

NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES



Media role for women's empowerment in Southern Punjab (Multan City) Pakistan

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Dedication

*I would feel pride to dedicate this thesis to my lovey-dovey wife,
Maria Mushtaq.*

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Before everything, I thank Almighty Allah for all the strengths and abilities He has given to me to come with this thesis. I also offer my humblest thanks to our Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), the fountain of knowledge and forever torch of guidance for humanity.

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*Muhammad Asif
Ås, Jan 2013*

ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a developing country with huge population, men and women are almost equal in numbers. Gender discrimination and violence against women is common practice in society. The study has been conducted in one of the city of Punjab province, Multan district (Pakistan). The population of the study area contains on the basis of different social classes. Media industry is flourishing rapidly in Pakistan and every social class has access on it. The first objective of the study was to analyze the people's perception of different social classes about women empowerment, socio-cultural and religious impacts on women empowerment in the study area. The second objective was to analyze the media policies and media role for women empowerment. Electronic media like TV channels can educate the women about their rights because due to low literacy rate majority of the population cannot read or write.

In present study, to analyze the research objectives different methods were used for data collection such as household interviews, key informants interviews, group discussions and participant observation. In focused area verbal communication and interview method was the best way for the collection of information because most of the rural population was uneducated and they cannot read the questionnaire. For the collection of information from the educated people questionnaire survey method was also used.

The main focus was to know the views of different people about women empowerment and to analyze the media role for women issues. In the study area, it was found that women belongs to upper class families are more empowered and their status is much better than middle class and lower class families. Men belong to upper class and middle class families were in favor that women should be empowered. Worst condition of women was in Wadera class families and lower class families because women status in these families was just like a slave. Educated male respondents were agreed that media can play a positive and constructive role for the betterment of women status but contribution of TV channels is not satisfactory in this regard. Only educated women gave the response in favor of TV channels that TV channels are highlighting the women problems and they are getting some information from TV channels. Mostly respondents from urban areas did not have any idea about the importance of TV channels and TV was the only source of entertainment for them.

Although many people from the study area were agreed that women should be empowered in a society. Women empowerment is also necessary for the development of a country. Most of the women were victimized by men in rural areas and the main reason was less literacy rate in those areas. Media could play a key role for the betterment of women and TV channels should focus women issues in different programs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| DEDICATION | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | v |
| LIST OF FIGURES..... | vii |
| 1. Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1.The context: (Pakistan) | 2 |
| 1.2.Gender discrimination and women rights..... | 4 |
| 1.3.Women empowerment and Electronic Media..... | 6 |
| 1.4.Objectives of the Study..... | 8 |
| 2. Literature Review..... | 9 |
| 2.1.Women Empowerment | 9 |
| 2.2.Gender Discrimination in Pakistan..... | 10 |
| 2.3.Media Role for the Empowerment of Women..... | 12 |
| 3. Research Methodology..... | 14 |
| 3.1.Study area..... | 14 |
| 3.2.Information collection..... | 16 |
| 3.3.Research tools and instruments..... | 17 |
| 3.4.Key informant interviews..... | 17 |
| 3.5.Household interviews..... | 17 |
| 3.6.Informal Discussion\ Participant observation..... | 18 |
| 3.7. Sample selection..... | 18 |
| 3.8.Why I used these methods..... | 19 |
| 4. Results and Discussion..... | 20 |
| 4.1.Different perceptions of women empowerment and socio-cultural and religious impact on women empowerment..... | 20 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.1.1. Introduction..... | 20 |
| 4.1.2. Definitions of empowerment..... | 20 |
| 4.1.3. Brief description of social classes in the study area.. | 21 |
| 4.1.4. Perceptions of Women empowerment in different social classes..... | 22 |
| 4.1.5. Social and cultural aspects of women empowerment. | 26 |
| 4.1.6. Religion factor in women empowerment..... | 27 |
| 4.2. Media role for women empowerment and interest of TV channels..... | 28 |
| 4.2.1. Introduction..... | 28 |
| 4.2.2. Women problem and media..... | 28 |
| 4.2.3. Interest of television channels and their contribution to highlight the women problems | 31 |
| 5. Conclusions..... | 34 |
| 5.1. Different perceptions about women empowerment and socio-cultural and religious impact on women empowerment..... | 35 |
| 5.2. Media role for women empowerment..... | 36 |
| 6. References..... | 38 |
| 7. Appendix..... | 43 |

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig.1 <http://pakistanipopularplace.blogspot.no/2012/05/pakistan-map.html>

Fig. 2 http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/country_information.php?Pays=PAK

1. General Introduction

This particular study examines the women empowerment and the contribution of the electronic media for the solution of the problems being faced by women. In this regard, the researcher has selected the city of Multan as research area which is situated in Punjab province in Pakistan. In Pakistan, a milestone change in electronic media has taken place during the last one decade. It has been recognized that media can provide the information as well as can educate the people. Literacy rate in Pakistan is very low especially among the women and illiterate people cannot read and write and they just rely on TV and radio for information. The research aims to examine the role of media to educate the women about their rights. In this part, the researcher would also focus on the gender issues and also analyze how Pakistani community deals with this problem? How the governmental and non-governmental channels are playing effective roles?

Discrimination and violence against women in Pakistan is a common practice and its social infrastructure is based on religion. Women are half of the total population but due to lack of freedom and education they are suffering at their home. In the last few years, due to effective work of different NGOs and free media has created the awareness among women about their rights. Now women are demanding for equal opportunities socially and economically. Although the government of Pakistan has passed different laws and legislations for the protection of women rights in order to improve their condition. Pakistan is a developing country and now it has been realized that for the development of country women contribution is utmost important in all fields of life.

The aim of current research project is to analyze what kind of problems women are facing and what is the role of government, media and different NGOs are playing to empower the women in all fields of life.

