many models of empowerment of women have also been analysed quantitatively, such as economic empowerment, use of contraceptives and health status and so on.

Based on previous research higher education and women empowerment are predicted to be positively correlated however gender equity is not found in such a simple narrative. It postulates that whenever women are introduced to formal and informal education they correspond to its innate empowering characteristics through becoming more aware and empowered in terms of economic gains and handling of their financial affairs[30]. Some recent researches have deviated towards the quality of higher education and the image it gives a woman to build upon and carry with her through life's every walk including financial activities. It has also begun a discussion on the material discussed and imparted to students in a higher education classroom and its acceptability and inclusion of gender. It is moving from women's access to higher education towards women's access in curriculum.

Women's access in curriculum implies a different meaning and a custom strategy required in different contexts since provision of higher education has always been impacted by social, political and cultural factors. Globally, the need for women at key decision making positions in educational institutes, including women as role models and to discuss their contributions in the respective fields, making sure that education helps them overcome internalized oppression (whatever its nature and characteristics are, depending upon the context) and think positively about their capabilities and futures and providing them space for building self-confidence and practicing that internal development are some highlights of the recent research findings.

Current analysis is broken into two stages and needs a generalized as well as a contextual picture of the personal empowerment status and gender knowledge, therefore it seemed more facilitated

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[30] There are numerous studies carried out on economic empowerment of women leading to overall empowerment (or empowerment in other aspects). Some examples I went through are: Hulme & Mosley (1996), Mayoux (1998), Hunt and Kasynathan (2000), Mayou (2002), Datta (2003), Rao (2003), Ezeasor and Ezeasor (2009).

through ESRD. Moreover, the respondents who participated in this study are currently part of the higher education in Pakistan, so are the current faculty members. Similarly, these respondents are not subjected to a development intervention but have been related in their capacity to higher education, as a service delivery, for a long time. The students who are now in senior year of their undergraduate program have a personal history and experience with higher education of three years which might continue after completion of their first post-secondary degree. HEIs in Islamabad offer an opportunity to include responses from students from all over Pakistan therefore, a generalization on behalf of this data and study results might not be a complete picture but it can be a starting point for more comprehensive studies towards specific areas of concern. The indigenous model constructed in the end consequently, cannot be very far from real scenario or a stretch of facts for the country.

## FRAME

The official HEC website provides record of all recognized universities in Pakistan and their ranking for each year based on several categories. HEC annual ranking report served as the sampling frame for selecting the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Islamabad as sites for the study.

Next, registrar office in every university contains student data and record related to degree course, CGPA, attendance, semester and area of origin. This data is used to maintain a referral list of students who were in second half of their degree courses. This list served as the sample frame of the respondents for the study.

## SAMPLE SELECTION

I have used the 2013 ranking of HEC[31] and opted for the category of general large universities of Islamabad. Further, according to HEC ranking criteria, large universities are those that have more than 7000 enrolled students. For easy approach to gatekeepers and facilitation of access

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[31] This was the latest official HEC ranking available when I planned and began data collection. It can be downloaded from
http://www.hec.gov.pk/InsideHEC/Divisions/QALI/Others/RankingofUniversities/Documents/Final_Ranking_Lists_dated5th%20July%202013.pdf

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inside the campuses and administrative units it was felt necessary that such universities should be selected which were originally established in the Federal region and/or have their headquarters established here. Based on this criteria five universities became part of this study.

For each university information on departments and faculties was collected through respective university's website and prospectus. Five main divisions were concluded on the basis of faculty[32]- Natural sciences, Applied Sciences (includes all subjects related to pure sciences, computer sciences and their application), Social Sciences (including architecture and accounts), Management Sciences and Arts and Linguistics. This division has been made to board-in the voices of students from various subject areas.

These students ranged from junior to final year students, had at least 70% attendance and their CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average- as guided by the office) was acceptable for their final exam eligibility of their respective semesters. Moreover, students from other provinces were specifically requested to participate in the research.

## INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE STUDY

As this is a two-phase, mixed methods research study quantitative as well as qualitative tools have been used. For first phase I have used questionnaires and in second phase the data has been collected through Focus Group Discussions and Interviews. Observation remained a common tool in both phases as all tools were self-administered. Details of each tool are provided in specific phase explanations.

## PHASE 1: QUANTITATIVE DATA MANAGEMENT

HEC and latest ASER[33] statistics show that overall female participation in higher education has risen to 46% in Pakistan and to 51% in Islamabad therefore, using Krejcie and Morgan sampling

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[32] Pleased refer to Appendix Aii

[33]http://www.aserpakistan.org/document/aser/2014/reports/national/ASER_National_Report_2014.pdf

table (1970)[34], a sample size of 378 was determined for an estimated population of 27100 enrolled women in five large universities of Islamabad.

In this phase sample was firstly divided amongst institutions according to the proportion of number of women students currently enrolled at each university. This was followed by a further proportional division of sample within a university according to the number of women students in each faculty. This information was explicitly requested from the university registrar office before starting data collection and was reconfirmed once at the site. Figure 3 represents the proportional division of the sample at the two stages.

**Figure 3**

**Sampling**

| Sites | UNI1=156 (41%) | UNI2=47 (15%) | UNI3=59 (12%) | UNI4=66 (17%) | UNI5=50 (13%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Natural Sciences | 22 | 8 | 6 | none | 4 |
| Applied Sciences | 31 | 7 | 22 | 8 | 14 |
| Social Sciences | 36 | 13 | 12 | 26 | 9 |
| Management Sciences | 45 | 21 | 12 | 22 | 18 |
| Arts & Linguistics | 30 | none | 7 | 10 | 5 |

Sample Size:378
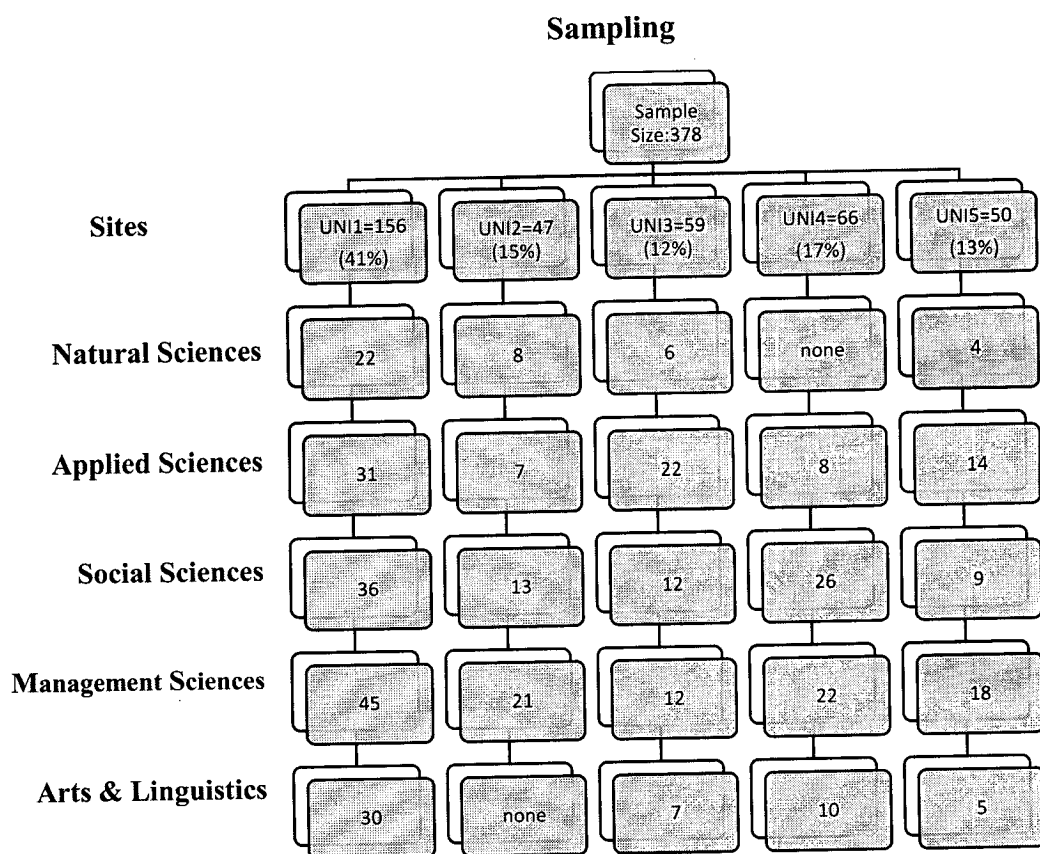
Source: Author

## QUESTIONNAIRES[35]

Questionnaires distributed among students were based on the personal empowerment model to determine the status of empowerment induced in the students as recipients of higher education. This was used to scale the status of core values, to identify the existence and extent of empowerment process; and to identify inhibitors and encouraging situations for formal analysis.

Primary instrument for this study has been the questionnaire which was divided into three main sections. It achieved an overall Cronbach's alpha rating of 0.893. In social sciences any instrument showcasing a consistency of more than 0.70 is deemed as *reliable* instrument.

**Content validity** was determined by analysis of literature presented in chapter two, with special focus on the personal empowerment model (Rowlands, 1995) and gender theory on curriculum for women (Yates, 2006). This facilitated in itemizing the concepts being researched through the instrument. For **construct validity** this was followed by discussions with supervisor, other experts (academia and social activists) and fellow students and a revised list of contextualized items was constructed. This list initially had 75 enquiry points and was divided into five broad themes. After the second feedback data collection instrument was finalized with three main sections- each catering to one specific theme of inquiry- and 51 elements in total. Any potential item that was found complex or confusing by the students, or overlapping and encompassing other elements by the experts was removed or modified accordingly.

Section 1 of the questionnaire aimed at eliciting information about the importance of higher education in women's lives and their own perception of the notion of empowerment and their own empowerment status accordingly. It was based on the literature of empowerment, education and development of core elements. Section 2 progressed with an attempt to understand the views of women students on if curriculum and co-curriculum have brought about the changes that depict the existence of personal growth. Section 3 was dedicated to gender aspect of knowledge and women's access to curriculum in higher education. Most

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[35] See Appendix Aiii

fundamentally Wolf-Wendel (2003) has been the inspiration for setting of this section on gender and higher education.

Actual data collection was preceded by a description of the study, its significance and the role and importance of participants. Similarly, each section was preceded by a note describing the key terms and familiarizing the potential participants with the content of questions and method for proper marking of options. Questionnaires also included a number of demographic questions but without any personal identification information. This part requested information about gender, age, marital status, residential affiliation, work experience and degree course and faculty. All but 12 questionnaires have been self-administered by the researcher; these twelve questionnaires were emailed to the respondents using google forms. This was a necessary step to include viewpoint of the few women students enrolled in limited degree courses like nanotechnology and Veterinary medicine. The internet based survey had exactly same worded questions and options. Each potential informant was sent the link and then reminded every two days via email to fill the form. Response rate for internet survey has been 100%.

The data collection time duration varied from university to university; the quickest were done in a day while at two of the universities two full days were spent and at another four full working days were required for getting questionnaires filled from the targeted population. Time duration varied as gatekeepers at each university allowed mobility differently. At some sites I was allowed to enter the shown classes and distribute questionnaires, some allowed free mobility in grounds and cafeteria but not classrooms while some arranged students to meet me in the office or library for filling questionnaires.

This quantitative data is augmented by a smaller set of qualitative data obtained through the FGDs and semi-structured faculty interviews. As an ESRD, qualitative data has helped in explaining and interpreting the findings from the quantitative data.

## PRE-TESTING

As questionnaire is the major data collection tool for this research, pre-testing was a necessary step to ensure appropriateness and sufficiency of the questionnaire; and to identify

questionnaire problems. In two of the selected universities questionnaires were administered to a small number of group (15 each) out of the target population. On average each questionnaire took eighteen minutes to be filled and general response rate was 4 out of 11.

Information provided by the respondents at the end of the questionnaire was utilized to revise the tool by adding elaborate instructions at the beginning of each section, changing the words of questions at a few places, reducing the number of open-ended questions and adding more options for assessment of women's views. The revised questionnaire takes an average nine minutes to be filled and is more convenient in terms of wording and options for the respondents to answer.

Surprisingly, one of the most recurring feedback comments came as the unfamiliarity with the concept of women empowerment. Respondents felt confused and queried what was meant by the term women empowerment? and what is expected from them as an answer? Some of the students who had idea of the concept showed an understanding of the term only in economic dimensions. Thus the open-ended question enquiring about respondent's view of women empowerment was broken down into two separate questions. First question, now, provided them a list to choose elements they view important for women empowerment and the second asked about their self-assessment depending on the elements they chose in the previous question.

Pre-testing also led to the realization that each respondent needed a verbal briefing before agreeing to fill the questionnaire and the main concerns included the time consumption and if they will be contacted time and again for further information. Also, before filling the questionnaire some respondents asked in detail the reasons of conducting the questionnaire.

## ANALYSIS

The first phase of the study uses quantitative analysis- frequencies, cross-tabulations and charts to form and understand a pattern of responses ascertained through questionnaires related to level of empowerment and general views of the respondents.

**SPSS** (version 18) has been employed for the descriptive analysis. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) is a windows based programmed which helps the researcher in data entry, analysis and presentation.

I have used SPSS in the initial phase of data collection and reporting to create the first database of this research. The quantitative data from closed-ended questions from the questionnaires was entered into excel sheets and then transferred to SPSS worksheets. This data was labelled accordingly and was assigned values. Data collected from internet based forms were fed directly into the software which relieved me from data entry procedures and any potential data entry errors.

Each form was coded 'form' with a subscript number (1,2,3,4 & 5) particularly assigned to the respondent's university, for easier future referencing and analyses and avoiding using the name of the university.

The initial tests performed were the internal consistency test and frequencies of the demographic questions to know the general profile of the respondents for a holistic picture.

For section 1 frequencies were calculated and standard deviation was tested to picture the general perceptions of women regarding women empowerment and their status and the role of higher education in promoting the development of theory core elements.

Curriculum and co-curriculum in section 2 were compared against each other to know the perception of women students on which aspect has accrued most changes in them which the markers of self empowerment.

For analysis, frequencies of responses to key questions followed by cross tabulations against marital status and faculty and degree were taken to interpret results in light of social and academic affiliation of the respondents. Based on these responses a semi-structured guide was prepared for the Focused Group Discussions and the semi-structured interview guide for the faculty as well. The open ended questions, which were not answered by majority, are treated as part of qualitative data and are used in next phase to interpret the personal views of the respondents gathered.

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# PHASE 2- QUALITATIVE DATA MANAGEMENT

According to Creswell (2012) an explanatory inquiry has to be followed by qualitative procedures to decipher a phenomenon. Three types of qualitative tools were used in this study to answer the questions and tying loose ends from the first phase. Concept building sampling was employed in this section.

## OBSERVATION

While waiting for questionnaires to be filled, gatekeepers to permit entry and allow research activities and waiting for faculty members to conduct the interviews I kept my journal and filed my field notes from observation of students and the environment of the institute.

Observation is a qualitative tool for gathering open-ended, first-hand information regarding people and sites. It helps in recording actual behaviour and analysing individuals who might be reluctant at some point to share any information or might be facing any difficulty in expressing themselves. However, as a nonparticipant observer I was restricted to only those individuals and sites where access has been possible and since most of the students appeared unaccustomed to formal research (Cresswell, 2012) rapport building for observation purposes has been difficult.

All fieldnotes were entered in a journal reserved for research, only fieldnotes made during FGDs and interviews were recorded on the FGDs and interview *protocols*[36], each observation corresponding to the specific question or opinion inquired. These fieldnotes have been descriptive as well as reflective.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

Focus groups are specifically helpful for gathering qualitative data from several individuals on the basis of shared understanding and specific views (Creswell, 2012).

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[36] Please refer to Appendix B for the layouts

Theory or Concept Sampling has been used here. Theory or concept sampling is a type of purposive sampling used in educational researches in which sites and individuals are chosen to generate information from different angles and discover a theory or certain concepts of an existing theory (Creswell, 2012).

The research locale provided a chance to interact with students from various academic affiliations and from universities students who were deemed to help with a better understanding of the concepts of personal empowerment and gender knowledge and express their views were requested for group discussions.

In this study six FGDs have been conducted. Table 2 shows the formation of each focus group. It was tried that every focus group had a diverse population to include as many perspectives as possible within the given scope of the study. Each FGD was attempted to include:

> At least one hostel boarder
> Students in second half/Last year of degree course (bachelors, masters, MPhil or PhD.)
> At least one member of any club/committee/student council
> Regular enrolment with attendance of at least 70%
> At least one member from all the five divisions constructed on the basis of faculties.

As these FGDs were a follow up to the first phase therefore, all questions asked were to build upon the quantitative results achieved previously. Moreover, participants were also asked to provide their personal experience in terms of self-empowerment elements of they feel any drastic change and also, to suggest any changes in the curriculum that they think can help bring change.

Sixth and concluding FGD, was conducted to include the viewpoint of male students and their understanding of the concept of women empowerment. For this discussion, a combined group of students from all five universities was requested to participate in a discussion based on men's view of women empowerment and their acceptance of the whole notion. With a gradual move towards making 'men facilitate women progress' (UNDP, 2013;2014 and 2015) it is important to attain and understand the thinking of fellow men to devise a policy which men can be a part of and not feel threatened by.

**Table 2**

## Focus Group Construction

| FGD # | Institution | No. of Students | Focus | | | | | Group | | | Profile | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Faculty | | | | | Hostel Boarder | Student Body Affiliation | Work Experience | Degree Program | | | |
| | | | N.S | A.S | S.S | M.S | A&L | | | | B | M | MS | P |
| 1 | UNI1 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | UNI2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| 3 | UNI3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 4 | UNI4 | 5 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | - |
| 5 | UNI5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 6 | - | 12 (m=7,f=5) | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 |

Source: fieldnotes

**Faculty Key:** N.S: Natural Sciences    A.S: Applied Sciences    S.S: Social Sciences    M.S: Management Sciences
A&L: Arts & Linguistics
**Degree Key:** B: Bachelors    M: Masters    MS: MS/MPhil    P: PhD/Doctorate

Focus Group Discussion guide is attached in Appendix B. The guide was designed to moderate the discussion around three broad themes- differences of core development among different faculties, low levels of self-esteem, positivity and dignity among students and lack of knowledge building regarding gender issues through higher education curriculum and co-curriculum.

