

**Silent Voices, Untold Stories: Perceptions of Female  
Students towards their own Experiences and Higher  
Educational Opportunities in Peshawar, Khyber  
Pukhtunkhwah (KP) (Pakistan)**

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Students towards their own Experiences and Higher  
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*Dedicated to my great feminist father (Shamaas Gul Khattak) my first love, my inspirations and my strength, my Sonerin supported me lovingly throughout my life*

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to investigate factors relating to the low level of women's participation in higher education in Khyber Pukhtunkhwah a particularly conservative and traditionalist region of Pakistan, adjoining Afghanistan. The province of Khyber Pukhtunkhwah has a culture, language, traditions and patriarchal values that are substantially different from the rest of the country. There is a chronically low participation rate in higher education by women (6.55%) as opposed to men (28.44%).

For this research, a mixed methods approach was used founded on Marxist and Islamic Feminist research paradigms, interviewing and questioning students in four higher education institutes in Peshawar, Pukhtunkhwah, using a research design that included both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The data analysis reveals that the women who succeed in entering higher education actually have social / economic advantages; they are in general from the elite and the upper middle classes. However, even they face problems relating to the particularly conservative understandings and practices of Islam that are culturally specific to Pukhtunkhwah/ Pukhtun culture as these were dominant in forming their decisions rather than the actual teachings of Islam. Attitudes towards women's work and the language of instruction used in their education had implications for their educational opportunities. Women of all economic classes had difficulty with being allowed to reach decisions on their own: they had to seek approval from their families, particularly from their male relatives. Men (and women) misinterpreted the teachings of religion, in other words they 'culturalised' Islam instead of Islamising the culture.

One of the aims of this thesis is 'Breaking the Silence: Listening to Pukhtun Women'. This thesis does this as it gives voice to (a number of) Pukhtun women, concerning their lives, hopes, anticipations, relating to education and career. However, this is just a beginning and much more research needs to occur in order to allow better understanding of the lives and aspirations of women in this area of Pakistan.

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*Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Statement and Contextual Background of the Problem

The status of women in Pakistan is multi-faceted. Pakistan is a federation of four provinces; therefore there is considerable diversity in the status of women across all classes and regions. Uneven socio-economic development had an impact on the rural/urban divide, with ramifications for tribal and practices. However, patriarchy is the main force of subordination for women and some men across the country. Gender is one of the organising doctrines of any society and one of especial dominance in Pakistan. Culture and traditions strengthen the patriarchal standards that predetermine the value of each gender. Patriarchy dishonours the men's and women's roles in the society that are valued by a religion. In Islam, men and women are seen as garments (*libas*) for each other (Quran, 2:187). In this context, a garment is for beautification and comfort; the intention is that men and women are to support each other, rather than to dominate over the other. The ideology of sexual division of labour is strong in Pakistan; it places women in reproductive roles as mothers and wives in the private arena of the home, and men in productive roles as breadwinners in the public arena (ADB, 2000:1; HAW, 2014). Because of this division, there is low or no investment in female capital.

Thus low investment women's human capital is compounded by the ideology of *purdah* (literally veiled) negative social biases and cultural practices, together with the concept of honour linked with women's sexuality and restrictions on women's mobility and the internalisation of patriarchy by women themselves, has become the basis for gender discrimination and disparities in all spheres of life in Pakistan (ADB, 2000:1).

This thesis will focus on a group of relatively young women in Pakistan in Khyber Pukhtunkhwah, previously known as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and on this region's Pukhtun women students in particular. While my original interest in this group began with female education in general, as well as women's roles in the historic freedom struggle of Pakistan and in the building of the Pakistani state, it has expanded to a more nuanced understanding of education. This study explores Pukhtun women's perceptions of their educational experiences, and by doing so, gives them a voice that is often neglected in research studies that focus on education in Pakistan. The thesis develops a framework that examines the voices of the educated Pukhtun women and provides a contextual analysis of

their experiences. It provides a deepening insight to the participating women's actual experiences of higher education.

Since I began this PhD work, the issue of female education has extended around the world, showing that gender issues are not limited to Pakistan only, but vary from society to society and culture to culture. Gender inequality is a longstanding and unsolved issue in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has signed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a solid promise of eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education by 2015. Ayub and Ali (2011:16) commented that 'Pakistan, a country with people of different social, financial, and ethnical backgrounds, expressed varied results for different targets and indicators of MDGs (AEPM, 2008). Data presented in Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) surveys revealed high gender disparity in the favour of boys in primary, elementary and higher education in tribal districts of the country. They further quoted various studies (Aslam, 2007; Lall, 2009; Qureshi, 2007), who exposed the pathetic position of girls' education in rural and tribal areas with special reference to PSLM surveys where girls have extremely low literacy and school enrolment rates in Pakistan (Ayub and Ali, 2011:16). Simultaneously, Qureshi (2007; cited in Ayub and Ali, 2011) reveals a high dropout rate of girls in these areas, in all levels of education across the country.

Let's explore Pukhtunkhwah! The total population of the province is approximately 23,971,000 people (estimated in 2008-09), of whom 11,279,000 are male and 12,693,000 are female (FBS, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Pukhtunkhwah is a very important and well-known province of Pakistan, but one whose culture, language, traditions and patriarchal values are entirely different from the rest of the country. The Pukhtuns are a traditional community; the social and cultural context of the society is predominately strict and patriarchal, men and women are conceptually separated by their gender role allocation (Lall, 2009). Lall further argues that

instead of looking at Pakistan in a homogenous way when it comes to gender and education, provincial and ethnic differences have to be taken into account and ... ethnic differentiation is important when looking at traditional perceptions of girls accessing and participating in education (Lall, 2009: 5).

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<sup>1</sup> As much as possible I have presented the most recent figures, which are mostly based on the 1998 census report and the estimations of the Federal Board of Statistics (2009). However, Pakistan has not conducted a census after 1998 because of political instability and a tug of war between the ruling and opposition parties, corruption in the government institutions and lack of economic resources.

I agree with the above argument that Pukhtunkhwah has culturally more multifaceted structural society than other provinces, because there are number of different Pukhtun tribal groups. The tribal setting of the society makes them traditional lovers.

Gender issues are therefore of extreme significance in Pukhtunkhwah. For instance, while the overall literacy rate is 50%, this figure hides the disturbing reality that the literacy rate for men is almost double that of women (PES, 2013). Just as concerning, this figure is mirrored in participation figures in higher education, where female participation is chronically low at 33% compared to male participation at 68% (PES, 2013).

The purpose of this gender study is to explore the various explanations for this extremely low percentage of women participating in higher education. By selecting to focus on women who have succeeded in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah despite the cultural and social impediments -- it is envisaged that this study will provide deeper understanding of the topic to inform future research as well as education policy in Pakistan.

The inhabitants of Pukhtunkhwah are Pukhtuns/Pashtuns, also called 'Afghans' or 'Pathans' by western historians (Caroe, 1957) and their language is Pashtu/Pukhtu. Pukhtuns are traditional people, who follow their centuries-old customs and traditions. They are famous for refusing to accept any domination by foreign rulers. That might be one of the reasons that the British imperialists intervened very little in Pukhtunkhwah, and kept it as 'a land without law' till 1901 (Rittenberg, 1988). The Pukhtuns were divided first by the Durand Line (an international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan). The British acknowledged the importance of the territory, as whoever held this strategic area could easily challenge the British Imperial authority (Kureshy, 1991). Therefore they implemented a policy of 'divide and rule' to have more control over the rebellious Pukhtuns. Furthermore, to strengthen their hold over the area, the Pukhtuns of Pukhtunkhwah were further divided in to a Federally Autonomous Tribal Area (FATA) and a Provincially Autonomous Tribal Area (PATA) and Settled Districts (for more details see Map of Pakistan Appendix I).

According to Farooq (2009: np),

Pukhtuns are born as rebels and that they never compromise with any kind of hegemony, supremacy, slavery or subjugation. Interestingly, one aspect of male hegemony in the area is the increasing subjugation of Pukhtun women. The British unleashed anti-Pukhtun propaganda and conducted a character

assassination, dubbing them as barbarous, hostile, mischievous, ill-mannered and wily people.

The British wanted to suppress the freedom-loving Pukhtuns, and therefore they launched this rigorous campaign and deliberately kept them uneducated. This was so that they could move forward towards Russia without disruption in the Pukhtun belt, and so that they could justify to the rest of the world that their policy of humiliating innocent Pukhtuns was within their 'divine right' (Farooq, 2009).

In 1901, Pukhtunkhwah was separated from the Punjab and given full provincial status under the direct control of the Government of India. Before 1932, when the province was given the status of a Governor's province, the people had no rights in most government institutions or court procedures. They were subject to Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) (1872), the Murderous Outrages Act (MOA) or Gazi Act (1877), and the Forest Act (1911). They had no right to challenge these regulations anywhere, but the Pukhtun did not stop their resistance. Hence, Pukhtunkhwah did not come under the direct rule of British imperialism (Shah, 2000).

For many centuries, Pukhtunkhwah has been a place of conflict; the Pukhtun inhabitants have fought many battles against various invaders who approached the country through the Khyber Pass. Women were involved in these wars, and it appears that women were those who suffered the most as a result of them. This is due to the belief that a family's honour is related to the chastity of the women in that family. As a consequence of this belief, Pukhtuns have become over protective towards their women. Punishment for violating this belief is severe, as any woman appearing to put her good name at risk may be executed (honour killing), or imprisoned at home by her family and allowed only restricted access to the outside world. Alternatively, she may be rejected by the family who cut her off and deny her relationship to them. As a result she will incur condemnation from the wider society.

Male domination of the family is a common practice in Pukhtunkhwah. The culture, although overlapping with Islam, has deeper and stronger roots than the religion, making it difficult to discriminate between religious law and the cultural conventions followed for centuries. Shah, (1998) believes that following the unwritten yet strict code of social behaviour, known as *Pukhtunwali* (پښتونوالی), and the strongly held belief that it is superior makes the people of the region conservative in outlook. *Pukhtunwali* moves down the generations via the elders and all the Pukhtuns are obliged to follow it. An example here is

the arranged or even forced marriages of women, as the preferred husband is a cousin, because this will allow land and property to remain within the family. She must also observe strict *purdah* (segregation), to protect the family honour. Pukhtun women traditionally inherit a half share of her father's property. However, she does not control property, as that is the business of the men of the family: her father, her brothers, her husband, etc. In addition, women have for centuries been exchanged in order to settle family or land disputes 'swarra' (see Shaheen, 2000 for further details). The patriarchal nature of the society results in women being forced into marriage to bear many children and makes her subservient to her in-laws. Decision making about her own life or the lives of her children is not considered; her only power comes when she has daughters-in-law over whom she can rule as she pleases (Shah, 1998).

Supporting this gender divide in society is *purdah* (*purdah* is also known as gender boundaries or segregation in the Pukhtun society) as well as *izzat or namus* (honour), an important religious institution. The word *purdah* relates to the strict division of physical space between men and women, and includes women's veiling from head to toe in a *burqah* (a shawl or cloak: the garment covering the body from head to toe in public). In the Pukhtun society, *purdah* is seen as a symbol of dignity and respect, so both men and women should abide by it. However, Pukhtuns commonly identify *purdah* as a 'defense of the honour of women' (Kakar, 2000:7) though it really restricts both men and women. For example a male stranger is not allowed in the women's section of the house, called the *zanana* compound.