1.1. The context: (Pakistan)

Pakistan emerged on world map in 1947. Total land area of Pakistan is 803,940 sq km. and according to population fact and figures of 2010 its total population is 177,276,594. Pakistan covers the northwest part of the subcontinent. Iran lies to the Southwest. Afghanistan is located to the west and northwest. China has a border with Pakistan to the northeast and Arabian sea to the southern boundary. Topographically, Pakistan has three main land features. Northern frontier Consist of mountainous regions, Indus valley in the west and Baluchistan Plateau in the east. Pakistan has a long mountainous area which shares with India and world second largest peak K2 is also situated in Pakistan region (Bolstad, 2003). Pakistan basically is an agricultural country and Pakistan is using 35.4 percent land for agriculture. Agriculture has a great contribution in GDP. As an agricultural country a large proportion of population is engaged with agriculture. According to the 1991-1992 labor force survey 79.4% rural women were engaged in agriculture sector. Literacy rate is very low among rural women than urban women. Pakistan consists of four provinces, Punjab, Sindh, Khebar Pukhtoon Kha and Baluchistan.

I have selected the city of Multan for my research. It is located in the southern part of Punjab. Its total population is 5 million and its total area is 3,721km². Multan is an ancient city of subcontinent and it has great importance for Muslims due to lot of shrines of Sufi saints (Multan City Government). It is basically an agricultural city and most of area is consisting on villages.

Its political influence has been increased from last 5 years because current Prime minister and foreign minister are also belonging to this city.



The graph is showing the geographical condition of Pakistan

Figure1. Adapted from <http://pakistanipopularplace.blogspot.no/2012/05/pakistan-map.html>

Multan is considered as a backward city because majority population is living in villages and they are engaged with agriculture. Due to lack of living facilities and educational opportunities majority people are living in poverty. Poverty and illiteracy rate is higher among women as compare to men. In villages women work all the day in fields and due to lack of education and ignorance they are treated like a slave. But due to great influence in politics of this area, government is giving more concentration for the development of this city. As compare to the past, Multan city is developing very rapidly from last 3 years due to political engagement of this area. In rural areas women are being depressed because they are just allowed to stay at home or work only in fields. Women don't know what are their rights? How they can fight for their

rights and freedom? Pakistani society is male dominant society and women are dependent on men.

1.2. Gender discrimination and women rights

Gender discrimination is a common phenomenon in third world countries. It is also one of the main reasons that process of development is very slow in these countries. Everyone comes in this world without any discrimination but our social infrastructure and social values teaches us these things. Equal rights and equal opportunities for everyone lead the country towards the fastest process of development. Dominant groups of the society spend their life in a better way because they have more access to the resources. These dominant groups also protect their status because they want to show to the oppressed groups that their status is natural and normal. If anyone did not belong to the dominant group then he or she could not get access to the better resources (Gupta, 2008).

Women are major oppressed group in third world countries. In the past, women rights protections NGOs and agencies had done lot of work in Europe and America and now women status is better in these countries. Women are performing equal contribution in development process of these countries. Status of women is relatively different in third world societies than modern European society. Discrimination against women is much involved in the development of a country. It can be analyzed through comparison between western world and third world countries. Equality does not mean the equal number of men and women but the equality of opportunities. Women and men status is normally designed by the society and in third world countries it is common perception about women that women place is in the home. Men are considered as the head of the family and they take decisions for all family matters (Chant, 2010).

Women are a vulnerable group in society those are the victims of violation and they are considered as the property of men. Women's rights have been violated in different forms like physically, socially and mentally. The world fourth conference for women rights was held in 1995 and in this conference it was realized that inequality and gender discrimination are the main hurdle for women's advancement. Women could be a great participant for the development process of a nation if they got the equal rights and freedom. In this conference many suggestions and polices were designed to protect women rights and to provide them equal opportunities in all fields of life. Due to the struggle on international level women's have much better status in many parts of the world (Savitri, 2004). In western part of the world like Europe and America women have much better status and opportunities as compare to Asia and Africa. Western part consists of developed countries and due to freedom of choice and equal rights for both men and women is main reason of their social and economic development. In Asia, women are the main victims of different kinds of violence like domestic violence, honor killing etc. They are considered as an individual property and they are not allowed to go out without the permission of her parents, brothers and husband. They spend their time as a slave in their houses.

In Asia, different countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh have similar culture. Pakistan and Indian got independence in 1947. India is known as a big democratic country in all over the world and during the different time periods lot of laws for the protection of women rights have been passed, but women status is still under question (Gangoli, 2007). For example, in December 2012, a medical student was raped in a bus during the traveling in India (Indian media). This issue was highlighted by the media and after that Indian Government took strong action against the culprits. The condition of women is miserable in India and Pakistan because they made laws for the protection of women rights but they did not implement these

laws. In Pakistan, democracy is not too strong and army has more interference in politics but its past so called democratic governments have passed lot of laws for the protection of women rights but those laws are not in practice.

Over the past three decades women rights, their social status and now gender discrimination has become the international issues. In developing countries gender discrimination is burning issue but also in more developed countries it is not unfinished agenda. In third world countries women don't have same equal rights like men and they don't have rights to own education, marriage and property (World Bank report, 2001).