Open-ended questions encouraged students to voice their experiences uninhibitedly and create options (Creswell, 2012) and responses themselves. Every participant was encouraged to take part in the discussion and in case of a similar view unanimity was seeked from the group, and if someone disagreed to the majority then was asked to elaborate her/his viewpoint or reasons (if any). Average duration for discussions has been 40 minutes and one FGD was conducted per day. All discussions were recorded using a digital recorder with participants' consent, while prominent emphasis on certain terms and other observations were recorded as fieldnotes on the discussion guide. English and Urdu both have been the medium of communication during FGDs.

## SEMI-STRUCTURED FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Faculty interviews were the last tool for qualitative data collection. A semi-structured interview was conducted with members of the curriculum- making/ revision committee/board from each university. This tool added the perspective of the faculty and provided their views on existing curriculum with regards to women and the changes required. Seldom probing was also used to make the interviewee clarify her/his point. English has been the main language of all interviews.

A total of eight interviews were conducted and each was recorded with due permission. Like most of the students, these interviewees did not ask for anonymity. Interview questions were based on the results and themes that emerged from the analysis of the data collected previously.

Table 3

**Faculty Interview Profile**

| Interviewee | Site | Sex | Faculty | Years at the Current Post |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | UNI1 | F | Social Sciences | 7 |
| 2. | UNI1 | F | Natural Sciences | 3 |
| 3. | UNI2 | F | Management Sciences | 5 |
| 4. | UNI3 | F | Arts and Linguistics | 5 |
| 5. | UNI3 | M | Applied Sciences | 5 |
| 6. | UNI4 | F | Social Sciences | 2 |
| 7. | UNI5 | F | Management Sciences | 3 |
| 8. | UNI5 | F | Social Sciences | 3 |

Source: fieldnotes

## ANALYSIS

In the second phase, the data has been analysed in the tradition of qualitative research. The core of qualitative analysis lies in the related processes of describing a phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how the concepts interconnect (Dey, 1993). Qualitative data analysis (QDA) is the

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process that transmutes written and recorded data such as interview and field notes into findings and conclusions.

A directed content analysis approach has ensured that patterns and themes which have emerged from the data are carefully verified. Content analysis is a systematic way to distil information from qualitative data collection methods into categories or themes that help make sense of the expansive data.

Directed content analysis uses inductive approach but initial coding starts with the existing theory or relevant research findings. Then during data analysis the researcher lets themes emerge from the data. This approach helps to validate and extend a conceptual framework (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). When there is a base study or a preliminary model is available then on can generate an initial list of coding from the existing model and theory and modify them during data analysis as the new themes surface inductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The following table shows the themes and codes generated for this study. Applying directed content analysis I started with the literature reviewed, specifically the model adopted, then used the data collection tools (FGDs and Interviews) and lastly the data itself for determining the themes and codes for analysis of qualitative data. Following table shows the linking themes and codes generated from literature and data collection tools.

**Table 4**

**Initial Coding**

| Themes | Inhibitors | Encouragers | Barriers in Higher Education | Changes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Codes | Machoism<br><br>Hostile male behaviour<br><br>Educated women supporting status quo | Local elders being supportive<br><br>Local organisations raising awareness<br><br>Some educated women bringing change within their households | Lack of women at policy making positions<br><br>Lack of curriculum revision to include women<br><br>Not inclusive of gender issues | Development of literacy<br><br>Mobility<br><br>Confidence |

During analysis, any aspect mentioned in group discussions was listed and analysed in terms of repetition and emphasis given during the discussions. For this fieldnotes and audio recordings were consulted repeatedly. Later, these aspects were categorized accordingly. Two new themes emerged most prominently and became part of final coding. Table 5 represents the set of final codes for analysis. Preliminary and final coding have been *descriptive* and *pattern*[37], respectively.

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[37] Descriptive codes are created in the beginning of the analysis and pattern codes come last as the patterns become clearer through data examination.

In this study descriptive codes are based on literature reviewed and initial data management; they carry little inference and are mainly exploratory. Pattern codes represent consistencies of human affairs as documented in the data and are mostly a part of inhibitors, encouragers and changes categories.

**Table 5**

## Final Coding

| Themes | Core Development | | | Gender Awareness | |
|--------|---------|------------|------------|---------|----------------|
| **Sub Themes** | **Inhibitors** | **Encouragers** | **Barriers in Higher Education** | **Changes** | **Recommendations** |
| **Codes** | Hostile male behaviour<br><br>Unsupportive male behaviour<br><br>Educated women supporting status quo*<br><br>Subject Bias<br><br>Lack of positivity<br><br>Lack of vision | Elders in household becoming supportive<br><br>Some educated women bringing change within their households | Lack of women at policy making positions<br><br>Lack of curriculum revision to include women*<br><br>Excessive focus on higher GPAs<br><br>Teacher's gender bias<br><br>Not inclusive of gender issues<br><br>Lack of HEC in recognizing gender equity needs<br><br>Commodification of knowledge<br><br>No centralized policy<br><br>Uncredited co-curricular<br><br>No motivation and incentive for extra curricular activities | Development of literacy<br><br>Mobility<br><br>Confidence*<br><br>Interaction | Teacher trainings*<br><br>Class Discussions**<br><br>Planned seminars**<br><br>Diversity*<br><br>Media campaigns<br><br>Credit awarding co-curriculum* |

Source: Author

Note:* are the items that have been emphasized by the students as well as the faculty.
** Emerged from the sixth FGD as an agreeing point between men and women.

Following figure explains the basic definition of the themes used for coding.

**Figure 4**

**Definition of Categories**

| | |
|---|---|
| Inhibitors | Include any data which can be seen as a social hindrance in empowering women. |
| Encouragers | Include any data that shows how social values help empower women |
| Barriers in higher education | Include any data that relates to the shortcomings of higher education in including women in the process of empowerment. |
| Changes | Include any data that reveals the changes women observe in themselves, in their households and society that has had positive impact for their empowerment. |
| Recommendations | Include any data which can be identified as a suggestion for improving higher education experience of women in terms of self empowerment. |

Source: Author

NVivo (8), designed to assist in analysis of qualitative data, helps the researcher to analyse research items such as questionnaires, interview transcripts, focus groups' transcripts and also in categorizing and examining other literature. It enables the coding and analysis of text, image, audio and video data.

In this research, NVivo has been particularly useful in exploration and description of patterns from semi-structured, open-ended interview and FGDs transcripts and theory evaluation as

well as theory building. This included *audio transcribing* the notes from the discussions and interviews; coding the data with key words as a way of identifying commonalities and variations; identifying common and variable patterns within data; and identifying themes which link or explain the data.

Secondary sources like HEC provided revised curriculums and plans were uploaded into the software. With these, the recorded FGDs and interview responses made the prime set of second database that supported and helped to decode and understand the first database to ascertain some concrete conclusions.

NVivo proved helpful in managing data and ideas and exploring data.

## LIMITATIONS OF DATA

The sample used in this research only focuses on general universities while HEIs in Pakistan include degree colleges as well as degree awarding universities. There are many types of degree awarding institutions all around the country with different specific fields of specializations. And as women percentage varies with subject or specialization wise and with type of institution, this factor is important for an accurate generalizability of results. General universities offer a wide variety of subjects for students to choose from therefore, they exhibit an eclectic environment and have a larger student body which is not very closely knitted in many ways. While specific specialization (such as medical colleges, accountancy houses) Degree Awarding Institutions do not exhibit a varied multicultural outlook and have a distinct variation of male female population as per subject area; so data collected from such institutes may have highlighted an entirely different set of elements and situations of empowerment in terms of curriculum and co-curriculum.

Similarly, it does not move around the differences between women universities and co-education universities. All tools were intended for a collective view of the women students and did not target women university students and co-education university students any differently.

This study provides a base for future endeavours and a basic outlook of how current curriculum and co-curriculum is shaping the minds of the students and how is it making them receptive of gender issues. We think what we are taught, so academics need to train minds about women. Moreover, it merely provides a description and impact of two basic elements of higher education practiced in universities and based on the data collected this study will only discuss the gaps and areas for support in these elements by educational planning. It does not go beyond curriculum to analyse the impact of teaching methods, university management, facilities and globalization or technology on the processes of empowerment.

Next, gaining access to sites and individuals was not uncomplicated due to the strict security conditions which further strained the quality of data collection as I was compelled to complete it within the time allotted by the gatekeepers.

Getting individuals to respond to requests for information was also a challenge because, as said earlier, many individuals lack the familiarity with formal research needs and procedures. Every research has limitations such as time and financial constraints, and also sometimes not gaining access to sites or participants due to the impact of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are different from informants because they are the ones who authorize researcher's entrance into the field. Students who participated in the research were all recommended by their administrations so this might have effected the responses given. While it was noted that for filling of questionnaires most participants were honest and diligently filled the questionnaire, a scant number of questionnaires did appear to have copied, improper and/or incomplete answers. This reinforces the lack of familiarity to formal research, hesitancy and inability to express; also this fact restricted data in gaining more insight from each individual who was not thoroughly sincere.

Moreover, despite my effort to include participants with varied outlooks this study remains mainly an urban viewpoint.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All educational researches must be heedful of ethical issues (Creswell, 2012); ethics have been the forefront agenda of this research stretching from the origins of the study to its final

completion. As Denzin and Lincoln (2009) relay, ethical consideration for research being involvement of stakeholders, attaining free consent of participants and to respect the culture of your research place.

For data collection, the researcher has been respectful to the sites of the study i.e. universities. A formal written permission was taken from each university and their entry requirements were fulfilled, as pertaining to the security concerns. Moreover, permitted timings were respected and efforts were made not to disturb the respondents or any regular activities taking place at the sites. In case of students' mid-terms or projects deadlines, I waited for them to get done and take out time for filling the questionnaires. Similarly, in case of FGDs care was taken to set timings and duration in consultation with the members beforehand to ensure minimum disturbance of their regular schedules. Each participant of this study has been fully informed about the purpose and nature of the research. Further, they were given a brief description of the participant demographics and how they fit in (same suit was followed for FGD participants and faculty interviews). Also, those who asked have been ensured of and confidentiality of responses is practiced. No recordings were done without the explicit consent of the speakers and in final reporting names of universities and participants were omitted to avoid any personal identification issues for them.

It is equally important to show respect to the audiences of your research (Creswell, 2012) therefore data has been reported honestly, without any alterations to suit prior predictions or any interest groups.

# CHAPTER 4
## RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## INTRODUCTION

The outcomes of both phase are presented together in this chapter. The central purpose of this research was to investigate the self-empowerment process of women students in higher education and the role played by the content communicated to them. This investigation undertook a comparison of their own perceptions and evidences -supported by literature- on education for women, to see the existing status of self-empowerment and awareness.

This chapter is arranged in order of data collection instruments used- as explained in Chapter 3.

## PHASE 1- QUANTITATIVE DATA- QUESTIONNAIRES

### AN OVERVIEW OF INFORMANTS' PROFILE[38]

A total of 378 participants filled questionnaires. Only 99 individuals shared their age, which revealed an average age of 23 years, with a majority of participants (86%) being single while 12% were married and 1% reported themselves as divorced. 3 (1%) women did not specify their marital status. Most participants were enrolled in postgraduate programs, 45% belonged to graduate programs and 1% were Doctorate studies scholars.

A Majority of the respondents belonged to Punjab, followed by Federal and then Khyber Pakhtun Khawa (KPK) and Sindh. Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan had equal share while Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) had the least number of participants in this survey. Figure 5 gives a graphical representation of the sample in terms of permanent residence. Out of these, 78% were

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[38] Please refer to Appendix C for a detailed table of the general demographic profile.

NOTE: All tables and descriptions contain figures rounded-off to one decimal place. The charts/graphs exported from SPSS present the exact tally figures for frequencies and percentages.

day scholars and 28% were boarding at either university provided accommodation or a private hostel.

**Figure 5**

**Sample Percentage from Each Area of Origin**
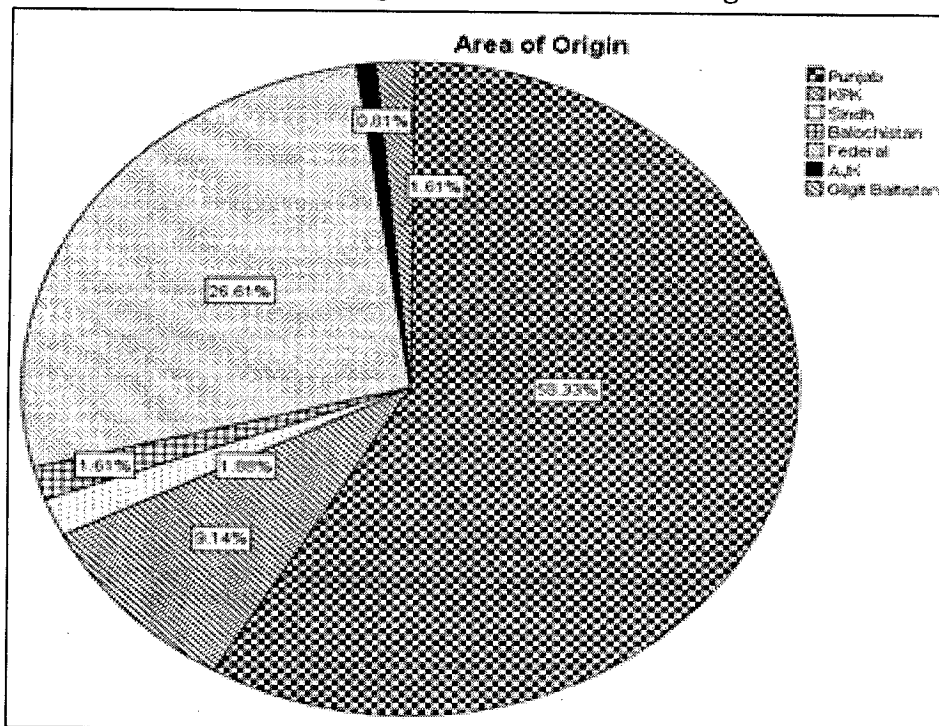
Only 11% were part of some sort of student body and carried out extra-curricular activities e.g. debating society, sports club, drama/cultural club etc. Whereas 30% held some form of formal employment at some point in their lives.

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the sample by university, as well as the cross-sectional percentage of participants from each faculty. It shows an overall picture of the sample that filled the questionnaires.

**Table 6**

**Number of Women Students from Each Subject Area and University**

| | | Constructed Divide the Respondent belongs to in terms of Subject Area | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Natural Sciences | Applied Sciences | Social Sciences | Management Sciences | Arts & Linguistics |
| | | Count | Count | Count | Count | Count |
| University Wise Responses Gathered | formUNI1 | 22 | 31 | 36 | 45 | 30 |
| | formUNI2 | 8 | 8 | 13 | 20 | 0 |
| | formUNI3 | 6 | 22 | 12 | 12 | 7 |
| | formUNI4 | 0 | 8 | 26 | 22 | 10 |
| | formUNI5 | 4 | 14 | 9 | 18 | 5 |
| | Faculty% | 11 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 14 |

Source: field data

With each university offering a wide array of subjects for men and women in all fields, Management Sciences, and specifically Business Administration, appears to be the popular choice for women in higher education; therefore in the final sample 30% students belonged to Management Studies. Applied Sciences at 20% is lower than Social Sciences with 25% participation. With English, Persian, Arabic and Urdu as most reported linguistic subjects, Arts and Linguistics constituted 14% share and Natural, Pure or Basic Sciences had 11% share in the total questionnaire sample.



FIGURE 6
DIVISION OF SAMPLE IN TERMS OF SUBJECT AREA
- Management
- Social Sciences
- Applied Sciences
- Arts&Linguistics
- Natural/Basic sciences
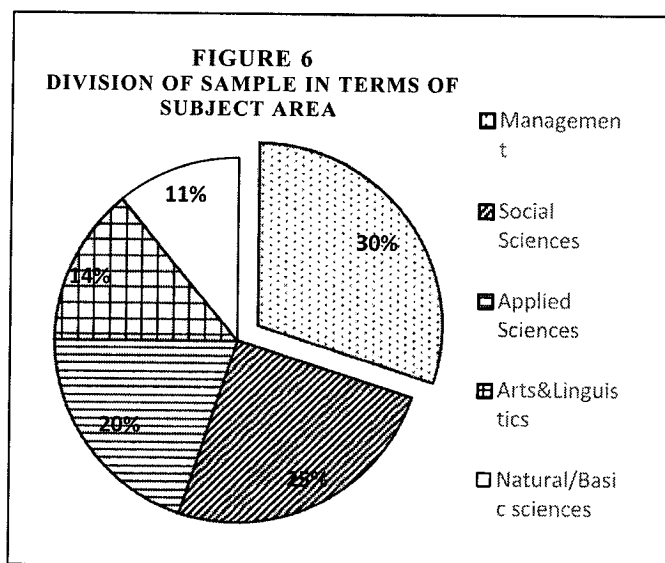
This indicates an overall choice pattern of women students. Management sciences being the most opted-for faculty followed by social sciences, applied sciences and then arts and linguistics. Pure sciences faculty remains the one with least women participation.

## SECTION 1

Section 1 began with an inquiry about the reasons for attainment of higher education for the students. This reflects on the priority of higher education in the respondent's life and was included to understand the mindset of the respondent for further analysis. The respondent could choose as many options as applicable to her experience and life history and also had an option to add anything if she wished. All respondents answered this question and a simple frequency table shows that out of total responses its economic payback, through higher paid jobs (53%), is the most prevalent reason for joining higher education. Availing its psycho-social benefits (50%) comes next. 49% believe in its inherent capability of increasing one's self-confidence and boosting one's self-esteem. 26% joined higher education on the suggestion of their parents but 33% actually like the idea of learning and knowledge exchange. This also implies that these students want to gain education for knowledge building, which opens up a multiplex of avenues for them. Students from Applied Sciences (62%) showed more inclination towards the economic gains of higher education but Social Sciences and Arts and Linguistic students are more attracted towards the personal growth and social benefits attained through higher education.