Kakar (2000:7) gives a detailed account about the boundaries of *purdah* that vary in application among the Pukhtun, differing also between the *nang* and *qalang* groups:

At one end are the *Kuchi* nomads, where women do not veil in public and are often left to care for the household while the men are out shepherding the flocks for days and weeks. When a male guest comes, he often sits separately with the men, especially separate from the young unmarried women of the family.

She further notes that the *nang* groups, whose existence is divided between agriculture and nomadic life, expect women, upon leaving the house to cover their faces out of respect for their elders. These women can visit others within their neighbourhood, but males and females have separated quarters in which to receive visitors. However, it is permitted for male family friends to visit married women and female heads of the household. In direct contrast to this are the *qalang* groups where there is much more

restriction on female movement. Women, apart from the elderly and children must be completely veiled if they leave the house. This is particularly observed among the Khans class, which is a group of major landowners. In this group, physical space is strictly segregated; only children and the elderly are able to move freely between the male and female areas. A daughter-in-law is expected to cover her face when meeting her father-in-law. Men must give clear warning if intending to enter the women's area. Therefore, *pardah* puts restrictions on women and gives more freedom to men over women. This further leads men of the family to deprive their women of education, health care and the permission to travel alone.

Ahmad (1992) highlights the concept of the *burqah* professing that the idea came from India. The tradition was noted in peoples who conquered Afghanistan and was common in the Byzantine, Greek and Persian societies. The author notes the similarity between the behaviour of Athenians in classical Greece and the *Pukhtunwali's* gender boundaries where family men only could visit the women's compound:

some women were even too modest to be seen by men who were relatives, and for a strange man to intrude upon a free woman in the house of another man was tantamount to a criminal act (Ahmed, 1992:28).

*Purdah* is a strong mechanism to establish separate worlds for men and women. Many Muslim and some Pakistani women prefer to be covered in public. It gives anonymity, grants comfort, allows for modesty, and precludes social judgements about dress and status (Kakar, 2000:30). Unlike the Pukhtun, the majority of Pakistan does not strictly adhere to the concept of *Purdah* (veiling). However the majority of the population admit it as a religious obligation of practicing Muslims and respect the segregation of both the sexes. For example if a family makes a visit to Pukhtunkhwah, they do value this tradition and the culture of the area. According to an ethnographic study on Afghan Pukhtun women,

*pardah* is a badge of status that allow a woman to be content to let her husband do battle in the public world while she dominates the household, gains the love and loyalty of her sons and if fortunate, eventually rules as the matriarch over her daughter-in-law and their children. The *pardah* culture in Pakistan is related to status, the division of labour, social distance and the maintenance of moral standards as specified by society (Ahmad 1976:76).

By contrast, Ali (2005:7) sees the manifestation of *pardah* in two ways:

separate places are reserved for women in the household and in public. A part of the house where women reside is called *Zanana*. In it they see only the nearest male members of the family. In public it is shown in separate compartments for

women in trains and buses, and in public gatherings like weddings separate arrangements are likely to be made for women's entrance. In recent years banks in Pakistan have tended to establish special branches for women which are staffed with female employees. It would not surprise anybody if a women employee in a government office were to ask for an office and place that would keep her away from the public gaze.

Ali (2005) argues that it is hard to decide whether Pakistan is non-*purdah* society or not; however, women still have a natural tendency to observe some form of segregation in public to avoid embarrassment to themselves and their men. Similarly, Papanet (1973), has made the following comments of a lack of integration among sexes amongst Pakistan's educated elites:

even in the most westernised middle class circles in the cities of Pakistan, the segregation of women remains important. For example, at the so called mixed parties of upper middle class groups, the polarisation of the sexes is automatic immediately on arrival. Breakdown in this pattern is notable among the academics, students and in some artistic circles, but even there some restrictions on interaction between the sexes remains, even where the *burkha* (veil) is not worn or special seclusion observed, women find it extremely difficult to be at ease in mixed situations and so probably do men (Papanet, 1973: 301).

Pukhtunkhwah women are generally illiterate, leaving aside the women of rich sections of society who are given an elementary education at home (Shah, 1998). Women of these upper strata were informally educated in household management, the art of house decoration, and about the observance of the religious rituals and festivals. However, some Pukhtun women did also contribute to Pukhtu literature and folklore (Shah, 1998) for example; Haleema Khattaka, the daughter of the great Pukhtu poet Khushal Khan Khattak, Nazo Ana, mother of Mir Wais Hotak, and Zainab his daughter, were others. In addition, Neik Bakhta, daughter of Allah Dad, Zargohna Kakara, daughter of Din Muhammad Kakar and Rabia Qandahri, were amongst many learned writers who contributed their *Diwans*, or poetic collections, to the rich body of Pukhtu literature (Shah, 1998, p. 70). However, these women belonged to the ruling or upper classes of the Pukhtun society.

Pukhtun men are considered to be the owners of their women, and as heads of the household, they expect respect and obedience from their family, especially from women. For example, when a woman becomes a mother of few a sons, then she holds a strong family position and some autonomy (Shah, 1998). A woman's legal position is also very weak in Pukhtunkhwah society. She is always deprived from her property rights because of the misinterpretation of religious terms, where she is the owner of half a share of her father's and

one third share of her husband's properties. This leaves women dependent on men. Typically the only livelihood is marriage, so after her father and brother, she would be protected by her husband and then her son. In my view, a woman is a source of comfort and solace to man, but she has always been faced discrimination and inequality in society.

Poverty is serious and widespread throughout Pukhtunkhwah, which makes women more vulnerable. Poverty with extreme conservatism and patriarchy (I will discuss this in more detail in my literature review) has negatively affected the health and the vivacity of women. Education came very late to the Pukhtunkhwah, in the early 1900s; therefore, women's socio-political perception was backward in comparison to the other provinces of Pakistan. Western education spread among the Pukhtunkhwah people only many years after the British conquest of Pukhtunkhwah. As elsewhere in the region, the first attempts at education had been established by the Christian Missionaries, but western education had no immediate effect in Pukhtunkhwah and in any case, the status of women did not improve much with the opening of the society to aspects of modernity (Khattak, 2003).

The popular view was that female education should be developed among women with the aim of fostering a strong religious and moral character, in order to ultimately ensure that women develop into dutiful wives and mothers. The local prejudices against women's education were so great that the government also gave very little attention to it. However, a good number of women pioneers from the educated middle class of Pukhtunkhwah were responsible for the growth of a socio-political consciousness among women in the province. They were, in fact, instrumental in the growth of Pukhtun nationalism and patriotism. Their impact on society in general and on women in particular was immediately felt, because due to their reforming zeal, they crusaded against social evils among women. They took the crucial steps for the gradual growth of the women's movement during the freedom struggle of the country (1906-1947).

In Pukhtunkhwah, 'home' is defined as women's legitimate ideological and physical space (Shah, 1998). Shah further highlights a famous proverb among the Pukhtuns for a woman, that there are two places for her to live, in her home or in her grave. She has limited or no access to the outside affairs of the society, because culturally it is the duty of men to be responsible for all outside social and political affairs. This ideological demarcation between public and private, inside and outside worlds intensified and maintained the notion of honour and the institution of *pardah* (Shah, 1998). This area of Pakistan is stricter than

others regarding women's honour and *pardah*. The majority of women in Pukhtunkhwah follow the Islamic or more culturally-specific practice of veiling (*burqah*). Men in Pukhtunkhwah do not like mixed-gender gatherings, whilst in the rest of the country, they have become accepted. Particularly in urban areas, Pakistani women do attend mixed-gatherings and do not observe *pardah*. As said earlier, the notion of male honour is linked to women's sexual behaviour; their sexuality is considered a potential threat to the honour of the family (Shah, 2010), therefore the patriarchal society of Pukhtunkhwah favours single-sex schools and universities for their women.

This culture gives men the role of the protector and provider for the family and it is believed that there is no need to educate women to be part of the workforce unless the family circumstances make this a necessity. This is because the Pukhtun do not like working women. Women's work is seen as a disgrace to the family honour, as well as the impression that the family men are not capable of earning good money for their women. Therefore men's education is considered more important, and if a woman is education, she would naturally want to work outside the home, bringing shame to the entire family.

Pukhtunkhwah capital city is Peshawar and it is the only developed urban area in the region whilst other provinces have more urban centres and developed cities. Thus, the urban/rural divide is more pronounced in Pukhtunkhwah than in other parts of Pakistan. For example, Lahore (in the Punjab) and Karachi (in Sindh) are the country's most advanced and industrial cities and urbanised provinces. The British colonial masters funded many of their industries in the Punjab and deliberately kept Pukhtunkhwah economically backward, as at the time the Pukhtunkhwah rebels were attacking government properties. Industrialisation brought a new revolution in some parts of the society, particularly in the Punjab, because women began to work in industries to fulfil the demands of the labour market. Therefore economic demands changed the culture and societal setup, and brought women some economic independence, which resulted in some women giving up aspects of their traditional way of life. Furthermore, in Punjabi culture, there is no concept of an Islamic veiling culture. All of this encouraged women to continue to seek industrial work. In other words, the advent of industries changed the production and societal norms in some parts of Pakistan. In Pukhtunkhwah, this change did not take place and traditional agriculture remained the means of production.

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country. It has suffered from decades of internal political disputes and low levels of foreign investment (Aslam, 2007). The economy relies on the agricultural sector, where women are unskilled labourers working side by side with their male counterparts. However women are not excluded from their household work. They have to prepare food by taking breaks from their field work. They have little access to technological aids. Women have restricted access to her family resources in the country overall, but especially in Pukhtunkhwah, because of her illiteracy and given her so many chores. This socio-economic backwardness is further intensified by the war against terror and Talibanisation in the area since 2000. The Taliban have attacked government and private properties, schools (particularly girls' schools) and people who in their view are against Islam. This insecure situation of the province compels people to move their businesses to other parts of the country or to neighbouring countries. Thus, these current demographic changes in Pukhtunkhwah have affected the provincial economy and further increased poverty.

Socio-economic despotism, political instability, insecurity of life and property, as well limited resources for basic necessities (such as food and shelter) are some of the causes of men's objection toward women's education. Many families in Pukhtunkhwah would opt for more educational facilities for their men, if they could afford them, but as resources are scarce, girls and women suffer the most. Now people are more reluctant to educate girls because of threats from the Taliban since last decade. Taliban leaders consider women's education as un-Islamic, although Islam puts an obligation on both men and women to acquire knowledge. The Taliban wanted to restructure the societal norms by the introduction of their own misogynistic Islam that is against the fundamental rights of both genders. They are promoting the traditionalist and conservative role of women to confine them to the household and child-bearing responsibilities. However, Islam allows and encourages women to support family men, if support for children and the home is required. Islam recommends that both education and work environments have to be segregated, but if such environments are not available, then women can participate in mixed environments as long as they follow the Islamic code of attire and manners.