1.3. Women empowerment and Electronic Media

Women are vital members of the society and they can play a significant role for the development process of any country. Women's contribution for the development can play a crucial role if they are sufficiently empowered. Empowerment of women is very essential because it gives them self confidence and they would be able to recognize their identities. It is important for the progress of nations that men and women should be treated on equal basis then women could contribute their part for the development because in this way they shall work side-by-side with men (Dubey, 2009). Women are struggling for their rights since early twentieth century but in recent times their struggle for the equality has now become an international issue. Their long struggle for equal rights and opportunities had been denied in the past but now at the international level it has been recognized that empowerment of women is very essential for the social development as well as economic development of a country (Narasaiah, 2004). Media is considered as a powerful tool in all over the world. It is used for the different purposes because in present era people are more dependent on electronic media. It has also been used for

propaganda in different countries. Only electronic media is a source for the uneducated people to know the local and international issues. Media has lot of positive advantages along with its disadvantages. Media is a powerful source which can highlight the women's issue and it can also recognize them about their rights. Through media we can mould the perception of the people according to our wish. Media may be used for the empowerment and rights of women but one thing which is most important that media should be independent but within limits. In Pakistan PEMRA (Pakistan electronic media regulatory authority) department is centrally controlling the media and they make rules and regulation for media industry. The main task of this department is to analyze which type of program should be broadcasted on TV channels. It is also necessary for Government to control the media because some time TV channels use sensationalism and vulgarity in their programs just to increase their viewership. On the other hand, in North Pakistan electronic media has also been used against the Government by Taliban. North Pakistan is consisting on tribal areas and Taliban has much influenced in those areas. They send their messages to Government and people through radio. For example, in 2012 Taliban has delivered a message in tribal areas through radio that women are not allowed to go in market without veil (Pakistan Media). Media should be controlled by the Government to prevent such kind of activities.

Media has the power to change the thinking, attitude and behavior of the people (Sweet man, 2000). Media has a capacity to highlights the core issue which are related to women's right like gender discrimination, lack of education, sexual harassment, women's health issues. When media broadcasts such kind of news then government gives some concentration to solve their problems and also on international level people shall realize its importance.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

In this study the core aim would be to focus on the issues of women empowerment and gender discrimination in different fields of life and I will also try to explore the media role for the empowerment of women. Electronic media is developing day by day and almost every person has access for it. It would be tried to explore how electronic media can motivate the women to gain their right and how media might educate the women for their rights? The main objectives of my study are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the perceptions of different people about women empowerment and socio-cultural and religious impact on women empowerment
- 2) To analyze the role of media for women empowerment and contribution of TV channels to highlight the women issues

2. Literature Review

This chapter will analyze some past studies which have been done on media role for women empowerment. It is very important issue but there has been very little research on this topic. Women empowerment has become the important issue in Pakistani society and rapidly growth in media industry can drive this issue in a right direction. Media could elevate the women knowingness of their rights and TV channels could be utilized as an instrument of social transformation. On Pakistan TV channels most of the women issues are highlighted through soap operas (Carilli & Campbell, 2012). Through literature review researcher gets more knowledge and proper guideline about his research topic. In literature review researcher consults the research work of different researchers on same field (Woodside, Megehee & ogle, 2009).

2.1. Women Empowerment

Empowerment is a procedure of transforming the power of choice to an individual or a community (Panigrahy & Bhuyan, 2006). Women empowerment is very essential for the development of the country and it could not be denied that women have capacity to change the destiny of a country. Women are offering their services in two fields, on domestic and economic front. It needs recognition that for the socio-economic development women participation is mandatory and they have ability to mould the nation's fortune (Panigrahy & Bhuyan, 2006). According to the Moghadam (2007), "For women, empowerment is a process, not an event, that challenges traditional power equations and relations". Empowerment of women needs valuable material and potential at individual level such as proper health, education and good earning sources (employment). Women empowerment becomes more difficult by interfering factors of gender discrimination, poverty among women, violence, poor health and lack of education

(Moghadam, 2007). Pakistan is a country where socio-cultural values are dominant on society. Men have more influence and control over the society and it is very essential to check their behavior trend. Women are the major part of the population of Pakistan but their contribution is very less for the development of country. Women should have same rights as men but due to socio-cultural aspects it seems very difficult. Women have very less opportunities in economic sector in Pakistan because most of the women are unpaid workers because they are engaged with agricultural sector. Agricultural sector of Pakistan did not have proper criteria of income for women. Women's economic participation is not satisfactory in Pakistan. More political participation of women can provide them more opportunities to empower themselves. In Pakistan, political opportunities and jobs availability were very few for women but from last one decade Government is paying more attention to provide more and better opportunities for women to improve their condition in every field. Women empowerment was analyzed through these indicators, socio-economic participation, health and educational facilities and Political participation of women (Naz et al, 2010) Pakistan is an agricultural country and half of the labor force is working in agriculture because mostly population is living in rural areas of Pakistan. In Pakistan 36% women were engaged with agriculture in 1988 and mostly were unpaid worker and 48% women were engaged with family labor. Women access to economic, political resources is very limited and gender discrimination can be analyzed through salary wages of men and women (Naz et al, 2010).

2.2. Gender Discrimination in Pakistan

Gender discrimination is existing in Pakistani society on high level. In Pakistan, 35 million people are living in the rural areas and they are engaged with agriculture and labor work.

Poverty ration in rural areas is high than urban areas of Pakistan and this unfair distribution of wealth and resources have great impact on gender equality. In Pakistan 47% population is living under the poverty line and a major part 35% population is living in the rural areas. Most of the women are financially dependent on men because Pakistani traditional society did not allow the women for jobs. In rural areas the main reason of gender gap is unequal distribution of resources and wealth. Women's restricted approach to the resources like education and health, limited access of power and social and cultural barriers are the factor of gender inequality in a society because society pays less for women than men in Pakistan (Alam, 2010).

Gender discrimination exists in almost all the developing countries and there is a huge difference of women's condition in developed and under developing countries. Much empirical evidence can be found that development process is much faster in those countries those are providing equal rights and opportunities for men and women (GII, UNDP). In Pakistan gender inequality exists in every sphere of life because gender discrimination is deeply rooted in Pakistani society since its independence. Gender discrimination in Pakistan can be observed in education, jobs, family, politics and socio-economic sector. Gender discrimination in educational sector resulted low economic growth. In a family, parents use all the possible financial resources for the education of boys but girls educations depend on the accessibility of extra financial resources.

Gender discrimination in education resulted Low literacy rate among women. Low literacy rate is also one reason of women's poverty because without good education women could not gain better status and high level jobs and they could not contribute for the development and economic growth (Chudhary &Rahman, 2009).