**Table 7**

**Reasons for Pursuing Higher Education**

| Reasons / Responses | Eagerness for learning/studying | Parents' insistence | Required for high paid jobs | Important for respect in the society | Important for self-respect and self-esteem | Any other reason added by the respondent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Selected** | 33% | 26% | 52% | 50% | 47% | 1% |
| **Not selected** | 67% | 74% | 48% | 50% | 53% | 99% |
| **Valid N** | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 |
| **Total Percentage** | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Source: field data

Eagerness to learn has the lowest percentage of responses after parent's insistence to join higher education. With respect to women participation in different fields, a cross-tabulation of the data

for this question reveals a fact that most students enrolled in arts or linguistic courses (62%) have been recommended to pursue higher education by their parents or family in general. This might be because parents who insist that their girls should study further prefer arts and linguistics programs more than the other programs; this information can also be used to infer that girls who are sent for higher education as the primary choice of their parents prefer arts and linguistic degree for themselves as it is *considered* easier than other graduate programs.

**Table 8**

**Higher Education Recommended by Parents**

| | | Constructed Divide the Respondent belongs to in terms of Subject Area | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Natural Sciences | Applied Sciences | Social Sciences | Management Sciences | Arts & Linguistics | Total |
| Respondent's parents insisted on studying further | Yes | 9 | 18 | 31 | 35 | 32 | 125 |
| | No | 31 | 55 | 65 | 82 | 20 | 253 |
| Total | | 40 | 73 | 96 | 117 | 52 | 378 |
| Total Percentage | | 22 | 25 | 32 | 30 | 62 | - |

Source: field data

Students who shared their own reasons included "*want to do something for my parents and my country*" (Telecom engineering student), "*we are nothing if we don't know what is going on around us*" (Psychology student), "*everyone in my in-laws is so educated I felt like a loser*" (Project Management student) and "*requirement of the field, you just have to do masters or a bachelors in my study area means nothing*" (Geophysics student). All these reasons can be broadly recognized under the umbrella of personal growth; and the potential of higher education to broaden your vision of life, self-esteem and social adherence.

Moving on, this section gave a list of elements and situations that a woman may regard necessary for empowerment in Pakistan. This question also gave an option to the respondents add their own input, even though this list was based on a literature-based model of personal empowerment (Rowlands, 1995), other reviewed literature and consultations.

**Table 9**

**Personal Empowerment of Women in Pakistan**

| | Not Necessary (%) | Necessary (%) | Importance Scale | Total Percentage | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy | 32 | 68 | 2 | 100 | 378 |
| Practical skills | 49 | 51 | 7 | 100 | 378 |
| Income | 43 | 57 | 4 | 100 | 378 |
| Career | 53 | 47 | 8 | 100 | 378 |
| Confidence | 29 | 71 | 1 | 100 | 378 |
| Esteem | 34 | 66 | 3 | 100 | 378 |
| Travel | 54 | 46 | 9 | 100 | 378 |
| Outdoor Activities | 57 | 43 | 10 | 100 | 378 |
| Personal time | 61 | 39 | 11 | 100 | 378 |
| Being part of a large | 54 | 46 | 9 | 100 | 378 |
| Friendships | 44 | 56 | 5 | 100 | 378 |
| Decision making | 45 | 55 | 6 | 100 | 378 |
| Any element added by the respondent | 97 | 3 | - | 100 | 378 |

Source: field data

Self-confidence remained the popular choice throughout the sample. A markedly large number of women students believe that a confident woman is more capable of running her life and day to day affairs efficiently; therefore, women should possess confidence. Interestingly, personal income falls slightly lower in the priority table and friendships and decision-making participation are deemed more important than travelling, participating in activities outside the household and being part of a larger social group. Similarly, a time slot allocated solely and specifically for one's own self was considered necessary by the least percentage of women. Out of 208 (55%) women who wanted a say in the household decision making, 36 are married women, this translates into 77% of the total married women. This can be used to infer that single women who are in the academic phase of their life do not want to bear the entire or major

responsibility sharing for household decisions while most married women want to have an equal participation in all household decision making.

Development of literacy skills, confidence, self-esteem and a personal time slot have showed the maximum marginal choice by the respondents. In these four elements two-third majority shared the same perspective while for all the other elements the ratios varied.

52% (198 out of 374) women consider themselves empowered according to the choices they made in the previous question and out of these 63% women students believe higher education has been a contributing factor for their empowerment. Conversely, 78% married women judge themselves empowered but 50% of these do not give higher education credit for their empowered state. On the other hand, the fraction of single women who think of themselves as empowered ladies is lower (58%) than the same figure for married women and out of these only 43 (36%) believe higher education has helped them achieve this state. Divorced women neither consider themselves empowered nor do they believe higher education has helped them empower themselves in any way.

Faculty analysis in figure 7 shows that most Management students and Social Sciences students feel higher education has been effective in achieving empowerment, according to the choices they selected as necessary for the same.

**Figure 7 Empowerment through Higher Education- A Faculty Analysis**
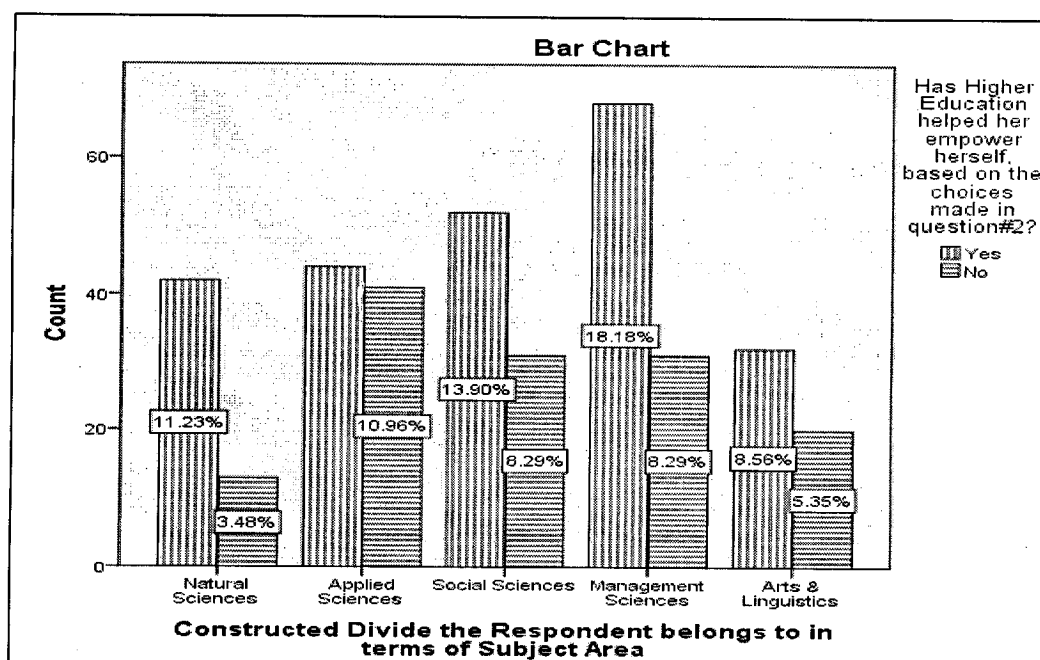


Source: field data

Upon further analysis of the data for this question, it can be suggested that more students in natural sciences (59%) believe that they are empowered while students in social sciences are next- with 56% population considering themselves empowered in light of the choices they have made in previous question-, followed by management sciences at 54%. Arts and linguistics and applied sciences show a less empowered population, 49% and 47% respectively. Moreover, when asked about higher education's role in their empowerment, 76% of the natural sciences students readily gave credit to higher education for their empowerment, followed by management sciences with 69%, social sciences with 63% and Arts and linguistics with 63% students, while a smaller number of Applied Sciences students recognize the role of higher education in their lives, with a percentage of 52%.

Furthermore, in a university wise breakdown it reveals that an all-girls university shows a relatively higher number of women (34%) who consider higher education responsible for their empowerment. Contrary to this finding, intra-university ratios indicate that in an all-girls institute where 52% women are satisfied with higher education, a sizeable population of 48% is not satisfied with higher education's ability to empower them. The two universities with highest percentages (85% and 79%) of women students who believe in their empowerment

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through higher education's assistance offer combined education, with one known for its management and applied sciences program while the other is highly acclaimed only for its management sciences faculty.

The next question specifically focused on the core personal empowerment elements of the original model and any changes the respondents experienced during their pursuance of higher education. More than half of the respondents experienced a general improvement in all the listed elements.

**Table 10**

### Development of Core Elements through Higher Education

| Core Aspects | Changes | As | Observed | Valid N | Missing | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Increase | No Change | Decrease | | | |
| **Self-Confidence** | 252 (67%) | 113 (30%) | 13 (3%) | 378 | 0 | 378 |
| **Self-Esteem** | 224 (59%) | 137 (36%) | 14 (4%) | 375 | 3 | 378 |
| **Ability to deal with surroundings effectively** | 224 (59%) | 140 (37%) | 13 (4%) | 377 | 1 | 378 |
| **Sense of Belonging** | 212 (56%) | 137 (36%) | 28 (7%) | 377 | 1 | 378 |
| **Dignity** | 177 (47%) | 183 (48%) | 16 (4%) | 376 | 2 | 378 |

Source: field data

A lion's share of the students from Social Sciences (74%) and Management Sciences (75%) experienced an increase in their self-confidence, 41% of Applied Sciences students felt no change and 11% students from basic or Natural Sciences reported a decrease in their confidence. For self-esteem, most of the Arts and Linguistics students reported that higher education brought about no change in their existing self-esteem. In conjunction with the responses to the previous question, it can be postulated that the natural sciences group, which reported the maximum number of empowered ladies, a majority of which acknowledged higher education as their benefactor, also has the maximum output for higher education improving the students' self-esteem. About 78% students felt that the higher education has boosted their self-esteem. However, a majority -60%- students have experienced no change in their dignity and

7% think that they have experienced a decline in their feeling of being worthy of respect from others.

For dealing and associating with society at large higher education has been most helpful for management studies students. 75% Management students felt their ability to deal with their surroundings has been enhanced due to their higher education experience but a sizeable portion of Arts and Linguistics (54%) respondents felt no change. Similarly, a larger number of Management students (35% of total 212 students who have experienced an increase in their social, economic and political affiliations) report a sense of belonging to the society and public spheres while students from other faculty (55%) feel no change in their affiliations or they believe it has decreased (12%) since they started their quest for higher education. 46% Arts and Linguistic respondents believe higher education caused no change in their civic engagements while many students from Social Sciences (43%), Applied Sciences (42%) and Natural Sciences (36%) also did not experience any momentous change. Out of 36 students who reported a decrease, 24% are from Arts and Linguistics and Social Sciences, 12% from each group.

In Applied Sciences, like Natural Sciences, most students (62%) do not relate any change in their dignity levels. In the case of this element Arts and Linguistic students show a maximum increase of their sense of dignity as 56% believe it has improved while only 2% experienced any decrease and 42% have felt no change whatsoever. Majority of Applied Sciences students do not feel any change. Dignity has, nonetheless, vastly improved for many Social Sciences, Management and Arts and Linguistics enrolled women students. Figure 8 presents a summary of each faculty for the element of dignity.

**Figure 8**

**Development of Sense of Dignity through Higher Education- a Faculty Analysis**
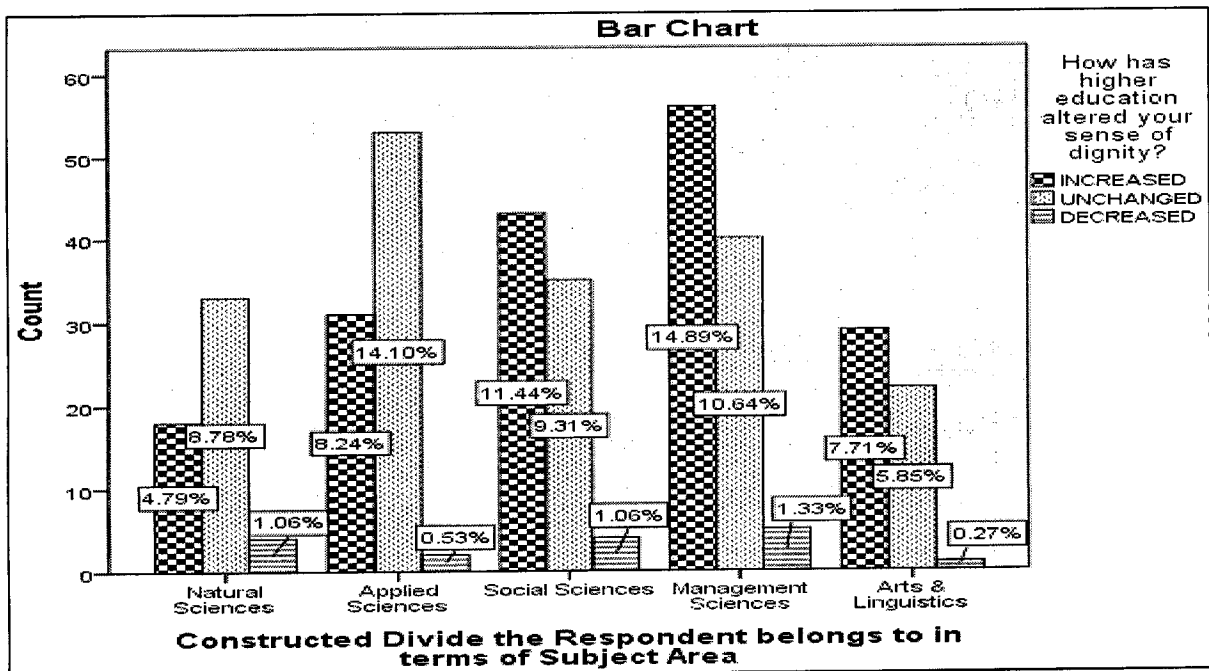


Source: field data

For all core elements, except the ability to deal with your surroundings, every woman student in PhD reported an increase, showing the higher the level of your education the more advanced you will be in your personal empowerment process. However, 67% students believe that their ability to deal with their surroundings has witnessed no major change. This could be because by the time one progresses to a doctorate degree one gets well-acquainted with social and cultural demarcations and how to deal with them.

If we further breakdown this data for women with a work experience we notice a similar pattern that reveals that more than two-thirds of the women with a work experience - of less than a year, a year or more than a year- believe higher education has helped them grow substantially in every core element. 77% have experienced an increase in self-confidence, 75% in dealing with surroundings and 70% in social membership through higher education; 62% women believe higher education has been instrumental in improving their self-esteem and 59% for sense of self-worth.

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26% of the sample revealed that their daily schedule does not provide any time for themselves while 66% manage sometime of their own which they spend reading, watching movies or going out with friends. However, around 7% always manage to avail any such opportunities in their daily lives. Since time for personal self appears to be the least necessary element as wanted by women, a lower number of women finding it on regular basis cannot be reasoned to be conclusive evidence for lower self-empowerment status of Pakistan's women students. However, considering the need for a schedule that allows women a time slot strictly for themselves, it can be argued that a change is called-for so as to help women find time for activities that make them happy, helps them grow and provides them an opportunity to experience personally construed spaces and power-within.

**SECTION 2**

In this section respondents had to choose one option, Curriculum (Taught courses during the degree), Co-curriculum (guest lectures/practical learning assignments), Both (Curriculum and co-curriculum, collectively) or None (neither curriculum nor co-curriculum have been helpful), that according to their perception has had the most impact in building certain changes in their **self**.

30% of the responses announce co-curriculum as the aspect of the higher education that has enhanced various abilities in women students while 36% of the responses indicate that curriculum accompanied by co-curriculum is considered more effective. However, 21% of the total responses do not show any aspect of higher education as being helpful in enhancing abilities of women students and only 13% hold curriculum alone capable of producing any increase in women's personal growth.

Table 11 gives an overview of the general perception of the respondents in this respect, which is based on the respondents' own experience of their degree specific course content taught in classrooms and co-curriculum activities that are in addition to their formal coursework during higher education years.

**Table 11**

**Personal Abilities and Higher Education**

| Enhanced Abilities | Higher Education | Content | Responsible | for Change | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Curriculum (Taught courses during the degree) | Co-curriculum (lectures/practical learning assignments) | Both (Curriculum and co-curriculum, collectively) | NONE | N | Missing | Total |
| a) Formulation of ideas | 100 (27%) | 105 (28%) | 132 (35%) | 39 (10%) | 376 | 2 | 378 |
| b) Formulating opinions | 93 (25%) | 84 (22%) | 123 (33%) | 78 (21%) | 378 | 0 | 378 |
| c) Expressing ideas and opinions | 56 (15%) | 134 (35%) | 133 (35%) | 53 (14%) | 376 | 2 | 378 |
| d) Participation in projects/activities | 40 (10%) | 148 (39%) | 145 (38%) | 41 (11%) | 374 | 4 | 378 |
| e) Initiation of new projects/activities | 42 (11%) | 122 (32%) | 115 (30%) | 96 (25%) | 375 | 3 | 378 |
| f) Learning | 107 (28%) | 64 (17%) | 169 (45%) | 37 (10%) | 377 | 1 | 378 |
| g) Analyses | 63 (17%) | 90 (24%) | 122 (32%) | 103 (27%) | 378 | 0 | 378 |
| h) Act independently | 30 (8%) | 123 (33%) | 119 (32%) | 105 (28%) | 377 | 1 | 378 |
| i) Sense of positivity | 54 (14%) | 97 (26%) | 109 (29%) | 116 (31%) | 376 | 2 | 378 |
| j) Resource management | 23 (6%) | 121 (32%) | 143 (38%) | 74 (20%) | 361 | 17 | 378 |
| k) Interacting outside your home | 23 (6%) | 121 (32%) | 175 (46%) | 57 (15%) | 376 | 2 | 378 |
| l) Interacting outside friends' circle | 24 (6%) | 172 (46%) | 116 (31%) | 61 (16%) | 375 | 3 | 378 |
| m) Confidence | 27 (7%) | 108 (29%) | 175 (46%) | 68 (18%) | 378 | 0 | 378 |
| n) Envisioning better self-esteem/self-image | 14 (4%) | 81 (21%) | 157 (42%) | 123 (33%) | 375 | 3 | 378 |
| o) Organizing personal timetable | 50 (13%) | 118 (31%) | 97 (26%) | 110 (29%) | 375 | 3 | 378 |
| Total Percentage (of cumulative response) | 13% | 30% | 36% | 21% | - | - | - |

Source: field data

Learning and analyses both show a higher percentage of students affirming the role of curriculum and co-curriculum but in case of analyses another common option chosen has been none for 27% students. This indicates that while higher education is playing its role in strengthening critical thinking, it is not doing so for a major percentage of students. As the bar graph in figure 9 displays, a certain ratio in each faculty relates to not experiencing any increase in analytical skills over the higher education period. Applied sciences make up the major share in this respect and Natural Sciences has the least percentage of this response. Social sciences exhibit an almost equal share of co-curriculum and none.