The Taliban is, therefore, indirectly attacking the western approach to education, as all schools have to focus solely on the Quran and *Hadiths*, the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Taliban leaders do not tolerate contemporary education: it not only encourages liberal thinking and understanding of religion (because it

will affect their patriarchal power), but also rejects the conservative ideals promoted by the Taliban.

The local and federal governments have no clear policy to deal with terrorism. They have failed to provide a peaceful and secure life for the people of Pukhtunkhwah because their own ministers' lives are at risk: for example, the recent suicide attack and killing of Mr. Bashir Bilour, a senior federal minister, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2012 was carried out because of his views against Taliban and their rule of laws (The Daily NEWS, 2012). This economic and political instability agitated the societal structure of the province. Indecisive political leadership and government policies have influenced local culture and women's education. Therefore the province is facing a high rate of female dropout in the education sector, which is also becoming problematic in higher education.

There have been a number of studies looking broadly at gender issues in education in South Asia, such as Brock and Cammish (1999) and OECD (2006a). There are also a few studies specifically about Pakistan (e.g. WDRW, 2003; UNDP, 2005; World Bank 2007; UNESCO, 2008). However, the above studies are contract research which identify the problems at the primary and secondary levels of education and focus mainly on economic and political considerations. As such, these studies do not grapple sufficiently with the social, cultural, economic and religious factors underlying female participation in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, which is the aim of this thesis. Given the increasing centrality of higher education in contemporary economies, the need for this academic research is critical. Only a few academic studies that have explored similar areas in Pukhtunkhwah (Naz et al., 2011; Shahzad et al., 2009) are available and their main focus has been to explore the impact of higher education as a possible way to women's empowerment. These studies have not examined how some women seem to achieve against all odds and succeed in higher education. Nor have they analysed or theorised women's own perceptions of their experiences.

My study is located in the feminist paradigm, particularly Islamic feminist literature and it seeks to explore the factors and impediments women face on their way to higher education. This research began with a simple question: what are the perceptions and experiences of female students contemplating and participating in higher education in Peshawar, Pukhtunkhwah? This study not only investigated the factors affecting female participation in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, but also attempted to hear and give voice

to the previously untold perceptions (which they never shared with anyone before) of Pukhtun women about their feelings. Most importantly, the study attempted to unearth the interplay between the different factors observed and explore their relationships.

## **1.2. Aims of the Study**

There are many factors that have influenced women's participation in higher education, but the study focuses on the dominant factors that influence a particular sample group of women from this traditionalist Pukhtun society. The research had six broad aims:

- To ascertain the dominant factors causing low participation of women in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah.
- To ascertain factors contributing to the success of those who do achieve in higher education.
- To judge the validity of the existing factors recognised to be responsible for gender discrimination in the Pukhtun society of Pukhtunkhwah in particular.
- To map-out a conceptual framework of feminist theories that can explain low levels of women's participation in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah.
- To discover to what extent these feminist theories help to understand these levels and ways in which women's participation in higher education can be increased.
- To encourage Pukhtun women to give voice for their higher education without confronting family men and societal traditions.

As the researcher, I am well placed to conduct this research because of my own personal background, my nationality and family heritage. I grew up in this area, and went to school and completed my Master's degree in Peshawar. Feminist research methodologies and methods have become central in this research. I have referred to this work in the methodology chapter, including the work of Pourzand (2003), who introduced me with the work of Harding (1987), Haraway (1990) and Letherby (2003) concerning the positionality of the researcher and the researched as an interactive process. In the words of Pourzand (2003:354),

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) highlighted the complex and changing power relations involved between the two. Collins (1990) and Mohanty (1998) are feminist researchers who have highlighted the importance of racialised identities in feminist research. Yuval-Devis (1997) stressed the importance of ethnic identity and inter-sectionality of identities in feminist work. A number of feminist

academics from Muslim countries such as Altorki and El-Solh (1988) have reflected upon the negative and positive dynamics of doing research in your own country or the country from which you originate.

After a thorough study of Pourzand (2003), I found myself as an in-between researcher too, as a researcher, living in one country and doing research in another. For this reason, my theoretical framework is mostly from western writers and I applied their theories in my home country context. I had to do things this way, because I found very few feminist studies on higher education in Pakistan. My study too will make a contribution to the methodologies explored above, as it challenges ethnocentrism in some of the research conducted by western liberal feminists (Pourzand, 2003: 355).

As an 'in-between' researcher, my country of origin is Pukhtunkhwah, Pakistan but I spent an important phase of my life in the UK.

While studying and living in the West has no doubt influenced our lives and perceptions, we still do not see ourselves as Western. This is a matter of conscious political (as a sense of supporting) choice as well as a result of the politics of the day which make sure that we remember that we are not Western, such as the racial profiling at certain airports these days (Pourzand, 2003: 355).

I am not thinking like a typical Pukhtun women; I am not English but my thinking has been transformed. My thinking process is more rational and logical beyond cultural barriers, and I would like to work for my fellow Pukhtun women to break their silence. Because

in some ways we are hybrid, but in our hybridity we also concur with the critiques of hybridity being an essentialist notion (Yuval-Davis, 1997), which we also resist (Malkki, 1995). This means that this 'we' I am referring to does not translate into all of 'us' maintaining a single ideological/social/political position in our research. As in all groups, there are various differences amongst 'us' as well – including our age, class, education and ideological frames. It also does not automatically translate into all of 'us' maintaining anti-essentialist positions as well challenging Western hegemony (Pourzand, 2003: 355).

Western academicians enhanced our understanding of conceptual framework and to think critically upon our research topics (Pourzand, 2003). However our own cultural and religious values influence our new knowledge of social change. In addition, our research contributes to the western academy and hopefully, provides new understandings which do not 're-inscribe' powerlessness (Maynard and Purvis, 1995, cited in Pourzand, 2003).

My struggle is to give my Pukhtun women voice or to break their silence, because this silence strengthens the patriarchy in the society. When women realise that there is inequality and unjust power relations in society, then they can begin to work for a better society. As an ‘in-between’, I was different from my sample women because of our different exposure, life experiences and opportunities—but most importantly, because of my study in the UK. Pourzand writes that

Overall such research is one way of potentially further expressing and building our feminist solidarity with women of South Asian and Middle Eastern countries in which we feel close in terms of their struggles and unequal positions at local, national and international levels. We can also be bridge builders between the South and the Middle East as well as the South and the Western world. Yet it also allows us to disturb the hegemony and ‘reductionism’ of the privileged in the West writing about the ‘underprivileged’ in South Asia who need to be saved, as well as writing about all women from South Asia as living under more or less the same conditions and suffering from the same burdens of representation and poverty. In addition, we potentially can disturb the discourses of exclusionary patriarchy, religion, culture or otherwise in South Asia who claim ‘authenticity’ and artificial, politically and economically motivated unity amongst ‘their’ people and all ‘others’ (Pourzand, 2003: 358).

I will examine my own involvement and background in greater depth in the methodology chapter. I was greatly inspired by the work of Pourzand (2003); she gave me a better understanding of the ‘in-between’ researcher concept. As she suggested, our struggle for social justice will not be finished with the completion of one research project. We have to share our work in the west as well as in east. So, like her, I will translate my work into the local language Pukhtu and my national language Urdu. However, careful consideration should be needed because our experiences might break the status quo of our society where culture has strong roots.

Furthermore, here I want to clarify my own position as a non-interventionist (liberal) Islamic feminist because some secular Islamic feminists (Wadud, 2000; Afshar, 2006; Mernissi, 2001, El-Saadawi, 2008) have challenged and criticised the verses of the Quran and rejected the possibility of religion bringing about, or helping to bring about, gender equality. An explanation for this is they are not living in Muslim culture and societies; they are living in the relatively peaceful societies of the west where they enjoy freedom of speech and writing. It would be impossible to make such a bold argument within an Islamic society such as Pukhtunkhwah. Therefore in my analysis and evaluation, I have divided Islamic feminism in to two groups; liberal Islamic feminism (which the secular Islamic feminists call

conservative), and secular Islamic feminism. Both advocate gender equity in the Muslim societies that culturaised Islam. Islamic feminists encourage regular debates of *ijtihad* to investigate new trends and transition in the society according to Quran and *Sunnah*. Furthermore it's challenging the existing interpretations of the Quran to redefine cultural and religious discourses. The secular feminists criticised the divine text (the Quran) but the liberal Islamic feminists criticised their views of polygamy, inheritance and child custody of Islam. However we need more modern linguistics of classical Arabic language, historians, sociologists and anthropologist critics for these redefinitions. Since we inherited patriarchic Quranic interpretations from men's clergy that proofing them superior but the Quran has given three times high degree to a woman as a mother than a father.

My own position is that I identify with the liberal Islamic feminists and take further a re-interpretation (neither feminist nor traditional) so as not to confront the divine Text (the Quran) and *Sunnah*.

The research aims to explore to what extent the barriers to women in higher education are the result of gender discrimination of any form. In addition, it attempts to validate or invalidate existing theories or knowledge about gender discrimination in higher education. Additional factors which came to light during the research can be perceived as new knowledge. This study further investigates these factors in the light of those women who do successfully complete their higher education, which is a sound contribution towards an increased understanding of this subject. Consequently, this research formed the basis for a plan to improve access to and participation in higher education for women in Pukhtunkhwah.

Research in education is a disciplined attempt to address questions or solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalisation and prediction (Anderson et al., 1998 cited in Cohen, et al., 2007: 37). This study examines women's low participation in higher education and uses the data gathered for its explanation and generalisation. In addition, the examination of women's participation in higher education in accordance with the aims listed above is also used to deepen an understanding of Muslim societies in general and Pukhtun society in particular. I hope that the findings of this study will provide information that the local education departments and aid donors will be able to incorporate into positive measures for the development of the present education system, with a view to improving the participation of women in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah where it lags behind that of men.

With reference to the culture of this part of Pakistan, this study further investigates the particular features of Pukhtunkhwah that affect the higher education of women and the different parameters of gender issues across the society. It emphasises the huge differences between the culture and society of Pakistan and western countries. The focus of this study is not only to investigate why some women do well in higher education, but also why others are so poorly represented in higher educational institutes, and to examine the process and factors through which this occurs. Gender inequality is manifest around the world because the sex differences of men and women; men are strong, so they want to dominate women, and women are biologically weak, therefore they accept this domination. So we can say that there is an on-going historical struggle of women against attitudes promoting inequality. Francis and Skelton (2005) discuss whether or not the globally seen inequality between the sexes is a result of genes, or the patriarchal nature of men and their wish to have control over the women in their lives, or long held historical prejudices deepened over time; whatever the cause, it must be noted that inequality continues across the ages and down the generations.

### **1.3. Main Questions of the Research**

This research strives to answer the following main questions:

- 3.4.1. How do the interrelations of gender, culture, Islam and education, contribute towards women's higher education opportunities in Pukhtunkhwah?
- 3.4.2. How do the co-relation of medium of instruction, economic class and access to education affect women's participation in higher education?
- 3.4.3. What are women's views about men's attitudes towards Pukhtunkhwah women's higher education, marriage and career?
- 3.4.4. How is segregation (partial/full) used as a mechanism to ensure women's silence to strengthen men's role in Pukhtunkhwah society?
- 3.4.5. How do religion and culture overlap in relation to women's higher education in Pukhtunkhwah?