A comparative study of gender discrimination was done in labor market of Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi is one of the big cities of Pakistan and there men's income was 65.41 percent higher than women's income. The main reason of this huge difference in income was gender discrimination in labor market. The researcher concluded that feudal society and gender discrimination in labor market was the main reasons of women poverty and low status in the society (Ashraf (2001) in Hussain, 2011)

In Pakistan formally women have equal rights as men in society because women can own property, women can participate in politics and they have right for vote. The reality is something else because women are considered as the second class citizen in Pakistani society. Most of the families prefer the male baby because male are dominant in society. On a family level women's task is only to manage the house and women are expected to obey their husbands. According to the Human rights watch, in Pakistan violence against women was 90% in 1999 and that was alarming situation for Pakistan. Women are conceived as the symbol of family's respect and men are the stewards of women and most of the women are killed on the name of honor because man thinks that women have been compromised the honor of his family (Singh, 2004).

2.3. Media Role for the Empowerment of Women

The empowerment of women in Pakistan has become the significant issue on international level and media is contributing a major part in this issue. Pakistani electronic media is flourishing very rapidly because electronic media is much independent in Pakistan. Media is playing a key role for the awareness of society and especially among the women to realize them about their rights and empowerment. Many female anchors are hosting different TV shows and such kind of programs is the best platform to highlight and discuss the women issues. Different

debate programs and drama serials are playing the best role for the empowerment of women (Carilli & Campbell, 2012). Media is presenting the women issues in different ways and media images of women have great impact on women. Some media's performance is not satisfactory because most of the time they create thrill and sensationalism in their programs just to increase their profit and viewership without considering that what are the impacts of these things on society? Media is a powerful way to promote the social and cultural values and it could be used for the promotion of women at grass root levels. Media industry is in the hands of male so; all the policies are made by men even women's participation in media industry is also increasing but their contribution in policy making is very limited (Gupta and Dyal, 1996)

3. Research Methodology

In a research project, methodology means to use different techniques for the collection of information and to find out the acceptable answers of research questions. Methodology is also defined as “a theory and analysis of how research should proceed” (Harding, 1987). In this research project, different research methods have been used to get the satisfactory results. In this research project qualitative method was mainly used for the collection of data. The research is composed on primary and secondary data.

3.1. Study Area

Multan district is situated in the Punjab province. It is located in the southern Punjab on the east bank of the Chenab River, Multan city is considered as a center of Pakistan and its distance from other big cities is 562 km from capital city Islamabad, 356 km from Lahore which is capital city of Punjab province and 966 km from Karachi which is the biggest city of Pakistan. Total area of Multan district is 3,721 square kilometers and it's approximately population is 3.1million. Multan district consists of following *Tehsils*-Sub Divisions- (*Tahsil*: consists on rural and urban areas)

- 1) Multan Cantonment
- 2) Multan *Sadar*
- 3) Shujabad
- 4) Jalalpur Pirwala

These four Tehseels have different urban areas, small towns and villages. Multan District has become the big city of the Punjab province due to its population and vast area. Multan city is also divided into different towns which are

- 1) Shah Ruken-e-Alam Town
- 2) Shershah Town
- 3) Mumtazabad Town
- 4) Shujabad Town
- 5) Jalapur Pirwala Town
- 6) Bosan Town

Multan is known as the city of saints due to lots of shrines in the city and it is also known as the ancient city of subcontinent. Basically Multan district is an agriculture part of Pakistan. Politically this part has very importance because current Prime minister also belongs to Multan (Punjab Government).



The graph is showing the geographical condition of Multan district on Pakistan map

Figure 2. Adapted from, http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/country_information.php?Pays=PAK

Multan is famous for its crops: wheat, cotton and sugar cane as well as mangoes and all these products are very famous due to its high quality. The main languages of this area are Punjabi and Sariki.

Most of the population is living in the rural areas and they are engaged with agriculture. This area has been neglected from the past governments and mostly in rural areas people did not have basic facilities like clean water, health center and schools. Literacy rate in men is 53.3% and in women is 32.3%. In Multan district 51% population is living in rural areas and 49% population is living in urban areas. Most of the people in urban areas are landlord and they own agriculture land so their survival also depends on agriculture (PHSRP, Punjab Government).

Population of Multan district is divided into three social classes including upper class, middle class and poor or labor class. A major part of population is living in rural areas and most of the villages have *Wadera system* (owner of big agricultural land and head of the village). This class is also considered as a part of upper social class (CSS forum Pakistan).

In Multan district, Multan city was selected as the research area. Multan city consists of six towns and every town has rural and urban areas. Most of the people in urban areas are engaged with big or small business and jobs. In rural areas people are engaged with agriculture or small business like small shops, Government employee and labor work.

3.2. Information Collection

Information was accumulated from primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through survey and interviews from different men and women in the study area. Secondary data was collected from different NGOs, Governmental organization, private organizations and available official documents and literature. For the collection of primary data most of the information was collected by the people through interview and verbal

communication. During the collection of information researcher should follow the rules and tell the truth to the respondents that he wants to collect some information (Vaus, 2002).

3.3. Research tools and Instruments

For the collection of data lot of research methods can be used but it is very important to select the accurate and proper methods for the research project. It is very essential to see which tools will apply for the data collection. In present research following methods were used for the data collection.

3.4. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interview means, interview with a person who has a vast knowledge about the issues due to his or her skills or experiences or cultural background (Mckernan, 1996). The main purpose was to choose the key informants for the collection of authentic and solid information about the topic in a short and limited time period. These people were very helpful to provide the proper information which was difficult task to collect without their help. People from media organizations, NGOs, head of the village (Wadera) and religious persons were selected as key informants during the research.

3.5. Household Interviews

Household interviews are best and useful source for the collection of information. Collective Interviews from all the members of household provide the proper information about the required questions (Green and Thorogood, 2004). For the collection of required information

35 household interviews were conducted. The questions were formulated before the interviews because most of the female respondents were uneducated and verbal communication was the most effective tool for the information collection. During the interviews the main focus was to know the respondent's perception about women empowerment and their views about media contribution for women empowerment.