**Figure 9**

**Role of Curriculum and Co-Curriculum Collectively in Increasing Analytical Skills**
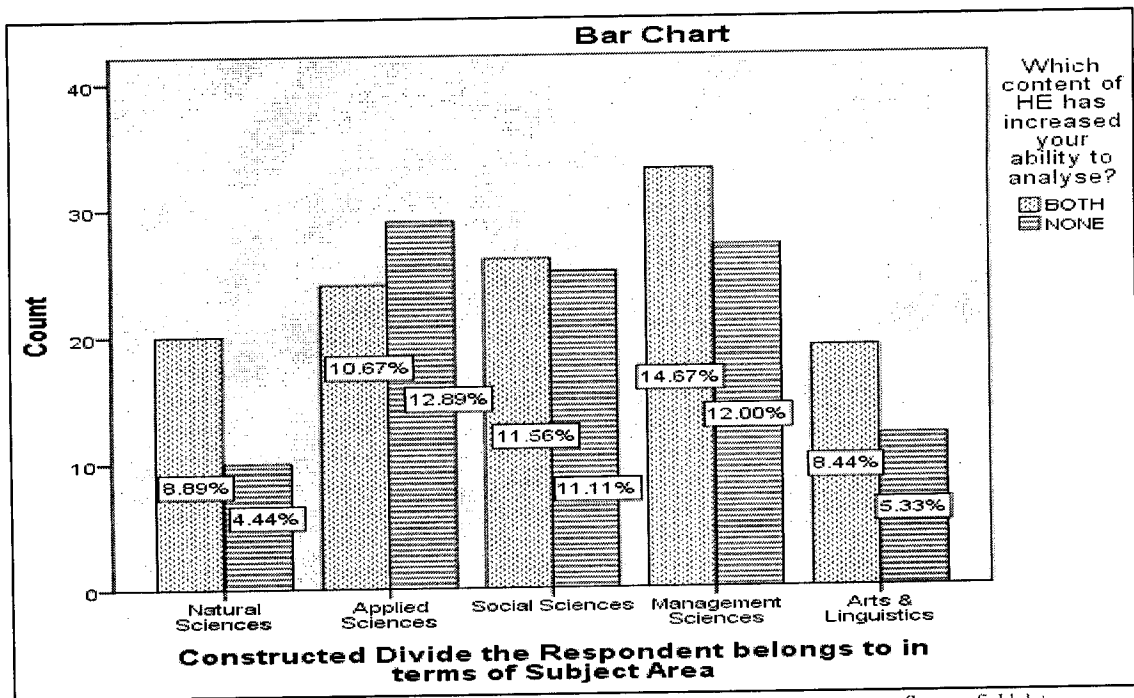


Source: field data

On one hand curriculum in itself has not been able to promote any abilities in many students across faculties but co-curriculum has been most effective for most students in terms of reinforcing their potentials to participate and initiate new projects or activities, thinking-on-the-spot and action-taking attitude, learning to better communicate with people who are not friends/family and organizing their time in a proficient manner.

While curriculum and co-curriculum together have been very effective in most of the capabilities' uplift, the sense of positivity is reported to be the least developed by these two. 31% of 376 students who answered this question do not believe curriculum or co-curriculum shape a sense of positivity in the recipient. Examination of the data with respect to faculty shows that Applied Sciences students made up the larger proportion of the students dissatisfied with higher education in this regard and chose option four i.e. none. While students in Natural Sciences occupy the other end of the spectrum.

**Figure 10**

Faculty Breakdown of Students who chose NONE for Sense of Positivity
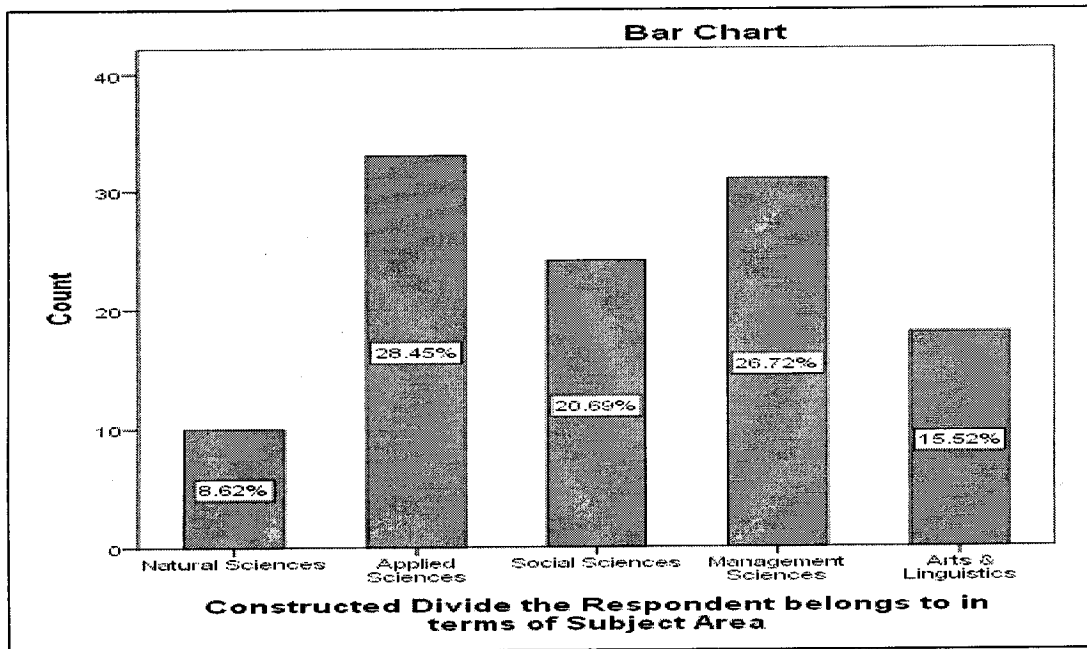
Similarly, figure 11 indicates that majority of the students do not see the role of curriculum and co-curriculum either individually or conjointly in helping them engineer a better image of themselves as women.

**Figure 11**

**Faculty Breakdown for Self-Image/Self-Esteem**
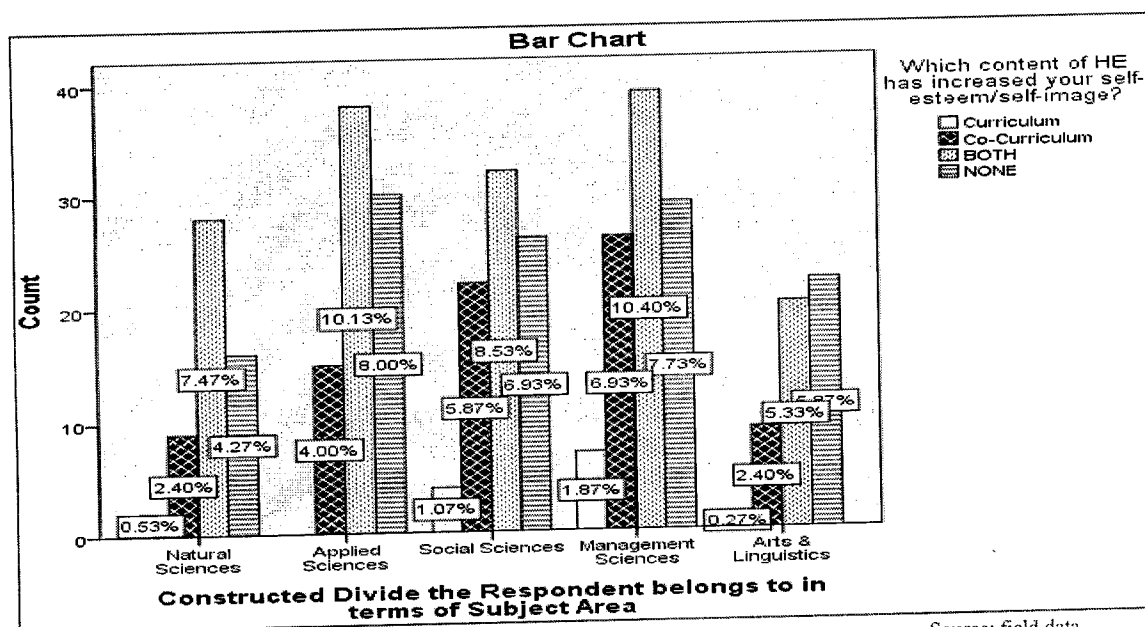


Source: field data

33% of the sample experienced no increase in self-esteem through curriculum or co-curriculum separately. This has been consistent with the view of students about the overall higher education experience (question#6) in which 37% individuals across faculties did not experience any change of self-esteem since their involvement in higher education while 4% said they actually felt a reduction. Here when the same question was focused specifically on curriculum and co-curriculum 24% individuals in Management sciences and Applied Sciences chose none of these two. Women students of Social Sciences were 21% and arts and linguistics' were 18% of the 123 women who do not consider curriculum and co-curriculum- considered separately- factors that helped improve their self-esteem.

Generally curriculum in itself has been the least favorite pick but formulation of opinions and learning are two thinking skills where curriculum has had a higher percentage than for the other abilities mentioned in this question. And in both cases, the bulk of the students who considered curriculum as the most effective means of enhancing their opinion-building and learning

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capacity were applied sciences students. Applied sciences students have been 32% and 34% of 93 and 107 women who opted for curriculum in regard to its impact on opinion-building and learning capacity, respectively.

Curriculum in its own capacity has been favored by applied sciences students in the majority of the statements while co-curriculum on its own has been favored most by Management Sciences students. Collectively, both these aspects of higher education hold the most importance for women students of Social Sciences. Interestingly, students who do not deem either of these significant have mostly been from management sciences, social sciences and a few from applied sciences as well. Although arts and linguistics students did not overrule the importance of either in their personal development, they also did not support any one or both abundantly. However, these students chose curriculum as a factor more than any other option given.

**SECTION 3**

With respect to critical consciousness as defined in this thesis, the last section of the questionnaire was dedicated to six questions that inquired about gender conditioning through higher education to look into the *curriculum for knowledge* and *curriculum for women* particulars. Table 13 presents a brief picture for this section.

**Table 12**

## Critical Consciousness for Gender Issues through Higher Education

| | Gender | Awareness | Through | Higher | Education | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Informing students about General social diversity | Informing students about gender conditioning of the society through curriculum | Preparing women to understand gender conditioning effectively | Preparing students to deal with gender conditioning effectively | Presenting Women as role models/ Examples | Reporting and discussing Women related issues In Pakistan |
| Not part of education | 186 (49%) | 186 (49%) | 204 (54%) | 244 (65 %) | 206 (55%) | 142 (38%) |
| Sometimes part of education | 133 (35%) | 123 (33%) | 128 (34%) | 98 (26%) | 135 (36%) | 146 (39%) |
| Always a part of education | 59 (16%) | 69 (18%) | 42 (11%) | 36 (10%) | 35 (9%) | 87 (23%) |
| N | 378 | 378 | 374 | 378 | 376 | 375 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 |

Source: field data

For all questions asked, with the exception of women issues in Pakistan, 'not part of education' has been the prevalent answer. In this section management sciences and social and applied sciences students were more positive about the role of higher education in incorporating gender knowledge into the mainstream education as for all six questions many of these students chose 'sometimes' or 'yes' as the category of response. However, if one observes the data from within these three faculties separately, it can be seen that in each faculty more students opted for 'not part of education' than the other two categories.

For example, with reference to gender awareness, a prominent portion of the total sample that chose yes or sometimes comprised of these students. However, within applied sciences 44% more students think that their curriculum does not give information to students in classrooms about men and women issues of public and private spheres. Similarly, in management sciences 21% more students think curriculum is not equipped in this regard and in social sciences this disparity is of 29%. Table 13 summarizes these results.

**Table 13**

### Gender Issues and Curriculum In Higher Education

| | | Constructed Divide the Respondent belongs to in terms of Subject Area | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Natural Sciences | Applied Sciences | Social Sciences | Management Sciences | Arts & Linguistics | Total |
| Does your curriculum include gender issues (Male/Female relations, male/female discriminations)? | NO | 32 | 38 | 48 | 54 | 15 | 187 |
| | SOMETIMES | 5 | 25 | 35 | 40 | 19 | 124 |
| | YES | 3 | 10 | 13 | 23 | 18 | 67 |
| Total | | 40 | 73 | 96 | 117 | 52 | 378 |

According to the students, Natural sciences curriculum or co-curriculum content is not inclusive of gender dimension at all as shown by the responses of women of this faculty in table 14.

**Table 14**

### Natural Sciences Responses for section 3

| | Natural Sciences | Students' Responses |
|---|---|---|
| | Number of students who chose 'Not Part of Education' | Total Responses for all three categories |
| Informing students about General social diversity | 37 (93%) | 40 |
| Informing students about gender conditioning of the society through curriculum | 37 (93%) | 40 |
| Preparing women to understand gender conditioning effectively | 38 (95%) | 40 |
| Preparing students to deal with gender conditioning effectively | 35 (88%) | 40 |
| Presenting Women as role models/ Examples | 20 (50%) | 40 |
| Reporting and discussing Women related issues in Pakistan | 19 (49%) | 39 |

But for Arts and Linguistics, as table 15 demonstrates, most women students believe their curriculum sometimes includes social diversity, gender issues and women role models In addition, at times co-curriculum handles women specific topics while curriculum lacks to explain to most of them about how to deal with these issues effectively.

**Table 15**

**Arts and Linguistics Responses from Section 3**

| Gender Awareness Aspects | Arts and Not part of Education | Linguistics Sometimes part of Education | Students' Always part of Education | Responses Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Informing students about General social diversity | 18 (35%) | 25 (48%) | 9 (17%) | 52 |
| Informing students about gender conditioning of the society through curriculum | 15 (29%) | 19 (36%) | 18 (35%) | 52 |
| Preparing women to understand gender conditioning effectively | 22 (42%) | 24 (46%) | 6 (12%) | 52 |
| Preparing students to deal with gender conditioning effectively | 34 (65%) | 12 (23%) | 6 (12%) | 52 |
| Presenting Women as role models/ Examples | 15 (29%) | 23 (44%) | 14 (27%) | 52 |
| Reporting and discussing Women related issues In Pakistan | 16 (31%) | 22 (42%) | 14 (27%) | 52 |
| Total | 120 (38%) | 125 (40%) | 67 (22%) | 312 |

Source: field data

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**Table 16**

**Undergraduate Women Students Response as a Percentage of Total Responses**

| Gender Awareness Aspects | Response | Percentage of Women Students | Undergraduate |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Not part of Education | Sometimes part of Education | Always part of Education |
| Informing students about General social diversity | 35% | 45% | 78% |
| Informing students about gender conditioning of the society through curriculum | 36% | 48% | 62% |
| Preparing women to understand gender conditioning effectively | 34% | 57% | 64% |
| Preparing students to deal with gender conditioning effectively | 41% | 53% | 53% |
| Presenting Women as role models/ Examples | 47% | 39% | 54% |
| Reporting and discussing Women related issues In Pakistan | 35% | 47% | 58% |

Source: field data

Similarly, if we see data for this section with respect to degree programs we will find that most of the respondents in undergraduate degrees across all faculties feel gender to be a more prominent part of their curriculum and co-curriculum than graduate and doctorate students. Table 17 shows the responses of women from undergraduate programs as a percentage of total responses for each specific category of every questions asked in section three related to gender awareness.

# PHASE 2- QUALITATIVE DATA FINDINGS

In an Explanatory Research Design it is crucial to consider what aspects of quantitative data must be followed and what questions must be asked in the qualitative phase to build on the quantitative results.

Keeping in mind the objectives and scope of this research, the follow-on qualitative phase pivoted around the role of higher education in the women students' life in different fields of studies. It was designed to allow women of what they have experienced and what changes do they think should be introduced and why.

The analysis in phase one brought forward three prominent results: first, a fine majority of the women students across the sample did not accredit the propensity of education to provide them with a refined sense of positivity and sense of dignity; second, cross-tabulations for various elements and factors showed that there exists a certain level of disparity with regards to core development within students of the same demographic characteristics showing higher education is not catering to the nurturing needs of all students in the same way; and third, more than 60% of the women students do not perceive their curriculum and co-curriculum contents to be effective developers of critical consciousness among the students.

For data reporting general transcription rules have been followed. Transcription is *clean verbatim*. It does not include profanity, filler words/phrases, interruptions, speech errors and non-verbal sounds (unless they have been a meaningful part of the conversation).

## TOOL1: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

It was seen that management and applied sciences students showed more inclination towards co-curriculum as the major contributor towards most of the enhanced abilities in them that foster their personal growth and critical awareness. On the other hand, arts and linguistic students and students enrolled in natural sciences degree programs do not consider co-curriculum content very helpful in this regard. But neither do they consider curriculum taught through books and lecture notes any better than the co-curriculum activities conducted for boosting their inner growth. Women in social sciences mostly believe in the combined ability of curriculum and co-curriculum to develop and encourage abilities and skills in women that help them perform better

in the society and help them achieve self empowerment. Nonetheless, table 12 in the previous chapter shows that a significant group of students is dissatisfied with both curriculum and co-curriculum in providing them with anything that promotes their inner growth. Similarly, most are not satisfied with the gender content of their higher education coursework. When these results were shared with FG 1,2,3,4 and 5, students came up with different explanations and views.

**Development and Promotion of Core**

Subject program seems to be a significant factor in core development and growth in students. It varies across faculties and within the same disciplinary groups as well. Students believe it results from the preferential treatment given to certain disciplines within their universities while treating other disciplines as ordinary. Most of the students think that the faculty of management sciences in every university is more at par with the global standards and to stay abreast with global changes all universities try to imitate international study patterns in this degree program and hire foreign qualified teachers who are more receptive to new ideas and encourage innovative projects.