### **1.4. The Structure of Further and Higher Education in Pakistan**

Higher education in Pakistan is administered in a way that is slightly different from Western higher education. The following table will further clarify the age, grade (year) and degree classification.

**Table 1: Classification of Higher Education in Pakistan**

Institute	Age	Grade or Year	Certificate/Degree
Colleges	16-18	11-12	FA/FSc
Degree Colleges	16-22	11-14	FA/FSc <sup>2</sup> - BA/BSc <sup>3</sup>
Post-Graduate Colleges	16-22	11-16	FA/FSc-BA/BSc-MA/MS/MSc <sup>4</sup>
University	18-22	13-17	BS (Four Years)
University	22-31	16-20	MA/MSc-Mphil-PhD

In Pakistan, MA/MSc to PhD is considered higher education. Degree colleges have grades (11-14), (FA, FSc, BA, BSc) but FA, FSc are not considered higher education. Some of the universities also started offering a BS (Bachelor of Science) recently, which is equivalent to a UK first degree. This research investigates why female students drop out after their first degree (BA/BSc.), and fail to go on to university-level education.

### **1.5. Definition of Culture for this Study**

It is important to define the word ‘culture’ for the purpose of this study, because different writers define this term differently. The term ‘culture’ is difficult to define precisely because it encompasses so many different things, and has been interpreted in so many different ways (Fowler, 2000). Most broadly, ‘culture’ refers to the customs and traditions of a group of people. This encompasses images, symbols, myths, values, ideas, language, art, folklore, philosophy, and religion (Peach, 2000:75). For the purpose of this study, culture is also a synonym of traditions, living style, and set values of the society. In addition tradition often transfers orally from generation to generation, for example, in the celebrations on the birth of a baby boy and in his circumcision ceremony.

‘Patriarchy’ in this study means a societal structure in which men grasp influence over property and family members. The traditionalist society of Pukhtunkhwah has set rules that males of the family are superior to women, and after the father has died, the authority will be

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<sup>2</sup>FA is stand for Faculty of Arts (2 years) and FSc. stands for Faculty of Science (2 years); both are equivalent to British GCSE.

<sup>3</sup>BA is Bachelor of Arts (2 years) BSc is Bachelor of Science (2 years) and BS is used for Bachelor of Sciences (4 years).

<sup>4</sup>MA is Master of Arts (2 years) MSc is Master of Science (2 years) or MS (2 years) is Master of Sciences after four years BS Bachelor of Science .

transferred to the eldest brother. If the family has no son then this authority will be handed over to uncles or cousins' brothers in the family; no one can change this set rule of society.

I want to make it clear for my reader that I will use the word 'culture' when referring to the traditions and the established values of Pukhtunkhwah society. I do not include religion in this list for the following reasons:

- i. Interpretation of Islam varies around the Muslim countries and wider society of Pakistan.
- ii. Lack of knowledge and awareness about their religion by the inhabitants of Pukhtunkhwah leads to their inability to see where religion ends and the culture begins. It is impossible for an ordinary uneducated person to distinguish the one from the other, as they are so closely bound up in each other.
- iii. Cultural taboos are incorrectly justified by their conflation with accepted practices and traditions of Islam.<sup>5</sup>

Islam is most often misinterpreted due to the strong hold of local cultural influences on society (Contractor, 2010). Nevertheless, being a Muslim society, *Sharia* law should be more dominant than culture. This is my interpretation, and, indeed, the most frequent interpretation of the affiliation between Islam and culture in Pukhtunkhwah. Therefore an attempt has been made in this study to highlight how and where people misinterpret the religion in relation to women's education and work. This study also investigates what arguments are used to justify these interpretations and whether the families of the sample women group are misinterpreting Islamic teachings? It is also worthwhile to differentiate the words 'faith' and 'religion' during reading this study: 'faith' is what people believe and practise within Pukhtunkhwah society and 'religion' or 'the Islamic religion' refers to the authentic teaching of the divine text (Quran) and *Sunnah* (the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him); these are the main sources of Islamic guidance. However, it is not the intention of this study to preach Islam, or what version of Islam to follow. Rather it is a study of women's higher education and how religion is often used as a scapegoat for inequality.

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<sup>5</sup>Some of the cultural taboos of Pukhtunkhwah society are:

- a. A female is not allowed to argue with her elders.
- b. People are not allowed to engage in conversation about sex, child birth and menstruation.
- c. Husband and wife have limited and basic conversation in front of their family members, they are not even allowed to sit next to each other.
- d. A female is not allowed to say anything about her marriage or intention to get married; her education and career would be decided by her family.

Interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an is known as *tafseer*, and Islamic feminists hold that traditional *tafaseer* (plural of *tafseer*) are dominated by male interpretation, leaving little or no room for interpretation from a woman perspective (Marsot, 2006: 35). In fact it was patriarchy and male domination in our society that changed the meaning of Islam about women (Yamani, 2006). The Arabic language of the Quran dominated by masculine words; this means that the commands apply to both men and women, because when the Quran addresses women only, Allah uses the feminine gender for us. This misconception is highly dramatised by religious scholars who have limited or no knowledge about Islam and the Arabic language. The Islamic *Shari'a* predominantly rooted in Islamic society's local cultural and traditions, which are rigidity implicated by the socio-economic development of a society (Moghissi, 2007). Said (1993: 6) highlighted the fact that

writing on Islamic societies and cultures originated in a particular context – the political, economic and professional interests involved in the representation of Arabs, Persians and Muslims, in general, and their cultural practices as exercised in Western literature and scholarly writing. Another key-point is that the line separating Occident from Orient is a human production, not a fact of nature. It is an 'imaginative geography'.

Islam recognises the cultures of all Muslim communities but because the religion is so accommodating, but the Muslims overlapped their culture with the Quranic interpretation. Islam does not deny the local cultures, but they have to adhere to the teachings of the Quran and the *Sunnah*. For example, the dress code of Islam for a woman is to cover her entire body; therefore the women of the Middle East and Iran cover themselves with a full *jilbab* (gown from head to toe), Indian and Bangladeshi women with a *Sari*, and Pakistani women with *shalwar kameez* and *chaddar*. None of those women are violating the dress code of Islam because they adapt the Islamic teachings according to their own cultures. Thus, a society that adopts Islam has to follow its culture according to Islam or Islamised their culture rather than to follow Islam according to their culture by culturising Islam.

## **1.6. Contribution to Knowledge**

This research will contribute to four key areas of study:

- The debate about gender issues in higher education in Pakistan
- The understanding of intercultural relations of gender, culture, Islam, education and economic class by contributing to the elucidation of the dominant factors that cause

the low participation of women in higher education of Pakistan in general and Pukhtunkhwah in particular

- The understanding of what factors enable some women to succeed in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah
- Feminist theory/theories for higher education in Pukhtunkhwah.

### **1.7. Dissertation Outline**

This study is divided into six chapters:

The first two chapters (Introduction and Literature Review) are based on the contextual and theoretical frameworks of the study. In each chapter I have attempted to provide a summarised but comprehensive general framework, and I have attempted to identify the relevant contextual background within which my research was conducted, such as socio-economic structure of Pukhtunkhwah society, feminists' theories and their relevance to my sample women and the unequal power relations in Pukhtunkhwah culture. These chapters are based on my passionate library research over many years in different places, and information from the international community as well as from my own experiences and contacts. A key part of these chapters is the discussion of different feminist theories across the world and a preface on Pakistan, and the interplay of gender, Islam and culture in the country in general and Pukhtunkhwah in particular.

In the methodological chapter which follows, the connection between my own lived experiences, family and cultural commitments is explicated. Feminist epistemology and feminist frameworks are also highlighted in connection with the work. Information is also provided on the sample women before embarking upon research ethics, which are particularly important for women's studies in the present socio-political situation in Pakistan. I discuss the design of the methodological framework, my personal journey during this study and the research tools used for the data collection. I ended this chapter with some reflections of this study and research on my thoughts and personal life.

The two empirical chapters follow from above. In the first, an effort is made to present the collected data in graphs and transcription, using the research methods. In the following chapter, I analyse the data in a way so that my reader can listen to my sample women's voices. Some new themes emerge here for the next chapter for discussion and conclusions. The dissertation ends with a final discussion and conclusions chapter, outlining

some of the debates to which I hope this study will contribute. These include the issue of, the ‘in-between’ feminist researcher’s position, synthesising feminists’ theories in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, redefining culture and religious discourses, considering the relevance and application of Marxist feminism and of Islamic socialism and the purpose of education. I discussed numbers of further areas of research that originated from this dissertation, such as how to change our curriculum and women’s own thinking. Similarly, considering my academic and research engagement in Pukhtunkhwah, some practical recommendations are provided to the various educational departments involved. All the above sections are informed by the feminist lens that I created for this study. While by no means claiming to provide a complete presentation of all the relevant discussions or issues, an effort has made to critically summarise the most significant in the context of this dissertation.

The appendices give details of the topics which need further amplification, such as maps of Pakistan, and map of Pukhtunkhwah; the profile of the colleges in the sample; the pilot/initial survey questionnaire (September 2008); the semi-structured interview questionnaire; the post-survey questionnaire (September 2009); a brief introduction of the focused-interviews interviewees. There is also a copy of my five research papers that have been derived from this study and published internationally.

1. Khattak, S. (2009) Gender Issues in Higher Education in Pakistan’ in *Studies in the Humanities*, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 36 (2) Pp.102-112.
2. .... (2010) ‘Perceptions and Experiences of Women towards their own Higher Educational Opportunities in Peshawar, Khyber Pukhtunkhwah (Pakistan)’ simultaneously presented in *Bulgarian Comparative Education Conference* at Plodiv Bulgaria (9-12 June 2010) and in *World Congress Comparative Education Conference* at Istanbul (14-18 June 2010).
3. .... (2011) Feminism in Education: historical and contemporary issues of gender inequality in higher education in *Occasional Papers in Education and Lifelong Learning: an international journal of Middlesex University* 5(2) Pp. 67-78.  
[http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/Schools/arts\\_education/research/journals/index.aspx](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/Schools/arts_education/research/journals/index.aspx).
4. .... (2012) ‘Synthesising Feminists’ Theories in Higher Education of Khyber Pukhtunkhwah (KP) Pakistan’ in *Nova South-eastern University Online Journal for Emerging Scholarly Research* 1 (1) Pp. 46-57.
5. .... (2014) ‘A Comparative Analysis of the Elite-English-Medium Schools, State Urdu-Medium Schools, and *Dini-madaris* in Pakistan’ in *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Comparative Studies* 1(1) Pp.92-107.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORIES OF GENDER, EDUCATION, AND THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF PAKISTAN**

In my literature review, I critically examine gender issues and higher educational opportunities for women in modern world history and in Pakistan. I have divided this review into two sections for the purpose of this study. The first section examines theoretical aspects of gender and education. It also discusses the role of feminist theories in education discourse and contemporary issues in higher education. A thorough reading of these topics serves to inform and strengthen the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. Section I further elaborates on the history of gender in education with special reference to some of the developed and developing countries around the world, to establish a wider global context for the specific gender and higher education issues that Pakistan faces. Existing obstacles of women's participation in higher education are also reviewed in section I.