3.6. Informal Discussion\ Participant observation

Informal discussion with different groups of men and women was most useful way to get the information for the research project. During the informal discussions with different community members, NGOs persons, media persons and religious persons lot of useful information was collected. During the informal discussion people feels more relax and provide the proper information. The participant observation is another way for collection the collection of information. This method is considered as a best way for the data collection in the social science studies. The researcher becomes the part of the society and discusses different issues with people and try to make close contact with the people. This is the best way for researcher to get more, proper and vast information.

3.7. Sample Selection

For this research project total 200 interviews were conducted for the data collection and 150 interviews were conducted to the female respondents and 50 interviews were conducted to the male respondents to know about the male point of view about women empowerment. To find out the media's contribution for women empowerment these most popular five channel's

programs were analyzed for three weeks. Geo news & Geo entertainment, ARY channel, Express news, Duniya TV and PTV (Pakistan Television).

3.8. Why I used these methods

In this research project main respondents were females and in the study area most of the population is living in the villages and they cannot read or write and verbal communication was the more effective way for data collection. During the interviews researcher has direct interaction with people and this is the easy way to achieve the required information. Most of the things researcher can observe by himself during the interviews which people often did not want to describe. In the study area it was most difficult for the male researcher to get direct access and interviews from women so, for this purpose a female student of Mass communication department (BZU University) was hired.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Different perceptions of women empowerment and socio-cultural and religious impact on women empowerment

4.1.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis of perceptions about women empowerment in different classes of society in the study area. This ascertaining attempt to explore one research question of this project, which is

- Perceptions of different men and women about women empowerment in Multan

This chapter will focus on people's perceptions of women empowerment and will analyze the problems which women are facing to get their rights. To find out the authentic and proper results, population of the study area is divided into four social categories.

- I. Upper class society
- II. Middle class society
- III. Lower class society
- IV. Wadera class society

The chapter concludes with results addressing the main research question and other sub questions.

4.1.2. Definitions of empowerment

Empowerment is generally described in a way, empowerment means right of self decision, power, control over one's life and control over resources and choice of life. According to Kabeer (2001) "Empowerment means, the expansion in people's ability to make strategic of life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". Different people have

their own views and thinking about empowerment because they describe empowerment according to their cultural, social, religious, self thinking and observational aspects. According to UN definition of empowerment, for the empowerment these components are essential, sense of self worth, freedom of choice, control over their lives at home and outside the home, control over the resources and opportunities.

4.1.3. Brief description of social classes in the study area

To find out the people's perception of women empowerment the population of the study area is divided into these social classes. It was more authentic way to find out the proper and accurate results for the research project. The population of the study area is consisting on these social classes

- Upper class society, High status leadership, business man, top management
- Middle class society, Small businessman, low rank officers, middle Management
- Lower class society, shop owners, Govt employee (peon, driver), poor farmer, Political workers
- Wadera class society, big landlords, owner of the village and deal all the political and social matters of the village

For the research project these classes were selected for the interview to know how people of the different classes perceive women empowerment.

4.1.4. Perceptions of Women empowerment in different social classes

Multan is consisting on urban and rural areas and its urban population is estimated 1539310 and rural population is 1590732 (PHSRP, Punjab Government). Population of this area is divided into different social classes. The society is divided into these social classes due to different characteristics like literacy rate, stander of living, women empowerment etc. To find out the perception about women empowerment, these social classes were focused during the research.

In Multan, most of the villages have chudhary or Wadera system and as a head of the village this person deals all the matters of the village. In this research project five small villages of Multan were selected to know about people's perception about women rights and their empowerment. These villages were selected because these villages had *Wadera system or Choudhary system*. During the survey in these villages 65% women were in favor that women should have right of decision making in her personal life and in family matters. During the informal discussion majority of women answered that they want to get education and health facilities but they are unable to get these facilities because head of the village did not give importance to these issue. In these rural areas poverty ration was too much high among women and due to this poverty women were most oppressed group in this society. Nasreen Bibi a rural female participant said, she has five kids and her husband's income is not sufficient to meet their family expense so she also works in fields and supporting financially to her husband along with the responsibilities of a house wife but with all this struggle her husband did not treat her good. She did not have right to take any self decision in any matter. She further said, she is doing her

best for her family and for her husband but she is not getting any reward. She said that she is facing all these difficulties because she is not educated.

An interview was conducted to the key informant (Chudhary) of Band Bosan village and he said about women education, "women should obey her husband and primary school level education is enough for women because after all women have to do the work in the fields and at home. The most important thing is that she should be obedient of her husband". In these rural areas 40% women are performing dual responsibilities because they are working in agricultural lands and also fulfilling their duty as a household lady. In the study area many cases have been recorded by the police that women are victimized of sexual harassment and raped by these Chudharies, Mukhtara Mai rape case is an example of this Wadera system which happened near Multan district. Due to media coverage and involvement of international organizations some people were arrested but in most cases police did not take action against such kind of people.

During the discussion with different NGOs persons they said, they want to work for the protection of women rights in the villages of Multan's rural areas but they are not allowed or did not get permission from the Chudhary. During the survey in the research area it has been observed that hardly 10 percent women are getting the facilities in rural areas like education and health. Most of the population in the villages of Multan is living in poverty. Literacy rate in the research area is very low male literacy rate is 41.6 and female literacy rate is 16.2 (phsrp, Punjab Government). Due to lack of education women did not know about their rights. In these rural areas 32% men were in favor that women should be independent in decision making in all matters of life and 53% men were not in favor of this and only 15% men in favor that women should be independent but within the limitations.