Students in management are always more privileged. They get best teachers and more exposure than us or any other discipline.[39]

Another student commented:

This is only because it (management sciences) has been all the hype in Pakistan for sometime now and universities try to attract more students into their universities by providing them better teachers and opportunities for progress.[40]

This applies to other schools as well. Since all sites chosen for data collection have been general universities, no university specializes in only one field but each one is specifically renowned for one or two subject schools as its best faculties as compared to other universities in the city.

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[39] Student, Shariah and Law, FGD1.

[40] Student, Politics and IR, FGD4

Our course content is totally different than those of science students. But we all know our university is actually known for engineering and we know they pay higher for teachers there and pay more attention to those students.[41]

Similarly, students also realize that the type of degree course determines the extent of their involvement in co-curriculum and curriculum content and this in turn determines their level of personal growth.

Management students recount that the co-curriculum has been a very significant part of their degree program; usually assigned more credits and given more time than the formal course content that is supposed to be learnt and reproduced. Since it carries marks and is counted towards their final evaluation, students are more involved and enthusiastic about them. Moreover, these projects also merit a mention in their resumes and a good project can earn them a better job interview or a better designation. Thus, their co-curricular activities provide them with a higher earning potential and contribute towards their self-empowerment.

...as we get to senior years we are given more real stuff to do as opposed to hypothetical situations which is more prevalent in other fields.[42]

Business is a very competitive field. May be in order to train us for the market they (academic institutions) train us in every field of life and co-curriculum activities are the only best way for this.[43]

Curriculum can give knowledge but not experience and in today's world we want experience to excel... co-curriculum provides this experience.[44]

Growing branches of specializations in business administration and management provide students a chance to hone their skills for international and national labor markets. Therefore, even if women students do not become part of the labor market due to any reason, the practical aspect of this field of study, which gives students a chance to come up with their own ideas to deal with the market and people, developing new products and marketing campaigns and

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[41] Student, F, MBA Finance, FGD6

[42] Student, M, MBA Marketing and Finance, FGD6

[43] Student, BBA, FGD2

[44] Student, MBA Human Resource, FGD2

presenting themselves and their products as the best offers helps these women develop a confident bearing, think critically and act independently.

Some students remarked on their course outlines and curriculum objectives as the lacking areas for vitalizing core among students in a homogeneous manner.

Our course outline is basically what our teacher wants us to read because she liked that reading list herself. So obviously it does not do any good to us individually.[45]

Our course is very defined and very basic. It is all about our subject requirements. Our co-curricular is also about our subject.[46]

Co-curriculum activities are few in our program, and the ones that are there are not for our abilities. Example, skill to interact with a lot of different people or for our self grooming. Some are good for our confidence but then that's it.[47]

In our department one very common activity is a guest lecture or a symposium on certain genre or author. This helps in many way but for only those students who participate and get on stage and arrange all the different things for the day, not every one can be part of management committee.[48]

Most of the students mentioned that other than a few projects many activities have no credits towards the final grade point average so it is very easy to escape the instructor's notice and go spend time in other activities rather than attending the lecture or conference/workshop. It can be reasoned that the deficiency arises due to lack of credit awarding activities that are specifically aimed at developing certain qualities in students by addressing their specific needs and awareness issues. Such activities should be made a compulsory part of the curriculum.

… even at the end of degree I don't have a clear idea where I should go for a job or what earning possibility can I create for myself. There should be some courses on issues like these for us for example blogging for revenue or contacting a publisher etcetera.[49]

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[45] Student, BA English literature, FGD1

[46] Student, BSc Mathematics, FGD1

[47] Student, BA Arabic language and history, FGD1

[48] Student, MA English Literature, FGD4

[49] Student, MS English Language, FGD3

Arts and Linguistics faculty lacks practical assignments and innovative teaching methods and themes, exposure in terms of literary workshops, analytical gatherings and visits to publishing houses or print media offices. The students feel that all these are needed for getting an orientation of the potential labor market.

Moreover, it has been evident in this study that major differences in approaches towards different disciplines within the same institution and shaping students' minds differently does not only create a disparity in terms of their personal growth and analytical levels, it also creates a rift among students as they get disconnected and alienated because they feel prejudiced against.

With reference to low levels of self esteem and dignity and no significant improvement in either for most of the women in higher education, the major reasons seem to be lack of acknowledgement, commodification of knowledge by numerous degree awarding institutes ungoverned by quality checks, and stereotyping disciplines with an imaginary intellect and academic status.

Some students believe with higher education becoming so easily available and everyone being part of it, it has become mandatory for everyone to go for further education in their respective fields. However, this abundance of degree awarding institutions has also led to a decrease in the value of higher education.

Everyone is doing masters and PhDs these days. So it just doesn't matter if I am doing MSc. It's not big deal to add to my self esteem.[50]

A few students, on the other hand, pointed out that pursuing a degree is not as important as the institution you are attending, for the purpose of uplifting your self-esteem based on your educational achievements.

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[50] Student, MSc Economics and Finance, FGD5

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Doing a higher degree is not out of ordinary anymore. It's too easy to get a degree from anywhere, pay your fees and that's it. Having a degree from a prestigious university is certainly a self-esteem thingy.[51]

Some students also vocalized the opinion that for women students self esteem can be achieved only when they are a part of a certain degree program from a specific institution.

It is only when you are a doctor from one of the famous medical colleges only then you have a right to feel proud of yourself or people will respect you. I observe that very often in my daily life... [52]

A socio-cultural requirement of getting married, reproducing and involving oneself in gender specific roles defined by the societal norms irk many women's self-esteem.

A higher degree for women in this country is just another prerequisite of a good rishta (proposal) especially if you want to marry someone who is settled abroad. So this helps in self-esteem in rishta (proposal) matters for some but other than that it's just a degree.[53]

Nothing can boost my dignity till I stop hearing "jitna bhi parh lo krna toh kitchen ka kaam hai aur bachay sambhalnay hain!"

(Nothing can boost my dignity till I stop hearing "no matter how much you study, you will end up doing kitchen chores and raising kids.")[54]

But some appear rather unconcerned to the limitations of the society since their priority is personal happiness and satisfaction rather than pleasing the people around them:

I don't care what others say. I am happy and that is what matters and should matter. Logo ki kia parwa karain. They keep on giving suggestions and we cannot always do what they want. *Actual*, *real* educated people will understand how much hard work I have put into my studies and for others I don't give a s***!

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[51] Student, BBA, FGD2

[52] Student, MS Bioinformatics, FGD1

[53] Student; also employed, PhD Geophysics, FGD2.

[54] Student, MSc Biosciences, FGD3

(I do not care what other people have to say. I am happy (with my academic choices) and that is what matters, and should matter. Why should we bother what people have to say or think? They keep on giving suggestions and we cannot always do what they want. Actual, real educated people will understand how much hard work I have put into my studies and for others I don't give a s***!)[55]

Nonetheless, many women in higher education feel disappointed and less acknowledged for their hard work. They feel limited by the demarcations of the society and the scoped out lifestyle and future preferences for women. Also, it seems to be connected with the sense of positivity. Some think positivity has to come from family and society at large. Education can help to a certain extent but unless it is espoused in the societal and household's thinking it is not very beneficial for women students.

I'll feel more positive about my future if my husband acknowledges that I am an educated woman who has opinions and can give better suggestions than his father and brothers.[56]

It all depends on your family. If they are supportive and encouraging everything is positive, otherwise no use.[57]

People in Pakistan have no vision. Unless education gives a vision to all of us women can't progress and feel positive about their future.[58]

Most students are generally not satisfied or positive about their future as Pakistani citizens so it stems out to impact their educational experience as well.

What positivity? Halaat dekhain hain yaha pe? Kuch positive hai? Higher education kia kr lay ga hamaray liye?

(What positivity? Have you noticed how things are here (in Pakistan)? Is there anything positive? (Then)What can higher education do for us?)[59]

A very distinct and determined mindset was also observed in these group discussions which manifests the existence of internalized oppression in these students. Most of the students-

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[55] Student, LLB Corporate Law, FGD1.

[56] Student, MSc, Islamic Banking and Finance, FGD1

[57] Student, Media and Mass Communication, FGD4

[58] Student, MA Education Sciences, FGD1

[59] Student, Electrical Engineering, FGD2

though not satisfied with all the opportunities they have to grow and express themselves- are not in a mood to complain and take it as the given order of things. Similarly, a few appeared to have no objection at all to the restricted and limited chances of growth that come with higher education and firmly believe things are running as they should be. A little probing yielded responses such as:

... itna sochay gey toh zindagi kaise guzaray gy?

(... if we think so much then how will we live?)[60]

This is how women should live. Higher education is necessity of time but that does not mean we forget we are women. Khana pakana ghar bar sambhalna to sab ko karna hota hai. If we start thinking of other things then zindagi mushkil ho jaye gy.

(This is how women should live. Higher education is necessity of time but that does not mean we forget we are women. Cooking and running of the household is done by all (women). If we start thinking of other things then life will become difficult (for us)).[61]

**Gender Awareness**

A student addressed the current practices of higher education institutions when it comes to gender sensitivity or sensitizing the students about societal diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and so on. She referred to the lack of planning and only focusing on women enrollments:

Yaha sb show-off kliye hai. Hamari university main adhi larkia hain hum inhain equal participation rights detay hain. Hamari business team main equal boys and girls hain. That's it. Ap dekh lain koi khas planning nahi hai keh aurto ko agay kaise ley keh jana hai. Yaha to hum aa gayi hain lakin agay? Female enrollment ki fikar hai sab ko retention ki nahi hai. What my sister studied in this course two years back I am taught with same books and notes. Jab nayey notes he nahi toh nayey requirements kaisay include karain ge yeh higher education main?

(Everything here in for showing off. Every institute likes to broadcast the equal number of women in their campuses and that they get equal participation rights and they are an equal and significant part of business teams. But that is all. You can see there is no special planning on how to take women further.

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[60] Student, LLB, FGD1

[61] Student; also employed, MS Biology, FGD5

We have gotten here but what is next? They are concerned about female enrollment rates but not about our future or retention rates. What my sister studied in this course two years back I am taught with same books and notes. When there are no new notes then how can they incorporate new requirements in higher education?)[62]

Most students understand that Pakistan is a patriarchal society and cannot include women or their concerns as part of mainstream agenda even in higher education.

This is a male-dominating society. They do not want gender sensitization through higher education. Why would men want that?[63]

Last and concluding FGD was conducted after the faculty interviews. It was conducted to get the views of male students regarding women empowerment and gender awareness. Except a few, most of the male students felt comfortable and recognized the concept of women empowerment as something beyond economic issues.

Some students referred to power relations and provided their interpretation of the term empowerment for women.

It is all about power, just like religion. Men are not ready to give women power so why will men help them empower themselves and come and sit with them in classrooms and board meetings?[64]

All these men stated that they read books and have not based their opinions solely on the content they are given to read during their higher education degree program. However, three students remarked that their opinions were based on their personal reading list, observations as well as their class discussions.

These men favored the idea of women empowerment during the discussion, but the few who believed women empowerment is a means to allow women become the controlling gender of the labor market through quotas and reserved seats were strictly against it. They strongly and

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[62] Student, MPhil Public Administration, FGD4

[63] Student, MA Pakistan Studies, FGD4

[64] Student, M, also employed, BA Architecture, FGD6

exclusively perceive women empowerment in economic terms and no matter how the concept is approached, they believe it will end up in women being economically better off than men, which is totally unacceptable and unthinkable for them.

How much more empowerment do you want? Universities are filled up with girls, medical colleges have 70% women, you cannot find a job because all jobs are reserved for women. Have you ever seen job statistics?[65]

There is a socially negative perception of the concept in our patriarchal society which impedes empowerment. There has also been a view from the male members of the group that empowerment means overconfident and misbehaved women.

… letting women speak in decision making or giving her a chance to make all her own decisions makes her *badtameez* (misbehaved). We have so many examples-- girls become rude and ill-mannered and stop considering what is required of them.[66]

A girl responded to this by saying:

Girls only become "*badtameez* (misbehaved)" when they have been in confinement all their lives and they are tired of it. We need space too.[67]

Most of the male students agreed that considering women as the other significant gender and not as the weaker gender is a lesson taught at home and practiced outside, including HEIs, and cannot be effectively instilled in students once they are at HEIs.

It starts at your home-- if you have not been taught to respect women and consider them equal it is hard for you to tolerate them as your equals outside your homes as well.[68]

Most students also agreed that gender awareness cannot be a part of current higher education. They believe neither the educators nor the students are ready for the change. It is a matter of practice more than preaching and as it is not supported by the existing social routine and current

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[65] Student, M, MS Economics, FGD6

[66] Student; also employed, M, MS Finance, FGD6

[67] Student, F, MBA Finance, FGD6

[68] Student; also employed, M, MSc Health sciences, FGD6

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higher education practices; it will be difficult to attain results from making it a part of all curriculum revisions. Students were unanimous in stating that most of the course content is designed to fulfill the technical job requirements and not the ethical or moral requisites and co-curriculum follows suit. Also, students are expected to work hard and aspire for the highest grades so unless gender sensitization is part of credit awarding activities and content students will not pay attention to it. However, some believe that even then students will only pay attention to it for achieving better scores and then become forgetful of the issues.

Yes if it can get them good grades then all will cram and rewrite the material on gender equality. But if you want practical results through this, then no, it cannot help.[69]

On the other hand, some students believed that it is a better idea to introduce gender specific issues and topics earlier in the degree programs and then condition students throughout the degree to make these concerns a permanent part of their practices.

Building gender awareness through guest lectures and workshops is good because in higher education all students, girls and boys have a maturity level and it can help them understand and incorporate these concepts in their lives...[70]

Indifference was also common among those men who understood the significance of sharing power and helping women progress.

I approve of women in universities and workplaces. They have their own place, but then that is my view. I know most men don't think like that and that is their view. Why will I try to change their minds?[71]

Some girls strongly felt the internalization of oppression as the main cause and believe education cannot help women overcome that.

By this time we are oppressed. At this age we are trained to think of people first-- it is always about what people will think what they will say.[72]

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[69] Student, M, BSc economics and finance, FGD6

[70] Student; also employed, MPhil IR, FGD6

[71] Student; also employed, MBA Human Resource and Marketing, FGD6

[72] Student; also employed, MS economics, FGD3

Bohat se bilkul unexpected situations ho jatay hain offices main. Mard ap ko bardasht he nahi krta. We are never guided what can happen in your workplace. We are never prepared.

(Many totally unexpected situations occur at workplace. Man does not tolerate you at all. We are never guided what can happen in your workplace. We are never prepared (through Higher Education))[73]

Where men can see a ray of hope with regard to gender sensitization among the graduates across the universities, women seemed to be more apprehensive of the approach. They believe it is an order which cannot be changed no matter how much time is devoted to it. Moreover, they also believe patriarchal values are reinforced in every segment of life in Pakistan and that makes bringing changes difficult even through education. Some women expressed:

At this level it is hopeless.[74]

Puri zindagi ap ko kaha jaye ye auratain hain, yeh to machar hain machar. Chalo urao inhain. Phir aik course kia faida dega...

(When all your life you are told these are women, these are mosquitoes. Brush them off! How can any six months course help then?)[75]

Few women believe in the power of education and awareness seminars to induce change in the overall mindset of the students and people. However, one of them highlighted the methods and tone of these seminars which, according to her, are a way of perpetuating the existing workplace gender discriminatory norms by developing acceptance in the students even before they enter the workforce.

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[73] Student; also employed, MS economics, FGD3

[74] Student; also employed, MS economics, FGD3

[75] Student; MS economics, FGD3

Guest lectures are helping but all I see is they inform us about some gender issues and it is in such a way that it makes us accept it. That treatment of women in corporate. It is given like every other thing in Pakistan which is about women.[76]

Absence of women role models in the curriculum and discussions is also strongly felt by many women students. They think it is because men are controlling all the systems and they do not allow women of substance to have the limelight. Some confessed their belief that people are more inclined towards glamourous females than intellectual females.

Nobody knew when first PhD female died but an actress[77] went to jail and all talked about it. Who is she? We all know what she does. Women who should be recognized are declared controversial and political and are just not made part of our daily life or knowledge.[78]

## TOOL 2: FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Faculty interviews were more restricted in terms of time but enough discussion ensued in all interviews that it showed more or less the same views and suggestions by all faculty members.

Discrimination in the grooming of students across faculty divide is recognized by the teachers as well. However, most of them view it as a continuation of a general mindset and said the same applied to both genders. According to them this divide starts when a student makes a choice for the subject or career he wants to opt for. Students and their parents understand the choices they make, the opportunities that will come with it and the aptitude of the student that must exist to excel in that particular field. Students in management and social sciences intentionally join a field that has more to offer in terms of grooming, presentation and confidence whereas sciences students are more focused towards the information and assimilation of knowledge alongside technical skills. This attitude is then applied stringently in the HEIs and through HEIs.

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[76] Student, MSc political science, FGD4

[77] Name of the actress has been omitted deliberately.

[78] Student; also employed, MCS, FGD3

We have just come out of the doctor, engineer, pilot phase. Business and other subjects are gaining acceptability now, from last twenty, twenty five years. But it will take time before people realize that education is more than from text books.[79]

All members of the faculty held the view that gender bias or favoritism does not exist in the renowned HEIs anymore, especially in Islamabad. Both male and female students are treated equally. It may vary with the context but teachers are now more open towards equal opportunities and similar treatments irrespective of class and gender divide. They maintained that gender discrimination is a dominant major issue in the corporate sector but not in higher education for students.

Women have no acceptability in workplace. Mostly businesses in Pakistan are seth (sole proprietorship) companies. They have a very narrow view towards women.[80]

Likewise, they also agree on the fact that overall higher education experience does work on the students' level of confidence and presentation skills, which are more apparent after the first half of the degree. However, there is nothing in the curriculum or the course schedules that is particularly focused on their core development. Every faculty member realizes that curriculum and co-curriculum is not fitting for promoting self growth in students. They believe it is as inept for women as for men enrolled in higher degree programs.

Regardless of the field we don't have a curriculum for which you can say that you are... giving gender empowerment or confidence to students.[81]

The disparity that exists across faculties and across the genders is more a product of social norms and the higher education system, just like primary and secondary systems, only follows along. A few teachers also pointed out that this disparity is not only an issue of developing countries but also of developed countries. Women are still shy of maximum participation in public spheres and education does not target gender divide per se any where in the world.