The second section of this chapter considers the Pakistani state and its education system which form the context for the critical gender imbalances in Pakistani society. This section further examines traditional roles assigned to each gender under the country's current Islamic doctrine of 'Enlightened Moderation' and the traditional roles assigned to gender in Islamic culture of Pakistan. Socio-cultural and other factors pertaining to gender issues are examined, and an analysis is made of the status of women in the country and as theorised by Islamic feminists. The identification of gender dynamics in the social order will hopefully make possible the realisation of higher educational opportunities for women in the country in general and Pukhtunkhwah in particular.

## **2.1 SECTION I**

### **GENDER AND HIGHER EDUCATION: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

This section introduces definitions and understandings of gender issues and a discussion on the issue of gender in education. It considers gender issues from a global perspective: it looks at developed countries, such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (USA); it also looks at developing countries, such as Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. However the aim here is not to compare the analysis of developed and underdeveloped countries. Lie, et al., (1994, cited in Hussain, 1995) argue that comparative analyses have intrinsic difficulties, such as lack of comparable information, disparities in the quality and reliability of statistics, and lack of uniform definitions of the factors and conditions involved. In addition, higher education is defined differently in different countries, and academic degrees and even academic fields are not uniformly structured around the world.

Here, I focused more on gender and higher education debates in the UK and USA that are suitable to help and extend my argument to the target area (Pukhtunkhwah). The justification for this is Hussain (1995: 29), who argues that these countries have well-documented data on gender and higher education that can be helpful in the construction of our theoretical framework. Furthermore UK was the colonial power in the subcontinent and has left noticeable imprints on socio-culture and the economy, while the USA was the world's leading cultural influence on women's rights and women's education during the twentieth century. The inclusion of evidence from countries such as Bangladesh and India, where gender issues in education are more or less similar to Pakistan, will provide a context for gender issues in higher education in developing countries. With regard to feminist approaches for the theoretical framework of this study, I focus on those feminist writers who analyse gender issues in higher education through the perspectives of radical, liberal, Marxist and Islamic feminism.

### 2.1.2 What is Gender?

Gender comes from the French; the word is 'genre'. This, in turn, came from Latin: 'genus'. Both words mean 'kind', 'type' or 'sort'.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes the word 'sex' alternative of gender social role in the society but the feminist theory use 'sex' to refer to our biological characteristics and 'gender' refers to our social roles. For example the British Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 ended the discrimination of women in all levels of education and employment. Thomas (1990: 17) argues that by the 1970s, radical feminists had begun using the word 'gender' to describe their theory of human nature, 'because the term sex no longer sufficiently described the sociological aspect of gender and power relationships'.

Conversely, by the end of the decade there was an agreement among the radical feminists regarding their theory that;

human nature is essentially epicene and social distinctions based on sex are arbitrarily constructed and matters pertaining to this theoretical process of social construction were labelled matters of gender (Thomas, 1990:17).

Therefore this study has adopted the terms 'gender' and 'gender behaviours' to describe social class and cultural in the context of Pakistan in general and Pukhtunkhwah in particular.

Furthermore, gender is the result of socially constructed ideas about the behaviour, actions, and roles of a particular sex. The beliefs, values and attitude adopted and exhibited by them are in line with the agreeable norms of the society (Sandy, 1980: 347). Increasingly scholars (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997) have recognised that the men and women do not need to submissively adopt their sex associated gender characteristics because men and women are socialised due to social reproduction. In other words, under this non-essentialist view, gender is culturally constructed rather than being a biological or innate quality (Peach, 2000).

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<sup>6</sup>These words are believed to have derived from a Proto-Indo-European root *gen-*, which is also the source of 'kin', 'kind', 'king', and many other English words. This is also the root of the modern French in the word 'genre' (type, kind) and is related to the Greek root 'gen-' (to produce), which is the root of 'gene', 'genesis', and 'oxygen'. As a verb, it means 'to breed'. Most uses of the root 'gen' in Indo-European languages refer either directly to biological characteristics at birth or to natural, innate qualities and social distinctions (such as 'gentry', 'generation', 'gentile', 'genocide')(Quoted from [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender#Feminism\\_theory\\_and\\_gender\\_studies](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender#Feminism_theory_and_gender_studies) [accessed 30/04/2009]).

Bornstein (1994: 51-2) suggests that 'gender can have ambiguity and fluidity'. She also suggests that the society plays a vital role in assigning gender specific roles and characteristics. 'Gender indistinctness' means that an individual has the freedom of choice to construct their own personality without being obligated to take up the characteristics traditionally assigned to their birth gender. while 'gender fluidity' is used to describe someone who does not accept the rigidly defined genders 'male' and 'female' and believes in the freedom to choose any kind of gender with no rules, no defined boundaries and no requirement to fulfil any expectations associated with any particular gender (Bornstein (1994: 51-2). This idea is very foreign to the traditional society of Pukhtunkhwah, where both male and female have rigidly defined gender roles that limit their opportunities and expectations in social life. Furthermore different gender studies are generally based on the theoretical framework of western and westernised women. Although there are some commonalities regarding gender roles and expectations across countries and cultures, there are, too, huge differences.

### **2.1.3 Why Gender has a Problem?**

Acker (1981:78) was one of the first to argue that sociologists have often failed to recognise that sex differences are the result of cultural and social influences:

writing of men, sociologists show an acute awareness of the social constraints upon their actions. Writing of women, of the sex differences, they frequently switch to psychological or biological levels of explanation.

Nevertheless, the argument is that the people's actions are socially constrained, although not socially determined; people make decisions, which are based on an awareness of the potentialities and limitations of certain courses of action (Francis, 2000a). Men and women make limited choices in different areas, because they passively accept their socially allocated roles of masculine and feminine behaviour (Francis and Skelton, 2001; Francis and Skelton, 2005).

This study adopts the view of Francis (2000a:7) that gender is, like the study of inequality and also class or race. This study explores gender perceptions and experiences and to ask questions about the deprived and silent women of Pukhtunkhwah, and also with the intention to give them voice, empower them and value them. It examines the factors contributing to the present state of affairs and how it has evolved. Men have a desire to dominate women, which results from historical prejudices of patriarchal cultural of Pukhtun

society. This is undoubtedly the case that there is a constant procedure of producing and reproducing gender discrimination in societies around the world (Thomas, 1990; Francis, 2000b).

The word 'gender' signifies the social characteristics of men and women, but also acknowledges the relationship between masculinity and femininity (Acker and Piper, 1984). Thomas (1990:11) quoted Acker's 1989 study, which reviewed various sociology of education articles published between 1960 and 1980. She found a significance marginalised women sample. She further highlights that it is interesting that before the seventies, researchers were not interested in women's studies and valued their gender related problems. Subsequent analysis by some feminists (Sharpe, 1976; Delamont, 1980; cited in Thomas, 1990:11) have attempted to reduce this imbalance by using all female, rather than mixed, samples, and by treating the quality of education received by girls as a serious issue, in a way that was rare before the late seventies (Thomas, 1990:11). Francis and Skelton (2005) explored the fact that although there is an increased number of a women sample in the empirical research, with women's poor presentation or their issues are not fully addressed. Belotti puts it:

The superiority of one sex is based exclusively on the inferiority and weakness of the other (cited in Thomas, 1990:11).

Cultural traditions, patriarchy and male domination are important aspects of gender in a particular society that requires comprehensive study to be understood, because these are the common causes of women subordination. This study will therefore explore how the differences of culture affect the gender issues of Pukhtunkhwah society. Very few researchers (Khan, 2007; Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007; Malik and Courtney, 2011, Naz et al., 2011; Hussain, 1995) have written about gender and the related issues in higher education in Pakistan; their main focus is on higher education as a tool of women's empowerment. One of their main weaknesses however, is that they did not theorise about how to get into, or secure access to, higher education. These studies lack feminist analyses, but I found the study that is the most relevant to mine is Hussain (1995). She conducted her comprehensive study about the urban women of Lahore to scrutinise different aspects of cultural and religious factors that block women's access to higher education in Lahore (Punjab). By contrast, my study takes up the feminist initiative to explore suitable feminist theories to theorise the role of higher education and the factors and impediments that prevent women from enrolling themselves in

and completing higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, a different conservative traditional province where patriarchal culture is more dominant.

There are a number of institutions which play a role in the production and reproduction of gender inequality, both on an ideological and level (Thomas, 1990). The people around us, our family and the media, promote the stereotypical gender roles on an ideological level, while employers who pay lower wages to female workers perpetuate inequality on a material level (Arnot and Grubb, 2001; Archer, 2003, cited in Thomas, 1990). However, the institutions, which ‘many sociologists have regarded as central in perpetuating inequality are also, crucially, central in potentially eliminating inequality is that of education’ (Thomas, 1990:12). Education is considered one of the key battlegrounds in the struggle for gender equality. Since nineteenth century, educational reformers have struggled to reduce the gender gap in schools as well as dispel stereotypes about appropriate subject choices for girls and boys. However, for the rural and some urban areas of Pukhtunkhwah, where the key issues are food, clothing and shelter, education is the fourth priority. Poverty is one of the major features of Pakistan in general and a main variable in educational access and attainment tested by this study.

#### **2.1.4. Feminist Theories of Education**

Various types of feminism have advanced different explanations for inequality in higher education: liberal, radical, and Marxist or socialist. All these feminist approaches concerned about unequal opportunities in higher education that challenged the propagation of male-experience and knowledge. Marxists or socialist struggle for equal power relation for both the genders in society that takes further by the liberal feminists to remove inequality by political, social and economic movement under state law. However the radical feminism criticises both the theories (Marxists/socialist and liberal) considering patriarchy is the main rival of women in society that gives supreme position to men and subordinate place to women. I have examined a fourth approach in this study, is the Islamic feminist paradigm. Islamic feminists claimed that Muslim societies are diverse and male dominated where culture and traditions have stronger roots than Islam. Because cultural values are older than Islamic values so under strong social and societal pressures people follow their patriarchal culture rather than Islam. Islam valued women’s rights and made education obligatory for women and men both. Therefore the Islamic feminists want to improve women’s social, political, legal, and educational situation around the Muslim world. Therefore they

challenged the patriarchal culture of Muslim societies. Islamic feminism encourages the Quran and *Sunnah*'s teachings of justice and fundamental rights distribution in-between the two genders (Contractor, 2010).