Upper class belongs to high status leadership and high level business. This class is only 3 to 5% percent of the Multan. Majority people are educated in this class and they are also in favor of women empowerment. During the interview to the owner of Rajpoot Rice Mill he said, women are also the main part of our society and for the development of nation women should be empowered. He further said all the opportunities and facilities like education, health; jobs should be equal as men. Women belong to this class of society are more empowered and educated. In the history, most of the elite class educated women were leader of social and political movements and they had the ability to organize the women community and protest for their rights (Smith et al., 2004).

Middle class is a major and big class in Multan city. Most of the middle class women which belong to this class are educated and they are doing jobs in different offices and companies and earning good money. In the research area women condition in middle class is much better but not fully empowered. Woman can do job and she can go outside the home but she has some other problems like she have to manage the family, children, household work like cooking, washing etc. In middle class families women have to face the rude behavior of the husband and in-laws.

One middle class educated female Humaira said, she is allowed to do job but after the job timing she cannot go anywhere without the permission of her husband. She also participates in family decisions but she cannot take any decision by herself she must need the permission of her husband. She said that her husband allowed her for job because he cannot meet the family expenditure alone. In middle class families of urban areas in Multan city 30 to 35 percent women are doing job to provide financial support to their families.

Literacy rate is much better in middle class families in rural areas of Multan because they have easy access and better opportunities for education. Women are well educated and they are having good jobs in rural areas and earning handsome salaries. A female advocate Maria Batool said, "I am educated women and I know what my rights are and also knows how to get or fight for my rights. If we are serious to improve the women condition then we should improve the education level of women. As an advocate I am dealing women cases on daily bases and in 80% cases women are victimized by men. Media could be a good source but in present condition media is not playing the constructive role in this matter. I am not satisfied with the performance of media organizations because their focus is only to increase their viewership and they are portraying women as a show piece. I am sure if media, NGOs and Governmental organizations shall work with honesty for the betterment of women it will be much better in short time". Better education and strong financial status of women can minimize the risk of exploitation of women (Sahay, 1998). Women of this social class are much aware about their rights.

In the research area, most of the population of labor class is living in villages. One female interviewee said, she did not know what is women empowerment she just know that her husband is her lord and it is her duty to obey him. When her husband will happy with her then she will be more relaxed and comfortable in her family. During the discussion with males it has been recorded that they did not want to educate their family women because if women will be educated then women will not obey them. Women in poor families are the most oppressed group of the society than middle class and upper class.

4.1.5. Social and cultural aspects of women empowerment

The study area is known as a backward area of Pakistan due to low literacy rate, lack of health and basic facilities of life. In the study area people are not educated and socio-cultural norms are main hindrance for women empowerment. Nadia is a primary school teacher and she replied “in this area social and cultural status of women is not satisfactory. There are not equal opportunities of job for women and if women want to do any job she must need permission to the male family members. If I will mention the social status of woman in this area woman have no access to available resources, opportunities and women have no rights of decisions making in their family. Women have not basic necessities of life like basic education, health. In this culture women are not allowed to go out for job their responsibility is only manage the family. Due to gender discrimination and lack of equal jobs opportunities poverty ratio is much higher among women. I am doing job as a teacher but with this job I have a responsibility to manage my family”. Bunyad foundation is a local NGO working in that area and Maria Mushtaq is a female worker of that NGO. She mentioned that’ domestic violence and gender discrimination is increasing in this area. The main reason is that poverty among woman is much higher than man and man is responsible for financial condition of a family. For the empowerment of women it is essential that women should be financially strong. When a woman will financially strong and she will not be dependent on male income then she can fight for her rights. Gender inequality is deeply rooted in this culture because woman is always known as a weak and dependent stratum of society. Most of the causes which we have recorded are domestic violence in rural areas but in urban areas due to better literacy rate their social and economic status is much better than rural women.

4.1.6. Religious factors in women empowerment

Pakistan is a Muslim country and 98% people in Pakistan are Muslims, religion is dominant in Pakistani society but most of the time people interpret the religion in different way due to lack of information. Islam empowers women. In the Holy Quran, Allah says “And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course” (Surah Nisa, Alquran). According to Ali (2008), Islam gives the equal opportunity of freedom, human self-respect and rights for both men and women. There is no gender discrimination in Islam: In the focused area, low literacy rate and lack of proper knowledge about religion of Islam is the main cause of women’s rights violation. The Qur'an says: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward God in whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bear you)" (Qur'an 4:1). In the focused area social and cultural values are deeply rooted in the society and most of the social and cultural values have clashed with religion. Most of the time social and cultural traditions overcome the religious. One interviewee she did master in Islamic studies and she replied ‘Islam gives the rights to women and it is wrong perception that in Islam woman has fewer rights than man. Islam provides the equal rights but problem is that every community translates the Islamic studies according to their wish. Most of the time people interpret the Islamic studies in a wrong way. In Pakistan social and cultural values are more in practice than Islamic values and this is the main reason that women have not a good status in this Pakistani society. Islam gives the right to women that she can choose her life

partner but in this society it is not allowed for women. Women take the decision for her personal life and she has a major participation in family matters but culturally such things did not practice in Pakistani society’.

4.2. Media role for women empowerment and interest of TV channels

4.2.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the analysis of media role for the women empowerment in the Study area. The main research questions addressed in this chapter are

- What is the role of media for the empowerment of women in the study area?
- What are interests of TV channels and their contribution to highlight the women issues?

This chapter will also focus some other related question along with the main research question such as, how media channels are portraying women. Does Media industry really want to help the women through broadcasting their problems or such kind of issues are only source of income and publicity for the media channels. To find out the proper information about this research question interviews were conducted from the people of study area and people of different organizations. The chapter concludes with results addressing the main research question and some other related sub questions.