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[79] Assistant Professor, F, Business School, interview7.

[80] Assistant Professor, F, Social Sciences and Humanities, interview8

[81] Associate Professor, F, Management Sciences, interview3

Most interviews revealed that all universities are following a similar curriculum content and text books. The only difference that is evident across different institutions is due to the opportunities portfolio these institutions offer to their graduates. While there is no uniformity or guideline to follow in this regard, some universities pay attention to the exposure and practical learning of students while others are more focused towards knowledge build up through conventional methods.

Overall, the higher education system is lacking in innovation and modifications of course requirements which should be followed by all universities in the country. Most respondents mentioned that the system does not let students make choices, they are not the decision makers and they are not trained to question the information they are given in a formal classroom setting.

Some faculty members discussed the reasons of this deficiency. According to them, course outlines are concluded after a long process that passes certain stages, varying in each university. Commonly, a subject committee deliberates and forms a tentative outline and a reference list which have to be approved by the board of studies of the university. This outline is in accordance of HEC requirements for the degree completion and in line with the guidelines of the university.

Both HEC and the university board do not explicitly mention gender equality in more than a number count. In some universities the teacher is not at a liberty to add or omit a topic, she/he can nonetheless decide how to move forward with the course outline. This bounds teachers to stick to the books and content decided by the board. Here the teacher cannot add topics on his own, especially with a rigorous study schedule which comes with the semester system. Even when teachers have an opportunity to modify a course outline themselves they are either too busy, too restricted through redtapism or gender biases that they do not address gender concerns beyond the number count. Some teachers do put in additional effort and include topics related to gender issues into their course outlines or co-curriculum activities but the scope of such efforts is very limited. And as these efforts are not holistic, they bear minimum results.

We go through so much trouble looking for international course outlines and books. But it is such a bedlam getting a new thing passed through the old bureaucrats. They think they know best and we cannot make any changes. They don't listen. It is so long a process to get listened and get a change approved.[82]

All female faculty members referred to the male dominancy present in Pakistan's education policy making, akin to any other institution. Since everything and every process passes through men they generally do not consider gender sensitization important or do not realize what has to be targeted when it comes to developing and polishing women students' capabilities and helping them forward in their respective public and private forums. They tend to generalize all policies and all new reforms; if there are any radical changes, these changes and policies are oblivious to gender specific needs and requirements.

Women have now started to participate in some ways. Men have been dominant and still are so they are not aware and don't bother to know the issues (of women). [83]

However, some faculty members also pointed out the fact that students are not ready to work hard and push their limits. They are more comfortable with traditional topics and any extra reading irritates them. Students generally hesitate about taking challenging projects and they prefer higher GPAs, as higher GPAs are still the academic excellence standard we have as a society.

You go to any class and tell them (students) you don't have a basic book in this course. I will discuss topics in class and you will search and read on your own. Next day you are reported to the dean by the whole class that the teacher is not giving us a book to read. We are clueless. This is so much burden. We have never done this before… …no teacher wants to be a part of this and explain themselves.[84]

This attitude of students plays a crucial role in discouraging any teacher who is willing to expand the course content by including new and diverse topics.

A faculty member reasoned that mostly teachers are from the existing system. There is no compulsory orientations, workshops or trainings for the teachers to keep them abreast of the

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[82] Assistant Professor, F, Linguistics, interview4

[83] Associate Professor, F, Social Sciences, interview6

[84] Professor, F, Social Sciences, interview1

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new social topics and innovative knowledge sharing methods. Teachers are not guided or motivated to make social diversity a part of their teaching content. Individually, a teacher may play some part in equipping students' minds with these complex phenomena but this cannot bring unity of thought among all students across all institutions.

All teachers have been of the view that diversity should be part of curriculum at all levels, especially higher education, to mold the thinking of students and make them receptive of change and not feel threatened by it.

We should talk about diversity in general and gender in specific in classrooms. We should teach students about these issues in first half of the degree and for the rest of the time we should condition them to follow and understand these issues.[85]

Few respondents stressed the need to consider the male population in classrooms before devising any policies or content, so that they feel a part of it and not threatened by the topics.

Male students, like girls, come from many different backgrounds. Outreach programs add to these variations. Mostly boys come with the mind-set that women should not work. Women should not leave their houses. So I say it is important to, from the very start, teach these students and bring them on a same platform about gender issues. But make sure you don't approach it as gender only, it will not gain acceptability and students will not translate your efforts as you want them to...[86]

## DISCUSSION

In gender and development context, empowerment is defined as a process which entails generative and productive power. This study shows that an individual woman experiences empowerment as a product of her social location, ethnic and cultural identity and her gender relations. It is also affected by her historical, economic and geographic background. When core aspects of empowerment are encouraged and developed, they target women's self-perception and internalized oppression enabling them to pursue **power-to** and **power-within.**

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[85] Assistant Professor, F, Natural and Applied Sciences, interview2

[86] Associate Professor, F, Management Sciences, interview3

Women empowerment is about transforming human and social relations. In order to tackle personal empowerment in its most basic form the women in this study had to confront gender conditioning and gender power relations at every step, from deciding to leave the household and move outwards for higher education, coming to the institution, dealings within the institution and then going back to the household and gender specific roles.

Results of this study show that women are fewer in number in sciences than humanities, management and commerce and arts. Miller and Miller (2002) discuss that promotion of collaborative learning, critical thinking and personal confidence are missing from Science, Mathematics and Engineering courses and these classroom experiences shape the decisions of students and parents for selecting higher degree specializations. As most women students do not enjoy science and mathematics in earlier period of their education span as a result of how they are structured, they tend to veer off these subjects in higher education as well. The subject choice of women students in this study (please refer to table and figure 6; also table 8) validates this hypothesis. Most women prefer or are suggested to be part of subjects other than science, mathematics, engineering and technology in their higher degree programs.

Women students shared their prime reason for joining higher education has been economic benefits. Women clearly see higher education as a means to change their current situation through managing and creating new opportunities for themselves and increasing their financial independence. This result is similar to the findings of Leathwood and Read (2009) and can be used to conclude that women in Pakistan, like Uganda, consider higher education to be a route towards better economic status and also a medium through which to engage in development of the country.

Self-confidence constitutes the highest percentage from amongst the elements Pakistani women students consider necessary for their empowerment. Personal income is the fourth most favoured element and full time career is lower down at eight. Rowlands (1995) showed that having the confidence to get out of the house and begin to interact with the world outside is a very basic and essential prerequisite to other activities. This makes one ponder on the significance of self-confidence required by a modern day Pakistani woman. She is looking for personal growth, self-confidence and self-esteem through higher education and jobs. Self-

confidence allows her to recognise and enhance her value to society by being an active member who has a say in matters that impact her life; rather than moulding herself according to the given guidelines and stay a passive member.

110 students believe that higher education content of curriculum and co-curriculum has not made them capable of organizing their personal timetable in an efficient manner. Moreover, 61% women students expressed that a personal time slot is not an important feature of an empowered woman's life. Literature shows that an organized woman is more able to realize things and gain information on her status and status of women around her (Rowlands, 1995). Similarly, organization helps her learn about her rights and development. This adds to her confidence and leads to creation of a space to exercise her cognitive skills and understand that disempowerment is not an individual shortcoming. This further leads to her understanding of the need to develop ways of having some kind of 'time for herself' where every ounce of energy and effort is not going in to meeting her practical gender needs. This time slot broadens her space and adds incrementally to her self-esteem. Therefore, not requiring a personal time slot for self-empowerment by majority of the respondents shows that the women in this study are not aware of the benefits of time-for-self either because it is least available in their lives and the lives of the women around them so they do not deem it necessary or because they lack orientation of what to do when not involved in gender specific roles.

Through this study I can infer that women do not prefer a separate time slot as a result of both these reasons. Higher education is not giving them enough space to experience power within and then power to. Since, there is lesser evidence of power to and expressive space there seems less need of time spent in discussion groups and self-grooming by women.

My findings suggest that once in HEIs women students face gender as well as subject stratification as higher education in Pakistan is not able to meet the varied requirements of gender strategic needs of women enrolled in different faculties on a similar scale. For example, in a nutshell, most natural sciences students revealed through the questionnaire that subject choice and opting for higher degree have been their personal choices, and also showed most development through the curriculum they are taught. On the other hand applied sciences students are most dissatisfied with the curriculum taught and are looking for the economic

benefits of their degree. These responses can be linked to show that students who are coming to higher education institutions purely for academic learning are satisfied but those who are looking for self-growth, skill development and marketability of their degrees are discontented with the content and the whole idea of empowerment through higher education.

These divides put women students in marginally different contexts of core development. As their development aspects vary, the changes they bring about in themselves also differ and this creates a divide and conflict between women of different subject groups. Participation in extra-curricular activities is already low in universities so this widens the gap and discourages friendships and agency among these women students. This lack of communication and alienated views were very observable. Significance of friendships and female kinship are well documented to be a network of support and identification for women. These networks help women affiliate and address community issues. Also, it provides them a forum to re-consider and re-construct the socially acceptable gender identities (Green, 2010). Across faculty friendships and associations can bring women together physically for events and discussions and encourage ideas sharing and communication. This helps in women achieving confidence and self esteem. Moreover, positive feedback from one another can provide them an intellectual and emotional space and a sense of the wider context (Rowlands, 1995). This is important for collective empowerment as it develops a common sense of purpose and identity. Women students in my study ranked friendships at number 5 and being in a large group at number 9.this shows that these women also need to be linked through a common strategy of developing a certain similar level of core and bringing them together through activities to encourage friendships and spaces for utilising and managing time schedules and experiencing power to.

A majority of the students reported an overall increase in all their core aspects with the exception of dignity. Phase 2 of the study revealed that this feeling of dignity is closely associated with social conditions and treatment of women within the household, and in aggregate women have revealed a low level of dignity with no changes through higher education. Higher education's inability to provide these women students with a content that goes beyond factual knowledge and breaks gender inequality has also regrouped with maintaining status quo in the society and public spheres which does not let women expect or feel worthy of respect for their educational achievements. Moreover, the increased

commodification of knowledge has undermined the power of education to boost one's level of self-esteem and dignity. We can see that in case of divorced women who participated in this study, higher education has not been able to provide them with social amenity. Similarly, more single women feel disempowered than married women. This restates the importance given to marriage and male companionship for a woman to feel respected and protected in this society. Here, a higher degree is just a compliment and not an achievement in itself.

The effects of higher education in Pakistan seem paradoxical and similar to the case of Jordan as described by Jansen (2006). Higher education adds to the self-esteem of women and encourages them to participate in public roles. But it also adds to her cultural prestige which reflects positively on her family and husband. Higher education, in this way, challenges and reinforces existing gender structures; therefore, an increased access of women to higher education is generally not reflected in labour markets, families or societies. My findings show that women are still not welcome in the corporate sector and are dealt differently than male employees. Students as well as their teachers recognize the case of gender discrimination in the corporate sector of Pakistan. However, teachers also confess to lack of higher education practices to render this problem void. Noreen and Khalid (2012) also recount a similar conclusion of their study by stating that education has to come with policy and social changes to encourage women become part of leadership and mainstream economy instead of conforming to a job list approved by traditional stereotype culture.

Escalation in the number of higher education degrees rather than qualifications can be ascribed to several reasons. University ranking system and globalization are the two major contributing factors. Leathwood and Read (2009) show how university ranking and preparing students for international labour markets has deviated the focus of universities from knowledge provision and so how league institutions are now perpetuating class and gender stratification.

Similar to other researches, analysis of this study also reports exclusion of women and gender concerns from the higher education content. As curricula has been receiving particular attention around the world in fields where women are less, the curricula of sciences and technological fields is reported to be void of women achievements and contributions (Rosser, 1995). This is however, not restricted to fields where women are under-represented but is also found in general

curriculum in higher education. Even in disciplines where women are more than men, women are excluded from textbooks and curricular materials and activities (Miller and Miller, 2002). Women students in the research appeared to be aware of masculinity of their courses and course content. Some consider it part of the norm while some are dissatisfied as they feel women are ignored in the social sphere in terms of their intellect and capabilities. They also feel women achievers are not highlighted in the society and their efforts are often relegated to the backstage. This awareness lowers self esteem and dignity for all women students whether they favour a change in the existing norms or not.

Moreover, it became apparent that for most it is not only the material taught to students, the activities they are supposed to undertake for or along with their degree programs or even the preferential treatment of one discipline over the other, but also the ingrained mind-set of Pakistani women who refuse to acknowledge any avenues for growth and development beyond those dictated by our socio-cultural norms. The development of core is thus impeded by their reluctance to disturb the status quo for they perceive it to be the precursor for unwanted trouble. Higher education in Pakistan has not been able to help majority of women break through this mind-set, even at individual level. Since there are no changes in the women themselves, they have not been able to address the power dynamics and influence change in other people around. Women are unable to create a possibility of negotiations, they face power over and respond through submission. Personal empowerment through education has to enable women to create an identity and a place for themselves to participate in the world.

As many faculty members mentioned, higher education improves several aspects of personal development in students but the findings of this research show that these improvements are restricted in nature. It has not developed the potency to question and disagree in students.

Observation and FGDs made me recognize two groups of men with respect to the status of women and women empowerment in Pakistan's context. They are either unconcerned or antagonists. In both categories the mind-set varies contextually but their attitude remains common. Some unconcerned men are fully aware of the gender discrimination in Pakistan and understand the power rules but are not concerned enough to take part in bringing about change. As they are not losing anything in the present order, they are fine with losses of the other gender

and the community as a whole. A large number of unconcerned men are so comfortable with the existing norms and values that they have no urge to understand its underpinnings and repercussions. They are similar to the women who consider it as a divine set of conditions which cannot be changed and should not be changed. These men too exhibit a form of internalized oppression. They have been oppressed to believe in status quo and to avoid questioning and changes.

The antagonists are the ones who are totally against any strategy that can change the status of women in the society. Most of these men are not ready to share power with women in the economic sphere. They are not ready to let go of practising power-over and male dominance in the labour market. They are not ready to rationalize an increasing number of women in higher education and workplaces despite a larger number of women restricted from participating in either. A second group in this category is antagonistic of women empowerment and all related subjects as they are not ready to share social dominance. They translate women empowerment as women's control in the household and their autocracy in defining social norms. These men do not support power sharing with women to make decisions about life and living.

Rowlands builds her argument on the nature of empowerment and its process. However, I take it as an analysis juncture. As literature has shown time and again, injustices in private and public spheres are so strongly embedded in the female mind that I feel the term internalizing oppression is just the master of understatement. Most of the girls who participated in FGDs seem to have accepted the natural and divine current set up while anger and the feeling of being prejudiced against is expressed heartily by the men. This is especially true for male students, while male teachers merely 'shrugged off' the discussions related to women empowerment. Male students have been much more vocal and provided the insight into a male mind which studies alongside women in HEIs and works with them in offices. They, like most women, are unaware of the dynamics of women empowerment as well as youth empowerment. All they understand and speak of is the economical dimension which is related to jobs, salaries and other opportunities which are responsible for their chances at a better job and higher salary brackets. Women empowerment is a hostile territory which if they get a chance will be placed right alongside other taboo topics for discussion in the society. The reasons for their antagonism are

the equal number of women in classrooms, scholarships and special job quotas for women in public sector.

This brings me to consider not only the failure of education to bring about acceptance of women in the mainstream but also of governance in general. In a traditional patriarchal society, where men are still considered the sole bread earners and decision makers in every possible dimension of the term, women giving men a run for their jobs and hence control is sure to evoke rigidity and hostility in them. The appalling levels of employment and justice, merit and governance are equally to be blamed in empowerment of women not taking roots in the context of Pakistan. When a male specimen cannot find a job for himself but finds one of his twenty-five female class fellows at a respectable post, he is not only envious and abhors these women who studied with him but also blames the system discrepancies, his luck and lineage in general. Now consider having one of these educated, well-employed women in his house. The ordained decision maker is certainly threatened and not at ease.

This is where inclusion of men to be part of solution is foregrounded. As one of the interviewee rightly suggested: men should be included in all efforts to help women gain equal treatment and opportunities. All men (students, teachers as well as policy makers at all levels) need to be sensitized to the need of gender equity in higher education in such a way that they do not feel powerless and help stimulate the change needed in societal thought process to accept women in public and private domains on equal terms.

## INDIGENOUS MODEL

All this discussion can be presented in the local model of self empowerment of women students. For this model I have relied on the elements identified by the respondents and applied them to the revised model of self-empowerment. Some of these elements have been explicitly mentioned by the respondents while some have been implied. However, this does not include exact wording of the responses.

In the core, as I have explained earlier in chapter 1, I have included the term critical consciousness in the revised model and it focuses on the process of empowerment itself and not

on the view of the respondents on the process of personal empowerment. According to this model, self-empowerment of women students through higher education remains in strong confines and dictates of prior experience, history along with social, economic and geographic positioning. This conditioning has resulted in certain inhibitors and encouragers that most directly influence the development of core within the students. The nature and extent of core varies in each woman as each woman has her own process of empowerment underway, however, dignity and critical consciousness have been the least apparent in core development.