Thomas (1990) noted that very few feminist researchers in the sociology of education choose higher education for their research venture, while so much work has been done on the primary and secondary levels. This is similar to the academic literature on Pakistan. However, this may be the outcome of a deficiency in the feminist theory of education. Of course, other educational theorists also have difficulty theorising the role of higher education in the reproduction of inequality (Thomas, 1990; Francis, 2000b). In the UK and USA, in comparison to Pakistan, there are substantial sources available on gender and gender inequality in higher education. In Pakistan there are only a couple of academic studies on gender in higher education; in contrast, a substantial number of studies have been published on the secondary level of education, and a notable number on the primary level. Most of these studies are contract studies carried out by donor agencies. This lack of research into gender and higher education in Pakistan is largely due to what international organisations chose to study, as national studies and academic research on gender issues in higher education are rare in Pakistan. Another reason for the lack of studies and theories concerning higher education could be that gender inequality issues in education are already entrenched at primary levels and are further reinforced at secondary levels, and by the time women in Pakistan reach the age of possibly entering higher education, a series of patriarchal, social, cultural and economic factors compel women to accept the prevailing system of male dominated education in Pakistan. As a result, very few gain access to higher education (Informal discussion with the Director of Education, 2008).

My analysis of the various feminist theories I will examine the differences and similarities between feminist approaches to education in the contemporary world. Then, once informed by these studies, I will look at various analyses of the Pakistani education system. Thirdly, I will scrutinise the application of these theories in higher education of Pukhtunkhwah specifically.

### **2.1.5. Liberal Feminism**

According to this philosophy, society should impose laws to bring in changes to the stereotype gender mind set of the social order and give equal opportunities to women as equal

citizens with equal rights. Liberal feminists' belief in a just society, where women and men should secure equally powerful positions. In the early seventies, liberal feminists were more concerned about the working-class children to have better educational opportunities. They struggled for a universal education compulsory for all, especially for girls who were highly underrepresented in mainstream schooling (Thomas, 1990).

Liberal feminists (Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797); Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-October 1902); John Stuart Mill (1806-1873); Betty Friedan (1921-2006) and Rebecca Walker (1969-present)<sup>7</sup>

believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world and they work hard to emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006: 21).

Liberal feminists raised their voices against sex discrimination during the civil rights movement because they passionately believed that racism and sexism should be abolished. The National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the Women's Equity Action League were all established to support women's rights.

These groups also started their struggle for the sanction of 'the Equal Rights Amendment' or 'Constitutional Equity Amendment', and demanded equal rights for both men and women under democracy. Furthermore, they sought democratic laws to secure additional rights for women, such as reproductive rights, and equal pay for equal work issues. They also campaigned for a number of other vital issues, such as suffragette. Women education for liberal feminists is reasonable health and child care, and protections against sexual and domestic violence against women.

Liberal feminism is also known as 'first wave' feminism, because it was the first feminist movement. It matured in the context of the industrial revolution and liberal politics in the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States and Europe (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006). First wave feminism influenced the struggle for women's equal rights during the 20th century. Their struggle was in eastern and western societies i.e. the South Asian feminists struggle for the liberation of Indian sub-continent is noteworthy in this regards. Both Hindu and Muslim women movements found common cause in not only their struggle for national liberation, but also for recognition of their legal and political rights.

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<sup>7</sup>Cited in Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006: 21

Written in reaction to the French Revolution, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) is still an impressive and decisive piece of writing which people still love to read today. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) are the early works that paved the way for radical second wave feminism (cited in Krollokke and Sorensen, 2006). Simone De Beauvoir captivates the argument of men supremacy, who considered women as invaluable secondary sex in their self-controlled world.

Woolf introduced the notion of female bisexuality and a unique woman's voice and writing, Beauvoir the notion of women's radical otherness or, rather, the cognitive and social process of 'othering' women as the second sex in patriarchal societies. We would say that Beauvoir thereby produced an authoritative definition of patriarchy (Krollokke and Sorensen, 2006:7).

Actually, the fundamental concept of the second wave radical feminists' was 'patriarchy', which they defined as a system of male-domination and oppression for the exploitation of women (Krollokke and Sorensen, 2006).Patriarchy was so predominant in existing society, and the feminists developed their ideas and views to criticise, and discredit patriarchy, with the ultimate aim of abolishing it completely.

However, patriarchy has a different form of authority in Pakistan that has an impact upon women's authentic voices. Pukhtunkhwah women made substantial contributions to the Pukhtu language, and, because under rigid Pukhtu perspectives, subjects like mathematics, statistics, and the natural sciences traditionally taught to men, such as art, literature, and biological sciences traditionally taught to women. This seems to be underpinned by the prevailing cultural and religious view, because these professional subjects will take longer to study. Women are encouraged to study for only short periods for their first degree so that they can get married at an early age. Pukhtunkhwah parents' first priority is to find a suitable marriage proposal rather than a suitable subject choice for daughters' higher education. Similar concerns were noted in works of twentieth century feminist writers, who commented on parents' apparent lack of interest in careers for girls, as they assumed that they would simply marry, have children and stay at home (Blackstone and Fulton, 1975, Hussain, 1995).

In the liberal model, education tends to be seen, to some extent, in isolation from the social structure (Thomas 1990: 13). Because education is considered one of the main causes of creating inequality in our society, also through education a society can reduce gender

marginalisation. For example, Friedan in her famous book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963:67 cited in Thomas, 1990), argued that ‘the education system was partly to blame for the ideology of the feminine mystique, but equally the solution for women who were trapped in their roles as wives and mothers was to return to college to obtain an education’. However, women’s own problem is their attitude, their own representation in media and their education system; so there should be a change in their own attitude to stop thinking about stereotype roles in society.

Liberal feminists were inspired by Betty Friedan’s landmark book. Similarly Rowbotham and Davis (1965) but from quite a different point of view—they argued that middle-class women were unsuccessful in western societies because they were lacking political leadership and social power (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006).

Their demand was payment for housewives- a kind of citizen’s income and positions of power in politics. Zillah Eisenstein’s work *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (1981) was a hopeful contribution liberal feminist (first wave and second wave) thought; its influence is even felt in today’s neoliberal feminism. ‘Typical liberal feminist concerns during the second wave, however, were documenting sexism in private as well as public life and delivering a criticism of gendered patterns of socialisation’ (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006:43).

However, the women of Pukhtunkhwah do not have control over their own lives, because the family, culture and society push them towards taking on roles of wives and mothers. In this traditional society, a degree is a piece of paper that does not guarantee a successful marital life. A highly-educated woman has difficulty in finding an educated suitable match for marriage. Males prefer to marry young uneducated women because of their flexible and non-argumentative attitude and their ability to bear more children, all of which are characteristics that will enable a man to easily dominate them (Shehzad, et al., 2010). Most liberals, like other feminists, believe that school’s hidden curriculum is encouraging sexist attitudes in children (Delamont, 1980:3 cited in Thomas, 1990):

Schools develop and reinforce sex segregation, stereotypes and even discriminations which segregate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world, when they could be trying to alleviate them.

In Pakistan, not only schools but also parents, culture and society instil these attitudes in children. Teachers convey these messages through the hidden curriculum. Hill (2001: 298)

summarises Bourdieu (1999), suggesting that cultural reproduction works through the hidden curriculum that categorises some cultures, life styles, ways of being and behaving (for Bourdieu the habitus), attitudes and values. Malik and Courtney (2011) and Qureshi, et al., (2007) came up with the same conclusion: that Pakistani educational institutions promoting their traditional and culture values that helping towards women's subordination position in the society rather empowering leadership status. They further argue about considerable evidences that the school culture in Pakistan shapes boys and girls differently. These statements demonstrate a central emphasis of the liberal feminists' analysis, that education has the ability to promote positive or negative attitudes, and that changing educational systems will change hence, eventually society. As mentioned earlier, boys in England have recently performed poorly relative to girls (in modern foreign languages, and literature for example), yet the liberal feminists of the seventies tend to be concerned only with the areas where girls were less successful, such as science and mathematics, seeing them as long routes to career success.

Ultimately, liberal feminism is not a suitable model or theory to be applied on Pukhtunkhwah society because law cannot bring equality in the society and education. These feminists theorise about western societies, not the traditionalist conservative Muslim societies of South Asia where legal reform fails in face of money, power and socio-cultural pressures. The constitution of Pakistan clearly mentions free primary education and equal access to primary and secondary education, but 60% of school going girls are not attending any education (UNESCO, 2010). State law has failed to bring equality in education due to the current lack of girls' schools, colleges and universities (particularly women's universities, as segregation is demanded by Pukhtunkhwah traditional society) and other educational infrastructure.

#### **2.1.6. Marxist/Socialist Feminism**

Marxist/socialist feminism was developed in the US workers' unions, in some parts of Europe as social-democratic parties for reformation, and in the former Soviet Union during communism. So we can say that it was a parallel movement to liberal or first wave feminism. The German Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919), the Russian Alexandra Kollontai (1873–1952),

and the American Emma Goldman (1869–1940)<sup>8</sup> were the famous pioneer feminists of this movement. Like liberal feminism, it demanded equal opportunities for both genders, but Marxist/socialist feminism differed in that it was a movement particularly for working-class women and their struggle against society's class system for socialist revolution.

Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai and Emma Goldman put the foundation of second wave feminism to struggle for women rights politically and privately; as Krolokke and Sorensen (2006:7) highlighted, 'divorce, abortion, and non-legislative partnership—and against sexism both in bourgeois society and within the socialist movements.'

Both liberal and socialist/Marxist feminism continued to develop and maintain strong voices in 20th-century feminism, though they were soon challenged by other types of feminism, such as black and third-world feminisms. The concept of equal opportunity framed a particular type of equity research, which arose outside the academy in the first half of the 20th century, and gradually provided the basis for a growing field of research in 'the women issue'. Following the scientific paradigm of structuralism as a set of ways and means of knowing, equity research initially took the basic format of muted group theory (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006:7).

The focal point of Marxist/socialist feminist explanations of women empowerment is the unequal power structure and education system in society. They are less worried about people's attitudes, because a society of fair distribution of power would naturally reinforce its inhabitants' positive attitude towards female equality. Marxist/socialist feminism is against capitalism and patriarchy and favours their distribution of power and capital; because this would enable a society to raise the status of its women members. Marxist/socialist feminism perceives that the class system inherent in most societies is the main cause of women's oppression. As Macdonald (1980: 30) put it:

Both class relations and gender relations, while they exist within their own histories, can nevertheless be so closely interwoven that it is theoretically very difficult to draw them apart within a specific historic conjuncture (cited in Williams, 1995).

However there are some differences between various Marxist/socialist feminists on the topic of women oppression's in society because of unequal power relations within the family and then society (Williams, 1995). In both situations they witness education is the major source of

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<sup>8</sup> (Cited in Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006:7)

capitalism that instilling class system, by exploitation of men and women workers and strengthening patriarchy.

Marxist/socialist feminists are quick to point out the essentialism of much of radical feminism (Thomas, 1990:17), and argue that there are different kinds of women's oppression in every society of the world. However the labour market is maintaining capitalism such as low wages, harsh working conditions, and little job security (Thomas, 1990). However, women's oppression and exploitation are common within the family and home as well. The situation in Pukhtunkhwah and in Pakistan more widely is that the labour market is male-dominated to be sure, but in Pukhtunkhwah the common cultural and social practice is to seek to decrease women's participation in the labour market, to discourage them from working outside home, and to increase their dependency on men. (I will discuss this further in Section II: Disparity in Socio-economic Status).