4.2.2. Women problems and media

Pakistani media is considering as more active and vibrant during this period. Current media is playing an important role for knowingness of gender issues in the society. But most of the time media presents the negative picture of women (Rutherford, Capdevila, Undurti and

Palmary, 2011). The study area consists of many small villages and small town along with urban area. Most of the population is living in the villages and literacy rate is very low among the women due to lack of girls schools in rural areas. Women are often victimized by men due to less literacy rate and ignorance. In villages people are living with and their survival depends on the agriculture. During the research it has been found that along with this poverty almost 95% families have Televisions and they have easy access on TV channels. In a group discussion with household women and workingwomen when I clarified the purpose of the of the group discussion they feel more relax and comfortable in the discussion and they give me proper answer of my questions. Most of the participants in the group discussions responded that TV is good source for women to get the awareness about their rights but they claimed that there are very few specific programs for women on TV. They said, there should be more programs about women because for uneducated women TV programs are the best source of information and knowledge. One female schools teacher replied “in this rural area women are facing lot of problems often women are tortured by their male family members and even police do not take interest in such kind of matters they just tell them it is your family matter we cannot do anything for you and you have to solve it at your home”. She further said, if any rape or women suicide incident happens then news media persons come with their cameras just to increase the rating of their TV channels.

Women problems are only presenting in stage shows and TV drama serials”. This was very detailed interview and during the conversation she also mentioned lots of other problems which women are facing in their daily life at home. Out of 200 respondents 150 interviews were conducted to the females and 50 interviews were conducted to the male respondents. Male respondents were 25% of the total respondents. Most of the males agreed that TV channels are

contributing very well to highlight the women issues on national and international level. Majority of the male respondents were in favor that there should be more specific programs for women. During the analyses of different TV programs it was found that in different TV programs anchors discuss the women issues in few words. One male reporter of Express TV channel was asked, have you ever visited the rural areas of Multan to see women problems and he replied, if something special will happen in that area then I will must visit there". This reply of media person is presenting the real picture of the media policies. Most of the female respondents were not in favor of media policies but according to the previous media record in whole Pakistan most of the cases related to women were highlighted by media. After media coverage about these issues Government and even high court and Supreme Court took suo motto action against the criminals. In a focus group discussion, majority of women replied that they are not allowed to go outside without the permission of male family members because they are powerful in decision making in a family. In Multan's villages due to poverty 40% women were working in the fields along with the responsibilities of their families. According to the key informants of a small village of Bosan Town, 70% women are uneducated in this village and here are no health center and school for females and low literacy rate among the women is main cause of their low social, moral and economical condition . They further replied, some of the TV channels are in local language like Waseb TV and Rohi TV but these channels are not highlighting the women problems in a proper way.

4.2.3. Interest of television channels and their contribution to highlight the women problems

Television in Pakistan was introduced first time in 1964 and PTV (Pakistan Television) was the first television channel started by the Government (PEMRA). PEMRA (Pakistan electronic media regulatory authority) was launched with the aim to improve and enhance the information, knowledge and entertainment of the people and another main task was to keep check and balance on different TV channels. In first phase, it was estimated that 36 private channels will operate by the end of 2010 and more license for private channels shall issue by the PEMRA in second phase (Banerjee & Logan, 2008). In the study area most of the TV channels were available through cable operators. Five most popular TV channels were selected to analyze their programs for three weeks to find out that how much programs are broadcasting related to women on these channels. The names of selected channels were Geo News & Geo entertainment, ARY (Abdul Razzak Yaqoob), express news, Duniya TV and PTV (Pakistan television). On news channels 60% programs including talk shows and news bulletin were associated with politics and current issues. Most of the airtime was fixed for advertisements because this is the main source of earning for TV channels. In different talk shows women issues and problems were discussed with the Government officials and politicians. During the three weeks analyses of news channels programs not a single specific programs was broadcasted for women. According to the human rights commission of Pakistan reported that 2903 women were raped and 999 women were killed in 2010(HRCP report, 2010). In the past, media has great contribution to high light the women issues on national and international level for example Mukhtara Mai gang rape case was firstly highlighted on the national media and after this Government took serious action against the culprits. In 2012, Uzma Ayoub rape case was highlighted by the news channels.

During the research it was observed that entertainment channels were most popular among women in the study area. Most of the entertainment channels broadcast the drama serials which highlight the crucial realities of the society in different ways. One female interviewee Shazia said that “I like the entertainment channels because I can watch different programs of my interest on these channels and through media I get information about the different issues about women. I mostly like drama serials because in these soap serials they highlight the women problems in a different way. Most of the drama serials give the real picture of women problem which women are facing in a family or in a community level”.

Some media persons were also selected for interviews and general discussion to get their views about media coverage for women issues. One journalist was asked the question about the channels interest then he replied that “in TV channels reporters always try to find the stunning news story. Especially women’s related issues for example rape cases get the extra sensational coverage on TV channels and often reporters ignore the ethics of journalism. TV channels always try to get lead from each other and this attitude creates bad impression of media. Private TV channels especially news channels they always try to increase their viewership because on the behalf of their popularity and viewership they get advertisement and business. Some time these channels lose their credibility because they broadcast some news without verification in order to get lead from other news channels... in my point of view private media is more concerning for their business and profit”. The main objectives of these media channels were to provide the proper information, education, social, cultural and religious knowledge to the people on local and community level (Banerjee & Logan, 2008). During the group discussion with male and female about 70% people were agreed that media channels have great contribution to increase their knowledge and information but most of the time they try to create thrill and

sensation in their news only just to increase their popularity. They also use yellow journalism (wrong reporting) which has very bad effects on their viewers because in this way they mislead the people. One employee of GEO news replied in his interview “all the TV channels claims that they are working for the betterment of people and they are trying to serve them through sharing knowledge, information and entertainment but the reality is something else, they are working 20% for the people and 80% for the money and profit”.