**Figure 12**

**Indigenous Model of Self-Empowerment**

**Personal history, experience; social, economic, geographic position.**

| Inhibitors | Core | Encouragers |
|---|---|---|
| • Patriarchal values<br>• Subject biases<br>• Biased curriculum<br>• Uncredited co-curricular<br>• Undefined co-curricular credit awards<br>• Unhelpful male behaviour<br>• Lack of acknowledgement of intellectual women<br>• Lack of vision as a nation<br>• Redtapism and orthodoxy for change in curriculum<br>• No female representation at policy levels<br>• Unemployment and lack of opportunities for youth<br>• Focus on matrimonial prospects | ✓ Self-esteem<br>✓ Self-confidence<br>✓ Sense of agency<br>✓ Sense of self<br>✓ (Dignity)<br>✓ (Critical Consciousness) | • Development of Confidence<br>• Development of literacy skills<br>• Mobility outside household<br>• Development of Interactive skills outside household<br>• Information on gender issues<br>• Instructors attitude of equality<br>• Increasing opportunities to pursue higher education<br>• Educated women increasingly becoming unsupportive of status quo<br>• Educated household elders supportive of female education |

# CHAPTER 5
# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

'HEC to strengthen women universities in country' (*Dawn*, 2013)

'Women education to bring socio-economic change' (*Pakistan Today*, 2013)

'Her right to education: Gender inequality major hurdle in access to education' (*The Express Tribune*, 2014)

'Government is promoting equity for women in education, claims minister' (Pakistan Today, 2015)

'Where are our female engineers?' (*The Nation*, 2015)

'Female doctors becoming 'trophy' wives: Is quota the right move?' (*Dawn*, 2014)

'Women and education: Yet another divide?' (*Pakistan Today*, 2015)

## OVERVIEW

Quality of education and its importance for women have always been a part of discursive agenda in the mainstream intelligentsia of Pakistan. In spite of the recognition and social struggle for rhetoric of **equality,** women's situation in higher education remains the same in Pakistan. Women, despite having hypothetically equal access to universities alongside men, have not been able to bring any change in their social position and status through education. Women are still under-represented, lacking power and status in the higher education system of Pakistan. Higher education is still plagued with gender and subject biases for women. As a human resources development agency and a means of upward socio-economic mobility for women, higher education in Pakistan has only helped a limited number of women and has instead

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impeded the achievement of gender and social equity by echoing unjust social and gender organisations of the current system.

In this thesis I set myself the task of exploring the self-empowerment process among women students at the higher education level. In order to define the scope of this study I have considered power-to and power-within concepts to comprehend the corresponding concept of self-empowerment and the changes it causes in the lives of women. This study focuses on areas where changes could be made to help women enable themselves to improve their existing social standing.

Using Explanatory Mixed Research Design this thesis presents the views and experiences of women students currently enrolled in higher education institutions in Islamabad, their fellow male students and faculty members involved in curriculum making. This included the methodology of self-reflection and analysis, including a deliberate focus on women's lives. I have improvised Jo Rowlands (1995) model of self-empowerment and have expanded the contextual model using the generative constructs of power and Conscientization. When empowerment is defined more precisely- in terms of power and a process-, the notion of an **empowerment approach** to development for women becomes a more useful tool for analysis and planning of services.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of higher education has been patchy; perhaps largely because of the sole focus on the number of women students. Graduate and post graduate programs are not conceived and designed deliberately to empower women, in terms of either the structure, methodology employed, or the philosophy behind it. The focus has been strongly aimed at delivering a particular service by developing the necessary skills, rather than a broader development of enhanced abilities and capacities which would leave women better placed to develop and manage their own agendas.

This study shows that access to higher education has improved the status of women in a very restricted way. Its content and experience have not been able to provide all women with a sense

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of self, dignity and the ability to counter social constraints; in fact it is making them a congenial part of a system in which social differentiation of gender constructs and gender inequality within a family and society perpetuates. There are many nuances between education and empowerment that are more vividly presented by exploration of gender inequality through qualitative studies.

Pakistan is part of the list of those Asian countries where discrimination begins at home; boys are preferred over girls and this attitude continuous throughout a woman's lifespan. Commonly, women are excluded from the decision-making process, discredited from an equal share and ownership of resources and they lack prospects to develop confidence in their abilities. This puts women precariously in a predetermined, passive and subordinate role, the same as in the early era of development enterprise as reviewed in chapter 2. The higher education system adds to these invidious practices and thereby reinforces the value system experienced by women.

These discriminatory practices of prevailing traditional cultural influences do not allow women to achieve their full potential. As they are denied a chance to develop confidence in their abilities they also experience a lower self-worth (dignity), which does not improve through higher education.

Pakistan still follows Victorian norms when it comes to the education system and the patriarchal values of the society reinforce domesticity and limited place of women in the public sphere. It limits their control of resources and their space of social and gender equality within family and the broad spectrum of society.

The voices of the women who were consulted in the study demonstrate that women in Pakistan participate in higher education so that it brings them the many benefits required for strategic gender needs. They look for confidence and economic independence, which form the basis of a better status and recognition from their family and the wider community. Being educated, achieving economic independence, developing personal confidence, gaining an enhanced status within the community and being given a voice, are all aspects of a tightly interlinked package of benefits which women want to avail through higher education.

Gender equality and women's empowerment should not only remain a priority in terms of access to education but also in terms of recognition in the curriculum in order to reach the grass roots where genuine change can take place and awareness can be raised that changes are necessary.

A just and equal society can be formulated in Pakistan and some changes have already begun. In spite of all the existing restrictions and limitations on women, many participants in the study expressed perseverance and a strong resolve not to perpetuate the system within their homes and their circle of influence. The significance of these female graduates as role models within their families and communities must not be overlooked.

Women's participation in higher education is a means to address the gender parity issues in Pakistan and can act as an arbitrament to harmonize different dimensions of the systems which obscure progress towards an egalitarian society. Higher education can have a manifold impact on gender discrimination by developing core in scores of women students simultaneously. Thus, its importance as an avenue to bring about change in socio-cultural settings cannot be discounted. Similarly, participation of men can also not be overlooked.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As this study focuses on post secondary education it will be worthwhile to focus on the primary and secondary education gender biases and their nature. As this study's findings show that gender inequality becomes a part of higher education as a continuation of tradition in moving from higher secondary to higher levels of academic career, the extent of the damage at these levels must be determined and research must be undertaken into the ways this can be mitigated.

More research needs to be carried out in Pakistan for collection of statistics and understanding different regional contexts. It can help in comparisons and identify local nature of power within empowerment processes. There can be comparisons among different types of institutions and degree awarding institutions. Similarly, different aspects of the higher education system can be scrutinized, from curriculum setting to mode of delivery and technical facilities.

Women are mostly treated as a homogenous group for development purposes; however, regional and contextual in-depth studies can showcase the differentials within women groups

and identify spaces for action. These in-depth studies can also highlight the contextual gender relations and the processes through which men can be involved to introduce changes.

Monitoring and evaluation of new policies or experimental designs can prove effective in learning from experience about higher education's capability to survive the challenges discussed earlier.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICES

Women empowerment is a gender issue therefore it requires inclusion of men to lessen hurdles and create possibilities of change initiation from 'the other end'. Similarly, any change of curriculum content should be made keeping in view the acceptance and presence of male students and male instructors. As HEC is working towards a unified system of quality control and course outline for each program, it should make sure that inclusion of women in the curriculum should not demoralise or threaten their male counterparts.

Mass media is a powerful tool and can be effectively used for the advancement of women. It can be an instrument for educators and government to tackle the current mind-set of the population regarding gender divide. It can also be used to target adult males and encourage them to be part of the change.

Resources allocated to higher education have always been very meagre in Pakistan. Diminishing and insufficient resources apportioned for higher education affect women adversely by reducing the budget for adjustment policies and programs. In order to approach mainstream inequality of access and representation in higher education, the government needs to apply active and visible policies and programs with a reserved budget. These policies and programs should be evaluated and analysed to ensure their impact on women and men in higher education.

A rapid expansion of HEIs, especially in the private sector, has already led to lower quality of education and it may lead to a second tier of research intensive universities that are ready to enrol a new segment of higher secondary graduates. As seen in many countries around the world, this expansion will not only result in new found opportunities for members of a specific class but will also create a new hierarchy by perpetuating the ability of gender and class

structure divide to further diminish the holistic value of education for the youth. Therefore, a strict mandate for university formation and programs to be offered to the students should be applied and followed, controlled by a central body such as HEC.

Higher education needs fundamentals for every activity's content that will not reproduce any obstacles that restrict growth of self-confidence, dignity and positivity among women students and helps them overcome internalized oppression. This demands a methodology which is based on the respect of women and communication with men and women involved in higher education. It is based on believing in the capabilities of women and their ability to bring changes within and around themselves. This methodology should prioritize empowerment for women as a goal in itself so that women gain access to knowledge, opportunities and power to analyse their own situations and act accordingly.

An analysis of the encouraging elements and obstacles faced by the women can also have implications for methodology. In the study the elements that encourage personal empowerment include exposure to more academic and employment opportunities. Here, different activities aimed at orientation of students towards higher and international study programs and national and international labour market and niches can be built in to the methodological approach.

Teachers training and workshops are very crucial in a framework of empowerment and Conscientization. Teachers are the change agents in such a model so their trainings and briefings are an important aspect of the methodology. Centralised training content can guide and motivate new and old teachers to respect individual differences and commit to their role in the empowerment process of their students. Teachers need to be aware of the dynamic, open-ended process of empowerment and realise and acquire the necessary skills, such as listening, encouraging and facilitating, to promote the process in all students, irrespective of their historic and cultural origin. At the primary and secondary levels, teacher education should raise awareness of practices that treat boys and girls differently and suggest and apply approaches that promote gender parity.

Curriculum can also be a change agent by being a site for the 'product of our labour' (Pinar, 2010). It shows that there has to be a spiral where curriculum is modified as the society changes

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and the new curriculum should feedback into the society to evoke change. Such a discourse can help the learners become change agents themselves and being underpinned by a gender inclusive approach, it can encourage women to participate in globalization, where different people express themselves in their particular ways as they have unique identities, backgrounds and desires (Jayaweera, 2010). Revised curricula need to equalise the imbalances identified in the existing curricula. It also needs to include women as active citizens and role models in such a manner that it motivates women students and show their fellow men that power sharing is beneficial for all.

# APPENDIX A-i

## Table17: Percentage of Female Students in Higher Education since 1900s.

| | Dataset: Education | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Indicator | Percentage of students in tertiary education who are female (%) | | | | | | |
| 4 | Time | 1990 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 | 2015 |
| 5 | Country | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Pakistan | 27.67003 | .. | | 45.13692 | .. | | .. |
| 7 | World | 46.19164 | 47.71506 | 48.87103 | 50.11931 | 50.57929 | .. | .. |
| 8 | Developed countries | 50.5533 | 52.14246 | 53.34248 | 54.79596 | 55.11962 | | .. |
| 9 | Developing countries | 39.14678 | 41.94756 | 44.79751 | 46.59683 | 48.12968 | .. | |
| 10 | Countries in transition | 53.87678 | 53.77932 | 54.11891 | 55.74534 | 55.35253 | | .. |
| 11 | Arab States | 40.18484 | 42.42045 | 45.06661 | 48.06751 | 49.64338 | | .. |
| 12 | Central and Eastern Europe | 53.11944 | 52.77871 | 53.55848 | 54.91018 | 54.62311 | .. | .. |
| 13 | Central Asia | .. | 49.86295 | 49.21883 | 51.97418 | 51.71735 | .. | |
| 14 | East Asia and the Pacific | 38.99425 | 42.08857 | 44.86198 | 46.54388 | 49.39557 | .. | .. |
| 15 | Latin America and the Caribbean | 48.66896 | 51.504 | 53.74773 | 54.21196 | 55.68884 | .. | |
| 16 | North America and Western Europe | 51.68667 | 53.13978 | 54.24199 | 55.59181 | 55.59871 | .. | .. |
| 17 | South and West Asia | 31.23063 | 33.46537 | 38.26417 | 41.02311 | 41.62806 | .. | .. |
| 18 | Sub-Saharan Africa | 31.97112 | 37.18243 | 40.29901 | 40.13969 | 40.08261 | .. | .. |

Data extracted from UIS/ISU (http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=135#)

**Table 18: Enrolment of Students in Higher Education over the Years by Degree Level**

| Sector | Year | Bachelor* | Master* | M. Phil.* | PhD* | PGD* | Total* | Percentage Increase ** |
|--------|------|-----------|---------|-----------|------|------|--------|------------------------|
| Private and Public DAIs | 2002-03 | 224,290 | 94,524 | 4,842 | 4,138 | 3,951 | 331,745 | - |
| | 2003-04 | 295,712 | 108,667 | 7,454 | 6,472 | 4,931 | 423,236 | 28% |
| | 2004-05 | 327,082 | 113,914 | 7,593 | 6,054 | 2,999 | 457,642 | 8% |
| | 2005-06 | 359,683 | 140,917 | 10,430 | 5,139 | 5,304 | 521,473 | 14% |
| | 2006-07 | 442,547 | 172,886 | 12,824 | 5,344 | 6,460 | 640,061 | 23% |
| | 2007-08 | 511,317 | 200,138 | 12,859 | 7,321 | 7,455 | 741,092 | 16% |
| | 2008-09 | 544,763 | 224,968 | 16,747 | 8,692 | 8,337 | 803,507 | 8% |

*Student Numbers are taken from HEC official table of enrolment by degree level.
(http://www.hec.gov.pk/InsideHEC/Divisions/QALI/Others/Pages/LevelofDegree.aspx)

**Percentage increase is calculated by the formula: Year2total–Year1total/Year1 X 100%

Example-     2003-04Total-2002-03Total/2002-03Total X 100%

= 423,326-331,745/331,745 X 100% = 27.57% = 28%

**All percentages are rounded off to one decimal place.

**Figure13a: Students Enrolled in Bachelors and Masters in Pakistan DAIs**



Source: http://www.hec.gov.pk/InsideHEC/Divisions/QALI/Others/Pages/LevelofDegree.aspx

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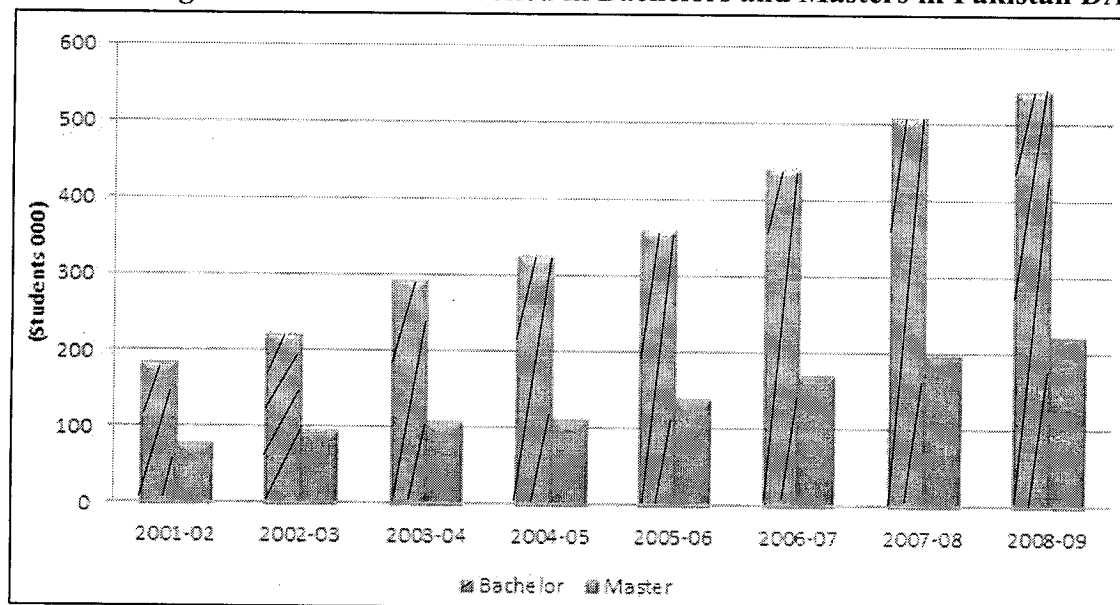
# Figure13b: Students Enrolment in Masters and PhD in Pakistan DAIs
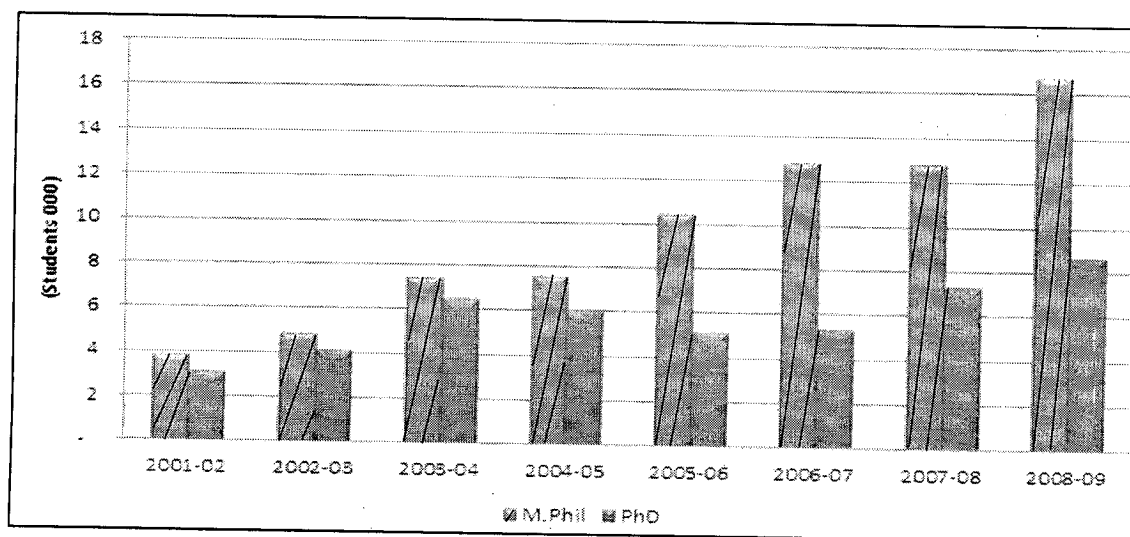
## Table 19: Gender Wise Enrolment by Level of Degree in DAIs

| Level Of Degree | 2001-02 | | 2002-03 | | 2003-04 | | 2004-05 | | 2005-06(P) | | 2006-07 (P) | | 2007-08(P) | | 2008-09(P) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Bachelors | 117027 | 68654 | 137695 | 86595 | 167072 | 128640 | 188067 | 139015 | 210293 | 149390 | 236320 | 205227 | 272839 | 238478 | 293,560 | 251,102 |
| Master | 49255 | 30274 | 56714 | 37810 | 64679 | 43788 | 64304 | 49610 | 84445 | 56472 | 92840 | 80046 | 106874 | 93254 | 131,102 | 93,865 |
| M.Phil | 2556 | 1315 | 3150 | 1692 | 4700 | 2746 | 4650 | 2943 | 6476 | 3954 | 7648 | 5176 | 8864 | 5995 | 11,009 | 5,737 |
| Ph.D | 2435 | 689 | 3122 | 1016 | 4652 | 1810 | 4293 | 1761 | 3741 | 1398 | 3993 | 1352 | 5469 | 1853 | 6,014 | 2,678 |
| PGD | 3431 | 838 | 2998 | 953 | 3192 | 1739 | 1683 | 1316 | 3521 | 1783 | 4263 | 2195 | 4921 | 2535 | 5,488 | 2,849 |
| Total | 174504 | 101770 | 203679 | 128066 | 244512 | 178723 | 263097 | 193845 | 308476 | 213097 | 345064 | 294697 | 398968 | 342125 | 447,274 | 355,231 |