Women's liberation activists joined Marxist/socialist feminism to condemn women's dual workload at home and outside, as well as raised their voices for equal pay and work. Simultaneously they, demanded single-sex educational institutes and work places too. Sheila Rowbotham, in *Women, Resistance, and Revolution* (1972), and Angela Y. Davis, in *Women, Race, and Class* (1981) expanded on the intersections of gender, race, and class (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006).

In addressing what they saw as 'the woman question,' they concluded that the emancipation of women would occur only with the destruction of capitalism and the rise of socialism, when women would be freed from dependency on men and the family and be involved in 'productive' labour. In areas such as the criticism of 'sex roles' and 'the beauty myth', however, women's liberation was closer to liberal feminism, which still had a strong hold (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006: 9).

In the words of Thomas that the role of education under this model is more difficult than in the other feminists' models because education is neither simply about the transmission of certain attitudes nor about the perpetuation of patriarchy (Thomas, 1990:37).

Traditional Marxist/socialist explanations such as that of Althusser (1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and, more recently, Hill (2004, 2006) have seen education's role as reproducing the relations of dominance and subordination necessary to the maintenance of the capitalist state. Neo-Marxist explanations (Willis, 1981; Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983a,b) have moved away from a deterministic model towards a looser one which emphasises

hegemony and cultural resistance. Wolpe (1978) took it further in her article, 'Education and the sexual division of labour', she argue that changes in the labour process have resulted in a disjunction between the skills taught by the education system and the skills (or in a sense, lack of skills) demanded in the labour market (cited in Thomas, 1990:39). As a result schools and colleges feel the pressure of conflicting demands: for example, girls are free to choose to study the natural or physical sciences, but forcibly push towards Home Economics to prepare them to become good wives and mothers. Similarly, hidden curriculums in educational settings and teachers' attitudes in the classroom also reinforce stereotypical female roles in society.

However, Williams (1995:57) criticises state policy in this regard as representing the contradictory interests of patriarchy and capitalism which respectively reinforce women's roles as carers within the family and low-paid workers outside it. She further argues that there is a need to challenge this by demanding socialisation of caring and reorganisation of sexual division of labour and division between paid and unpaid work. However, with reference to the specific society under consideration in this thesis (Pukhtunkhwah society) state policy is failed in both aspect of demand (by providing infrastructure of education and job market) and supply (increasing women's participation in education and work forces).

Barrett (1984) analysed that education is a clear entity of state policy, and endorses class and the class system among people. I agree with Barrett's analysis that education is the entity of the state policy because in Pakistan, the dual education system (state schools, Urdu medium and private schools, English medium) are producing a de facto class system. This class system can be seen in the Pakistani society where the students of state schools make up a low-income working class who do low-income jobs—this, in turn, provides them with only limited access to their fundamental needs and entry in to higher education. On the other hand, the private schools produce a high-income capitalist/elite class which has all the necessary means to live a luxury life and has easy access to higher education that prepares them for high-income jobs. This duality of the education system and its reinforcing of the class system in society is one of the research questions explored by this study.

Barrett's (1984, cited in Thomas, 1990) thesis described four levels of how gender relations are reproduced in the school environment: the first is that of ideology, where girls and boys are socialised into appropriate feminine and masculine behaviours; the second is

that of structure and organisation, where the majority of head teachers and heads of departments are men while women are employed at the lower grades of the teaching profession.

While this was very true in past times that school structure and organisation was unequal, in recent years there has been a rise in the number of women who have taken of leadership roles in schools, especially in primary schools, where most of the head teachers are women (TDA, 2012). According to TDA (2012) there was a 35% increase in women secondary school heads during the past decade. 70% of the teaching workforce is women while 67% of head and deputy head posts occupied by women. It is evidence from the existing figures that despite comprising 60% of the British workforce, women occupied only one in eight (12.5 %) senior management positions in the top 100 British companies (TDA, 2012). However, in Pakistan where all the government schools are single-gender, the percentage of female teachers is 37.4% in primary, 33.7% secondary and 17% in higher education (Khattak, 2012). The ratio of women is less than half of the ratio of men, despite the fact that the teaching profession is highly encouraged for women in Pukhtunkhwah due to the segregated educational environment.

The third level at which gender relations are reproduced consists of those mechanisms which channel pupils into a sexual division of labour: as said earlier, boys are encouraged to study science and technology, while girls are encouraged to study the arts. As mentioned earlier Pakistani parents want their daughters to marry, not to study long professional courses that would delay their marriage.

The fourth level at which gender relations are reproduced is that of the definition of legitimate knowledge: what is often taught as neutral and objective is in fact are Eurocentric and sexist (however, Barrett rejects the relativism of many feminists and argues that an objective, neutral knowledge is possible) (Thomas, 1990:24).

Thomas (1990: 27) further strengthens my argument and wrote that ‘in a sense, ‘Barrett’s analysis is remarkable because it is so unremarkable’ and further commented;

while her theoretical analysis of the interrelationships of gender and class at the general level may be controversial, few feminists would disagree with her comments about education. Her comments about subject specialisation may even have more in common with traditional liberal approaches (i.e. girls are ‘channelled’ into the arts) than with the approach of radical feminists who see science as inherently masculine.

Arnot (1981: 13, cited in Thomas, 1990) critiques the differing views of women argued by diverse feminist approaches, for example Marxist-feminists and the cultural (liberal or radical) groups. She believes that they both present an 'overly determined view of women'. The former view she believes, sees women being doubly affected by capitalism and the patriarchal nature of the society in which they live, whilst the liberal and radical groups cultural approach see women as 'over-socialised'. The Marxist-feminists see schools as producing gender as well as class inequality, whereas the liberal and radical groups regard schools as the cause of the problem but also a possible solution. Arnot (1981) further suggests that a combination of the two perspectives would be better, as it could explore the whole picture of girls' experiences in education and how children confront and tackle the dual powers of class and gender. This synthesis, the bringing back of agency and resistance into Marxist analysis was a feature of the Gramscian neo-Marxism, the capacity for resistance against capitalist (and patriarchal and racist) ideological hegemony, the 'naturalisation' of capitalist exploitation and racist and sexist oppression. This 'resistance theory' Marxism, termed 'neo-Marxism', developed in the 1980s, and was exemplified by the work of Paul Willis (1977), Michael Apple (1982) and Henry Giroux (1983a, b).

Marxist/socialist feminist analysis is useful in analysing the class system in Pukhtunkhwah society and its effect on the education system. It focuses on differences of social class and the social class related impacts in Pukhtunkhwah society of patriarchal oppression. Marxist/socialist feminism emphasises that patriarchy impacts more severely, more oppressively, on the poor rather than the rich. The rich have enough money to provide food and education for their children while the poor are struggling to meet their basic needs. Marxist/socialist feminism within an Islamic framework needs to recognise the importance of charity within Islam. Islam does not believe in or recommend equality of power or equality in the distribution of wealth. Allah clearly said in the Quran that I have created you in different groups and sects to be recognised and tested. It is worth noting, however, that if the rich people in Pukhtunkhwah society were to pay their *Zakah* (an Arabic word for charity) every year at the prescribed amount of 2.5% of their saving income, there would not be such a big gap between the rich and the poor. However, Islam's denial of the distribution of equal power and wealth in society poses some problems in synthesising Marxist/socialist feminist analysis and Islamic feminist analysis, which are addressed below. My aim is to use Marxist/socialist feminist analysis: the distribution of economic class in the sample used will further provide a basis to theorise about the effect of economic class and poverty on the

higher education system of Pukhtunkhwah. Regarding the *Zakah*, this act of charity, it needs pointing out, does not contradict Marxist/socialist feminism, because the acts of charity, equivalent in some ways to Western philanthropy, for Marxists, would be seen as only slightly ameliorating class exploitation and oppression, rather than addressing (and seeking to replace) capitalism. Muslim acts of charity do not seek to replace capitalism.

### **2.1.7. Radical Feminism**

In early 1960s and early 1970s saw the women's liberation movement of radical feminism. Second-wave feminism is exclusively dominated by radical feminists. Their argument was against patriarchy and male domination (Williams, 1995). This popular movement was for women empowerment and emancipation, so we heard strong radical voices in the second-wave of feminism. The 1980s and 1990s saw another vital differentiation of second-wave feminism, the debate about their skin colour and third-world women.

The 1960s to 1970s produced many of the expressions that have become household words in the United States: 'Sisterhood is powerful', 'consciousness raising', 'the personal is political', 'the politics of housework', the 'pro-woman line', and so on. Key to this branch of feminism was a strong belief that women could collectively empower one other (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006:9).

Radical second-wave feminism was divided into two groups of thinkers: neo-Marxists and psychoanalysts, as summarized by Juliet Mitchell (1970) in *The Subjection of Women* and Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006:9). Their main argument was patriarchy and differences of race and class society are responsible measures of women unequal power position. However biological disparity is more middle-class phenomena.

The Freudian theory of women's 'natural' dependency and sexual frigidity was at first denounced, then later rearticulated as a mimicry of the unholy alliance between capitalism and patriarchy that designates sexism as the particular character of women's oppression (Mitchell, 1970; cited in (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006).

The radical feminist paradigm further claims that education is a diffusion of men's knowledge and experiences that we learn in our schools. Thus, this unfair knowledge has no value and should not be taught in educational settings (Thomas, 1990). Spender (1982) strongly supported this point and argued:

Men have provided us with a false picture of the world, not just because their view is so limited, but because they have insisted that their limited view is the total view (Spender, 1982:16; cited in Thomas, 1990).

A specific example is provided by the Textbook Board of Pakistan which has branches throughout the country and aims to produce quality textbooks up to BA/BSc levels. One can observe the same themes of male-domination and supremacy as well as the subordination of women as the hidden messages across all subjects in their curriculum (Isani and Virk, 2007). Curriculum design and the content of textbooks are strong contributors to the perpetuation of gender discrimination in the education system. This has been noted in previous studies (Malik and Courtney, 2011; Mattu and Hussain, 2004). Dean (2007) states that the existing textbooks are full of gender marginalisation and discrimination, active strong masculine roles for men and weak inferior roles for women, to show them as more passive. Gender bias, of course, is not limited to schools; it is also evident at college and university levels (Thomas, 1990).

The impression gained is one of the women's inferiority, her domesticity, her lack of intelligence, ability, sense of adventure or creativity (OECD (2006b: 14).

It is evident from the above report that the appearance of women in the textbooks is very minimal or else they are portrayed as doing invaluable activities. In other words, Pakistan's patriarchal society is conveying the message that men are superior and should dominate and rule society while women should serve them. Radical feminists (Acker, 1989; Francis and Skelton, 2005) have found in studies that men (teachers or students) in educational institutes tend to trivialise women's ideas and experiences.

Radical feminists see the put-downs and discrimination experienced by girls as the means by which men control women, and by which boys control girls. From this point of view, women are oppressed and victimised; they are not simply the unlucky recipients of prejudice (Thomas, 1990:14).

As schooling is a part of gender discrimination, radical feminists do not accept the idea of increased women ratio into higher education. Spender remarks:

Such superficial analyses and solutions are not only insulting to women, they also ignore the distribution of power in society and the academic world, and the way in which males have appropriated and defended that power (Spender, 1982: 110, cited in Thomas, 1990).