5. Conclusion

Gender discrimination and violence against women is a normal practice in third world countries and Pakistan is one of them. In 2010, the total population of Pakistan was 177,276,594 and women are the half of the total population in this country. Women and men are equal in numbers in Pakistan but there is a huge gap in status and rights. In Pakistan different local and international organizations are working to improve the women's condition in different areas. Violence against women and gender discrimination ratio is much higher in rural areas than urban areas. Punjab province is considered as a big part of the country and the majority areas of southern Punjab are consisting on rural areas. Southern Punjab is known as a backward area due to lack of basic living facilities and educational opportunities. Multan is an ancient city of Punjab Province and its majority population is living in the villages and they are engaged with agriculture. Multan city was selected as a research area by the researcher because its majority population is living in poverty and poverty ratio is much higher among women. Many cases of rape and domestic violence has been recorded in that area and Mukhtara Mai case is one of the famous case belongs to this area that was highlighted on international level by the media. Media industry is flourishing day by day in Pakistan and lot of Private TV channels are working in Pakistan. Media is a weapon which can be used for constructive or destructive purpose in any country. Media has a capacity to change the thinking and views of the people. In backward areas like Multan where literacy rate is very low, media could be a good source of information and awareness. Literacy rate in men 53.3% and in women is 32.3% in Multan and most of the population cannot read the newspaper. In this alarming condition only electronic media could be a source for awareness in a society. Electronic media is developing very quickly in Pakistan and

due to the competition between different channels most of the time TV channels ignore the ethics. This competition becomes the reason of yellow journalism (wrong reporting) in electronic media industry. Gender discrimination is deeply rooted in Pakistani society and socio-cultural discrimination also exists in this society.

5.1. Different perceptions about women empowerment and socio-cultural and religious impact on women empowerment

In the study area social, cultural and religious factors have great influence on women's empowerment. The community of study area is divided into many social classes. The discrimination against women is different in different social classes. It has been seen that gender discrimination and violence against women was higher in rural areas where people were uneducated and they had strong believe on social and cultural norms. During the research survey it was found that only 28% women in rural areas had some idea about their empowerment, status and rights and 63% women had no idea about empowerment. The condition was much better in urban areas because literacy rate is much better in city area and women had some knowledge about their rights. The study findings show that women of Wadera or Chudhary families are bound in the four walls of the home and they have no rights in decision making even at household level. Men are all in all in these families and women are totally bound to the socio-cultural norms. In Pakistani culture women are dependent on men and men take decision in every matter. It has been observed that women of middle class families are somehow independent and they can take a part in decision making in different matters. Women of lower class families or poor families especially in rural areas are totally ignored of their rights and empowerment. During the discussion with men of different social classes it was found that men of middle class

families were in favor of women empowerment but with the limitations. Men were belonging to Wadera or Chudhary families and lower class families were not in favor that women should be independent. Along with the social and cultural norms religion aspects are also a barrier in women empowerment. There are some limitations for women in Islam and men only pick religious arguments they can use for their own interest. Women can get better life, status and empowerment but socio-cultural and religious aspects have made the mind set of men that they are superior and these are the main hurdles in women empowerment.

5.2. Media role for women empowerment

In the study area especially in small villages majority women cannot read the newspaper and every family has easy access to TV channels. Television can play an important role for the betterment of women in the research area. Most of the male respondents were not satisfied with the policies of TV channels. After the analyses of different TV programs it was found that women issues were only presented in the serial soaps or in movies. Only 13% female respondents replied that women are portraying unnecessary or as a show piece in different TV channels. They said media is not doing any constructive work for the betterment of women. According to the 69% female respondent media was only a source of entertainment for them. During the research it has been found that due to competition between channels most of the TV channels were giving the extra coverage of women issues like rape case and violence against women just to increase their viewership. Some time they use yellow journalism (wrong reporting) just to create thrill in their news. Media could be a good source to educate the women about their rights but due to competition race between the channels their contribution about this issue is not much satisfied. But it has been seen that many causes related to women were firstly

highlighted by media and after that Government took action on it and in many cases women got justice due to the struggle of TV channels. For the better of women status in a society conscious effort is needed and broadcasting organizations should focus this issue. Every organization could not be a perfect in its work but media could be a key of women development if they just took this matter seriously.

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7. Appendix

7.1. Media's Role for Women Empowerment Questionnaire

- **Household information**
 - (i) Household number
 - (ii) Village
 - (iii) Household population
- **Respondent's information**

Age-----

Education-----

Gender-----

Occupation-----

- **Women's empowerment**

Q#1: What do you understand by women empowerment?

Q#2: Do you agree with women empowerment?

- (i) Fully Agree
- (ii) Partially Agree
- (iii) Disagree
- (iv) Fully disagree

Q#3: Do you think that women empowerment leads to change in society?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

If there is positive change how -----

If there is negative change how -----

Q#4: What are the factors that empower women in our society?

Q#5: Do you think that education can play an important role in women empowerment?

(i) If "Yes" how-----

(ii) If "No" how-----

Q#6: Do you think that NGOs are playing any role in women empowerment?

(i) If "Yes" which type of role-----

(ii) If "No" how-----

Q#7: Who decides about household activities in our society?

(i) Male

(ii) Female

Q#8: Do women have easy access to educational facilities?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

Q#9: Do women empowerment is against the teaching of Islam?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If "Yes" how-----

If "No" how-----

Q#10: Do you think that socio-cultural norms have any effect on women's empowerment?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

If "Yes" how-----

If "No" how-----

Role of Media:

Q#11: Which source of media is in your access?

- (i) Electronic media
- (ii) Print media

Q#12: Does media can play any important role in women empowerment?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

Q#13: Does media can bring any change in women’s status?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

If “Yes” how-----

If “No” how-----

Q#14: Do you think that media is presenting women’s problem in a proper way?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

Q#15: Are you satisfied by media’s policies related with women issues?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No

If “Yes” how-----

If “No” how-----

Q#16: Which sector of media is playing a better role to highlight the women’s issues?

- (i) Government sector
- (ii) Private sector

If “Government sector” how-----

If “Private sector” how -----

Q#17: Are you satisfied with Government's organizations efforts to improve the women's condition in our society?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No