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## Figure14: Adult Literacy* in Districts of Punjab
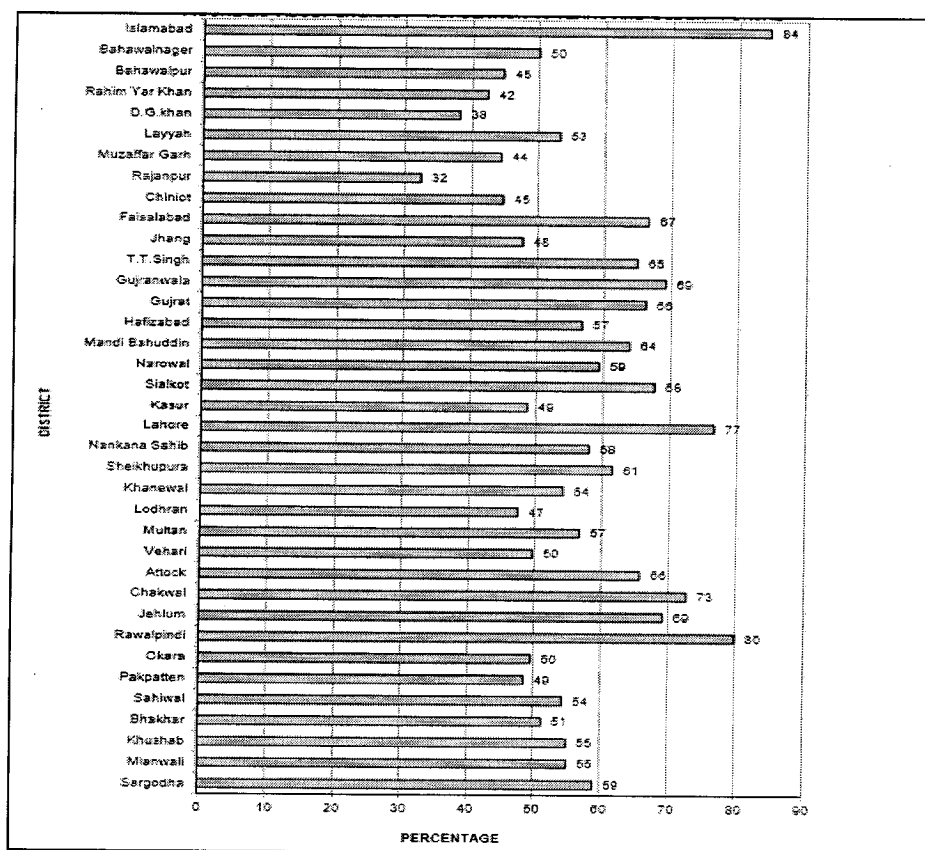


*Adult literacy: ages 15 and above

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
## Table20: Krejcie and Morgan Table for Sample Determination

Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

| N | S | N | S | N | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 10 | 220 | 140 | 1200 | 291 |
| 15 | 14 | 230 | 144 | 1300 | 297 |
| 20 | 19 | 240 | 148 | 1400 | 302 |
| 25 | 24 | 250 | 152 | 1500 | 306 |
| 30 | 28 | 260 | 155 | 1600 | 310 |
| 35 | 32 | 270 | 159 | 1700 | 313 |
| 40 | 36 | 280 | 162 | 1800 | 317 |
| 45 | 40 | 290 | 165 | 1900 | 320 |
| 50 | 44 | 300 | 169 | 2000 | 322 |
| 55 | 48 | 320 | 175 | 2200 | 327 |
| 60 | 52 | 340 | 181 | 2400 | 331 |
| 65 | 56 | 360 | 186 | 2600 | 335 |
| 70 | 59 | 380 | 191 | 2800 | 338 |
| 75 | 63 | 400 | 196 | 3000 | 341 |
| 80 | 66 | 420 | 201 | 3500 | 346 |
| 85 | 70 | 440 | 205 | 4000 | 351 |
| 90 | 73 | 460 | 210 | 4500 | 354 |
| 95 | 76 | 480 | 214 | 5000 | 357 |
| 100 | 80 | 500 | 217 | 6000 | 361 |
| 110 | 86 | 550 | 226 | 7000 | 364 |
| 120 | 92 | 600 | 234 | 8000 | 367 |
| 130 | 97 | 650 | 242 | 9000 | 368 |
| 140 | 103 | 700 | 248 | 10000 | 370 |
| 150 | 108 | 750 | 254 | 15000 | 375 |
| 160 | 113 | 800 | 260 | 20000 | 377 |
| 170 | 118 | 850 | 265 | 30000 | 379 |
| 180 | 123 | 900 | 269 | 40000 | 380 |
| 190 | 127 | 950 | 274 | 50000 | 381 |
| 200 | 132 | 1000 | 278 | 75000 | 382 |
| 210 | 136 | 1100 | 285 | 1000000 | 384 |

N is population size.

S is sample size.

Average of both values is taken and **378** is determined as the sample size.

Source: Determining Sample Size for Research Activities by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), Educational and Psychological Measurement, volume 30, Pp. 608.

# APPENDIX A-ii

## Table21: Subjects Taught In Each Faculty (According to the Selected Universities)

| Natural Sciences | Applied sciences | Social Sciences | Management Sciences | Arts And Linguistics |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physics | Bioinformatics & Biotechnology | Pakistan Studies | Business Studies | Occidental and oriental languages |
| Mathematics & Statistics | Computer Sciences & Software Engineering | Media and Mass Communication | Technology Management | Urdu |
| Environmental Sciences | Aerospace/avionics engineering | Economics/finance/ Accounting/ Econometrics | | Arabic |
| Chemistry | Mechanical engineering | Politics/ International relations | Governance & Organization | English |
| Pharmacy | Electronics Engineering | Rural Development | Marketing | Persian |
| Veterinary sciences | Mechanical Engineering | Islamic banking and Finance | Management | |
| Biosciences | Electrical Engineering | Law (corporate/international) | Finance | Architecture |
| Environmental Policy & Management | Telecom & Networking | Anthropology | Project Management | Industrial Design |
| Geology | Communication Security | History | | Islamic Arts and Architecture |
| Geophysics | | Education | | |
| Nanoscience | | Psychology | | |
| | | Ussuludin/Shariah | | |
| | | Comparative religions and Islamic history | | |
| | | Sociology | | |
| | | Public Administration | | |
| | | Islamic studies | | |

# APPENDIX A-iii

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

### MPhil Thesis Research

*This research is purely academic and aims to study the personal empowerment status of women pursuing higher education in Islamabad.*
*This questionnaire has open ended as well as close ended questions; please answer according to your understanding and experiences to provide a valuable opinion for the research. I appreciate your cooperation and ensure complete discretion of all personal information.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** Name (optional) : | | **B.** Age (optional): (In complete years) | |
| **C.** **Marital status:**<br>1. Single<br>2. Married<br>3. Divorced<br>Other:----------------<br>(Nikkah/separated/engaged) | | **D.** **Permanent Residence:**<br>1. Punjab (urban/rural)<br>2. KPK (urban/rural)<br>3. Sindh (urban/rural)<br>4. Baluchistan (urban/rural)<br>5. Federal<br>6. AJK<br>7. Gilgit Baltistan<br>8. Other: | |
| **E.** **A. Degree currently pursuing:**<br>1. Bachelors (BSc)<br>2. Masters (MSc/MBA/MA)<br>3. MS/ MPhil<br>4. PhD<br>B. Semester: | | **F.** Title of your current degree: | |
| **G.** **Faculty:**<br>1. Basic/Natural Sciences<br>2. Applied Sciences<br>3. Social Sciences<br>4. Management Sciences<br>5. Arts and Linguistics<br>Any other: -------------------------- | | **H.** Last degree completed: | |
| **I.** **Hostel boarder:**<br>1. Yes<br>2. No | | **J.** Member of any student committee/council/group, during your current degree:<br>1. Yes<br>2. No<br>If yes, please specify: ----------------------------------------------- | |

**K.** **A. Any work experience?**
**1.** No       ↓    2. Yes

**b.** **If yes,** what is/was the nature of your employment?
1. Part time      2. Full time     3. Volunteer (1.Paid/ 2. Unpaid)   4. Internship (1. Paid/ 2. Unpaid) 5. Any other: ------------------------

**c.** **Nature** of organisation:
1. Public      2. Private      3. Semi-government    4.Multinational      5. Any other: --------------

**d.** Are you **currently employed**:
1. Yes       2.No

**e.** **Total** working experience:
1. Less than a year      2. One year     3. More than a year

**3.a. If more than a year**, how many years: ----------------------------

| *For this section, please reflect upon your personal experience of attaining Higher Education in Pakistan to choose (✓) one option for each aspect given below:* |
|---|

**1.      Why are you pursuing Higher Education?**
*(You can choose more than one option for this question)*
1.      You like studying/learning
2.      Your parents insisted on studying further
3.      It is important for high paid jobs
4.      It is important to gain respect in society
5.      It is important for self-confidence/ self esteem
6.      Any other: --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**2.      According to you, which of the following element(s) lead to empowerment of women?**
*(You can choose more than one option for this question)*
1.      Literacy skills
2.      Practical skills
3.      Income
4.      Career
5.      Self confidence
6.      Self esteem
7.      Traveling
8.      Participating in activities outside home
9.      Time for own self
10.      Being part of a large group
11.      Having friends
12.      Participating in all decision-making within the household
13.      Any other:--------------------------------

**3.   Do you consider yourself empowered, based on your choices above?**
1.      Yes
Why? ----------------------------------------------------------------------------
2.      No
Why? --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**4.      Has Higher Education helped you empower yourself, based on the choices you made in question#2?**
1.      Yes
How? ----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
2.      No
Why? --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**5.      How has higher education altered the following in you?**

| Aspects | Increased | Unchanged | Decreased |
|---|---|---|---|
| a.      Self-confidence. | | | |
| b.      Self-esteem. | | | |
| c.      Ability to deal with your surroundings (social/cultural) effectively. | | | |
| d.      Sense of belonging to wider networks (socially/economically/politically). | | | |
| e.      Your sense of dignity i.e. feeling worthy of respect from others. | | | |

**6.Does your timetable include "time strictly for your-self"- e.g. time slot for personal/self-grooming, hobby?**
1.      Never
2.      Sometimes
3.      Always
      In case of option b or c, please mention activities/tasks that you undertake in this time: -----------------------------

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For this section, please consider **curriculum** particularly for **university required/compulsory courses** *(that are taught in and specific to your degree programmes).*

*Also, consider **co-curriculum activities** as those **activities/projects/events** which are an **extension** to the degree program you are currently in; and are **compulsory** for all students to attend/participate. These may/may not be graded and may/may not be held outside university premises by a third party. E.g. speaker series, guest lectures, practical learning assignments e.t.c.*

1.    **Which content of Higher Education has:**
      (Please tick only one option for each of the following)

| Statements | Curriculum (Taught courses during the degree) | Co-curriculum (lectures/practical learning assignments) | Both (Curriculum and co-curriculum, collectively) | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a)    increased your ability to **formulate ideas** | | | | |
| b)    increased your ability to **formulate opinions** | | | | |
| c)    increased your ability to **express ideas** to others | | | | |
| d)    increased your ability to **participate** in new projects/activities | | | | |
| e)    increased your ability to **initiate** new projects/activities on your own | | | | |
| f)    increased your ability to **learn** | | | | |
| g)    increased your ability to **analyse** | | | | |
| h)    increased your ability to **act** on your own | | | | |
| i)    increased your sense of **positivity** | | | | |
| j)    increased your ability to **manage resources (e.g. money)** | | | | |
| k)    increased your ability to **interact** outside your home | | | | |
| l)    increased your ability to **interact** outside your friends' circle | | | | |
| m)    increased your **confidence** | | | | |
| n)    increased your sense of **participation** | | | | |
| o)    increased your **self-esteem/self-image** | | | | |
| p)    increased your ability to **organize** your personal timetable | | | | |

## Section 3

For this section, like section 2, please consider **curriculum** particularly for **university required/compulsory courses** (that are taught in and specific to your degree programmes).
Also, consider **co-curriculum activities** as those **activities/projects/events** which are an **extension** to the degree program you are currently in; and are **compulsory** for all students to attend/participate. These may/may not be graded and may/may not be held outside university premises by a third party. E.g. speaker series, guest lectures, practical learning assignments e.t.c.

1.      Do you think your **curriculum** educates *all* students to live in a **diverse society** (a society with many cultural, gender and ethnic factors)?
  1.  No
  2.  Somehow
  3.  Yes

2.      Does your **curriculum** include **gender issues** (Male/Female relations, male/female discriminations)?
  1.  No
  2.  Somehow
  3.  Yes

3.      Do you think the **curriculum** *prepares* women students to **understand** the **gender** (male/female) **discriminations** of the society?
  1.  No
  2.  Somehow
  3.  Yes

4.      Do you think the **curriculum** *prepares* women students to **effectively deal** with the **gender** (male/female) **discriminations** of the society? (E.g. glass ceiling? Expected role of women in society?)
  1.  No
  2.  Somehow
  3.  Yes

5.      Is your **curriculum** infused with "**women**" as **examples** or **role models**?
  1.  No
  2.  Somehow
  3.  Yes

6.      Are **topics** pertaining to **women** part of your **co-curriculum**?( E.g. group discussions, guest lecture)
1.      No
2.      Somehow
3.      Yes


## Thank you for your time and cooperation.


Those interested in further participation in this research through group discussions please provide your details:

Contact#:

Email id:

# APPENDIX B

**FGD GUIDE**

FGD#                                       Date:

| University: | Diversity: /5 | Setting: |
|---|---|---|
| Members: | Duration: | |

View of Empowerment:

- Are you empowered?
  Let's discuss the role of higher education:

| Aspects | Increased | Unchanged | Decreased |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-confidence. | | | |
| Self-esteem. | | | |
| Ability to deal with your surroundings effectively. | | | |
| Sense of belonging to wider networks (socially/economically/politically). | | | |
| Your sense of dignity i.e. feeling worthy of respect from others. | | | |

- Has it made you critical about your surroundings? Do you raise questions or look for reasons in social settings?
- My analysis shows students from sciences view curricula as the main factor while for all others especially management believe co-curriculum is better? View?
- Most students answered that women are not discussed as heroes or examples? Why?
- How do you understand gender? How do u face gender from coming to uni and going to the outside world?
- Do you think the **curriculum/co-curriculum** *prepare* women students to **effectively deal** with the **gender** (male/female) **discriminations** of the society? (E.g. glass ceiling? Expected role of women in society?)
- What changes would u like to propose or see in your curricula and co-c?

- Ascertain strategic needs for them and then the role of higher education in it.

- What do u think must be the changes in higher education to make women students empowered? To enable women better analyze and participate in the society?

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# INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee's Profile                                    Date:

| University: | Name: | Department: |
|---|---|---|
| Post/ job title: | Years at the current position: | Qualification: |

If a lady- Are you as, an educator and as a woman, satisfied with the higher education curricula and co-curriculum for promoting women? (Rights, potential)

How u think current curricula prepares women for understanding and handling gender issues?

How do u see gender issues be relayed to students?

Most students answered that women are not discussed as heroes or examples? Why?

My analysis shows students from sciences view curricula as the main factor while for all others extra-curriculum is better? View?

In your field (          ) what suggestions or recommendation would you give for curricula making?

# APPENDIX C

**INFORMANTS' PROFILE**

| Demographic Variable | N | Percentage (valid) |
|---|---|---|
| **Marital Status** | | |
| Single | 326 | 86 |
| Married | 47 | 12 |
| Divorced | 2 | 1 |
| *Missing* | 3 | 1 |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Permanent Residence** | | |
| Punjab | 217 | 57 |
| KhyberPakhtunKhawa(KPK) | 34 | 9 |
| Sindh | 7 | 2 |
| Baluchistan | 6 | 2 |
| Federal | 99 | 27 |
| Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) | 3 | 1 |
| *Missing* | 6 | 2 |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Current Boarding** | | |
| Day Scholars | 272 | 78 |
| Hostel Boarders | 104 | 28 |
| *Missing* | 2 | - |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Degree Program** | | |
| Bachelors (BSc, BBA, BA) | 170 | 45 |
| Masters (MSc, MBA, MA) | 190 | 50 |
| MS/MPhil | 14 | 4 |
| PhD | 3 | 0.8 |
| *Missing* | 1 | 0.2 |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Faculty** | | |
| Natural Sciences | 55 | 15 |
| Applied sciences | 86 | 23 |
| Social Sciences | 84 | 22 |
| Management Sciences | 101 | 26 |
| Arts And Linguistics | 52 | 14 |
| *Missing* | 0 | - |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Student Body Affiliations** | | |
| Affiliated | 42 | 11 |
| Non-Affiliated | 311 | 82 |
| *Missing* | 25 | 7 |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |

Continued…

| Demographic Variable | N | Percentage (valid) |
|---|---|---|
| **Work Experience** | | |
| **Experienced** | 112 | 30 |
| Less than a year | 33 | 30 |
| A year | 17 | 15 |
| More than a year | <u>16</u> | <u>14</u> |
| *Missing* | 46 | 41 |
| *Total* | 112 | 100 |
| **Not Experienced** | 239 | 63 |
| *Missing* | 27 | 7 |
| *Total* | 378 | 100 |
| **Type of Organization** | | |
| Public | 7 | 6 |
| Private | 29 | 26 |
| Semi government | 8 | 7 |
| Multinationals | 4 | 4 |
| *Missing* | 64 | 57 |
| *Total* | 112 | 100 |
| **Nature of Employment** | | |
| Part time | 12 | 11 |
| Full time | 24 | 21 |
| Volunteer | 5 | 5 |
| Internship | 9 | 8 |
| *Missing* | 62 | 55 |
| *Total* | 112 | 100 |

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