However I argue that unless a woman knows her rights, strengths and weaknesses, how she would be able to compete in this superficial world of men? Higher education is a tool of

empowerment and emancipation for women (Malik and Courtney, 2011). It is not a solution to leave the ground to men; the best way is to persistently struggle and do not give up. However Spender and Thomas's solution is to separate women and men in all fields of life, because when men see successful women in the education system, they try to trap her in a vicious circle and try different strategies to impede her. They suggest that women must make their own education, their own rules, and their own society. Nevertheless, this is problematic in the male dominated society of Pukhtunkhwah: women are impelled to support this male domination because without male support and agreement, a woman cannot move on in her society. The male is the head of the family unit, so all the family members are bound to obey and respect him. Similarly Hussain (1995) found that permission of the male head for women to enter higher education means a guarantee of his financial support for the women.

This study emphasises that we not only need dramatic social change in our society but also to change women's own thinking. Challenging culture and patriarchy will not happen unless women break their own silence and ask for their rights. Higher education has that strength that could empower women. Malik and Courtney (2011), for example, recognised higher education as an instrument for social change and women's empowerment. They further argued that engagement in higher education equips women with the knowledge that will form the basis of their economic independence. Attainment of these achievements brings with it an increased status and recognition from their family and the wider community (Malik and Courtney, 2011: 41). However a question arises here: how do we prepare the ground for women's smooth entry in to higher education? My study will give the answer of this and similar questions.

### **2.1.8. Islamic Feminism**

Third-wave feminists (1990s onwards) demanded more opportunities for women without sexism. They motivated feminist theorists to develop their own theory of honour and politics and uncompromising thinking. In this wave, we saw the rise of Islamic feminism. Margot Badran, a prominent Islamic feminist writes;

first I came across the term 'Islamic feminist' in the works of Muslims such as in Teheran's journal '*Shanan*' founded in 1992 and the book 'Feminism and Islam' published in 1996 by Mai Yamani, a Saudi Arabian author. The term appeared in Turkey, South Africa, and other corners of the Muslim world (Badran, 2002:17).

Currently, the goal of Islamic feminists is to support and articulate gender equality is compulsory in the Quran. Islamic feminism mainly stresses the re-reading of the Quran with a female perspective—something that is sometimes called the scholarship of activism (Afshar, 2000).

In third-wave feminism, there are more debates about the effects of globalization and of previous feminist theory and the politics of unequal power relations in society. Women's oppression is evident in research into third world politics and discussed in postcolonial and third-wave feminism. The third-wave feminism is more concerned than previous feminisms with making coalitions with black, diasporic, subaltern and Islamic feminisms, in a general attempt to offer new critical global perspectives and platforms for women's emancipation and empowerment.

Islamic feminism describes the ways that Muslim women live in their patriarchal culture and how they balance their women-hood, self-effacement, with the challenges of modernisation, changing perceptions of femininity, and the power of women in wider pluralist settings of the Muslim world (Contractor, 2010).

This feminism is usually grounded in the Islamic beliefs of these women and at the same time is underpinned by the Western socio-cultural milieu of many Muslim women (Contractor 2010: 23).

Islamic feminism challenges the patriarchy and patriarchal interpretations of the Quran and *Sunnah*; however, they are in favour of men supporting them to achieve their goal of equal rights. They challenge the stereotypical woman's role in society and give the example of Ayisha (RA), one of the wives of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was a great scholar and teacher of Quran and *Hadiths* in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Thus this feminism, like radical feminism, is a dual struggle against the existence—indeed, their salience—of patriarchy in Muslim communities and is also against widely held secular suspicions of visible religiosity (Contractor, 2010:76). Islamic feminists do not categorise the issues of women's subordination and oppression with socio-economic or class differences like Marxist feminists do. Islamic feminism encourages women's knowledge of Islam as well as contemporary knowledge or education. To empower Muslim women and challenge the existing patriarchal interpretation of Islam, both contemporary and Islamic education must enable them to convey their argument for or against patriarchy.

Similarly, Yamani (2006) and Karmi (2006) argue that Islam in Muslim societies is a hard, patriarchal religion that dictates a conservative view of cultured-Islam and far away

from the original Islam. That is one of the key arguments of this study too—that the culture and traditions of the Pukhtunkhwah society is over-dominated by patriarchal values and by centuries-old customs. Pukhtun culture is effectively training men and women to be commodities of patriarchal culture, and is structuring the pattern of women's lives to be subordinate. Within these cultural and social patterns, women have very few chances for social mobility. This not only creates hurdles impeding women's primary education but also their overall development (Naz, et al., 2011). This study examines the possibilities for redefining culture and religious discourses for Pukhtunkhwah women, where their rights should not be exploited in the name of religion or culture.

Therefore Islamic feminists (Yamani, 2006; Wadud, 2000; Afshar, 2000; Mernissi, 2001) condemn all forms of inequality against women in the name of Islam, because gender inequalities in Muslim societies are cultural reproductions that must be eliminated through higher education.

Mohanty (1998) argues that Muslim women are always portrayed in the west as powerless and oppressed in western academia. Therefore western feminists are using the images of third world women as objects in their studies; as victim that need their help.

In western feminists' theories, Asian, and particularly Muslim, women are depicted as powerless individuals who need to be guided by western feminism in order to become politically mature. It is unrealistic to view all women or all Muslims as a homogenous group, ignoring the historical and cultural differences between them (Darvishpour, 2003).

I am suggesting here that Islamic feminism should be considered and developed as an alternative feminism, a feminism that, together with Marxist feminism and its recognition of the importance of class location in women's oppression, can facilitate women's emancipation in Islamic countries. Western and Islamic feminists do not consider religion an impediment to gender equality in education. They do not consider how women's own thinking should be changed and how women silence themselves. Islamic feminism as it currently stands is originally a product of those Muslim feminists who have accessed higher education and have attained high positions in western societies.

As advanced in the introduction to this thesis, some of the secular Islamic feminists (Wadud, 2000; Afshar, 2006; Mernissi, 2001, El-Saadawi, 2008) have challenged and criticised verses of the Quran and rejected the possibility of religion bringing about, or helping to bring about, gender equality. One possible explanation for this is they are not

living in Muslim cultures and societies; they are living in the peaceful societies of the west where they enjoy freedom of speech and writing. It would be impossible to make such a bold argument within an Islamic society such as in Pukhtunkhwah. Therefore in my analysis and evaluation, I have divided Islamic feminism into two groups: liberal Islamic feminism on the one hand, and secular Islamic feminism. As for my own position, I identify most strongly with the liberal Islamic feminists and follow an original re-interpretation—rather than a masculine or feminine re-interpretation—of the Quran and *Sunnah*.

The problem of gender issues in Islamic discourse is different across different Muslim societies due to the diversity of their geographical, cultural and political situations. Muslim societies interpret the Quran in a way that suits their individual culture. My study attempts to explore the religious and cultural understanding of a sample group of women, women who have attained higher education, to explore whether and to what extent the impediments to women's access to higher education in Pukhtunkhwah is cultural, and whether and to what extent it is the religion of Islam itself discourages or encouraging women to seek entry to higher education.

### **2.1.9. Gender and Higher Education**

As compared to primary and secondary education, feminist sociology gives little attention to the status of women in higher education, especially in Pakistan. Feminists considered higher education as women's success, but there is an obvious question: why are women marginalized at higher education institutes? Thomas (1990:29) quoted Byrne (1978:15):

There is an intellectual minority of girls whose elite wings have helped them to fly from the gutter to the university.

and Wolpe (1993: 20):

Those children who comprise the elite section of the education system are destined via higher education to fill the managerial, professional and higher executive posts of this country,

Thomas (1990: 29) criticises the use of the word 'elite', in these quotes, and that Wolpe (1993) and Byrne (2001) as well as other feminists, support women gaining to access to higher education but are not concerned how they will be treated there. Why can women not their place there? The alternative way of looking at higher education is to see it is a

continuation of the reproduction of gender relations (Thomas, 1999:67). Radical feminists' standpoint is that higher education is not the ultimate success of women because the education system further prepares men and women for their stereotype jobs, care-giving and marriage for women and authoritative powerful leading jobs for men. Therefore we can sum up that higher education and secondary school curricula are male-biased and perpetuate unequal status relationships in society.

I would like to add on there is an inconsistent correlation between higher education and gender inequality because the hierarchy is in the hands of masculine power. Higher education is a semi-government body in Pakistan but not secluded from the cultured power and values of society. Higher education in Pakistan is based less on knowledge and more on training students to secure jobs for economic stability. However this created confusion between the objectives and policies for higher education, producing something like educated ignorance. The stated aims of the higher educational policy of Pakistan (1998-2010) do not match with the practice, and the education system does not work as it is supposed to; as Isani and Virk (2007) criticised, education is not a means of cultural production, so we need to analyse peoples' responses to it.

Education at the primary and secondary level promotes a passive role for women; sometimes give them puzzling and ambiguous messages about the stereotypical women's role in society. Therefore, there is a drastic need to study higher education and hold it to the same criteria. The classic study of Komarovsky (1946:77) found that women in higher education had the same conflicting experience with their care-giving and career roles; that societal expectation is that women will take on a passive role, and learn to be 'feminine' and marriageable. A female student might experience this attitude from male university staff and peers forcing women into care-giving roles and giving them the impression that men do not like clever women. This can come from tutors, but also, from society, family, peers and friends especially women.

Similarly Pukhtunkhwah society gives its women the impression that in spite of her cleverness, her main responsibility is to serve her family. She is not allowed to take part in the decision making process, such as budgeting, because a wife does not know her family's or husband's sources of income.

Likewise Louise and Val (1999) and Chisholm and Woodward (2000) confirmed that women graduates are often confused at whether to make a choice between marriage, bearing children, and part-time post-graduate work, or to enter high-status, traditionally 'masculine' jobs: they have been highly pressured by society either way. Such women are barely accepted by the society and they do not attract men. This theory of women's choice is particularly important for my study where raising a family is considered the only purpose of a woman's life in Pukhtunkhwah. This study explores the causes of women dropping out of higher education.

#### **2.1.10. Gender Equity in Higher Education**

There are many American and British analyses on the difficulties and discrimination experienced by women students and staff in higher education such as CCHE, (1973); Furniss and Graham, (1973); Fox (1981); Vartuli, (1982) and in Britain, Blackstone and Fulton (1975); Piper, (1975); Rendel (1980); Weiner, (1999); Acker (1989); Arnot, (1981) and Arnot, et al., (1998). Today, there is a growing body of work looking at the position of both men and women in education (for example, Martino and Meyenn, (2001); Reay, (2012); Francis and Skelton, (2001, 2005); Walkerdine et al., (2001); Frosh et al., (2001); Epstein, et al., (2004); Archer (2003); Haywood and MacanGaill, (2003); Renold, (2005). However these studies are conducted exclusively on societies that lack a religious-dominated cultural context. My study is strongly based in the religious (Islam) and cultural context of the North West Pakistan in general and Pukhtunkhwah in particular. The intention is to explore the inter-play between religion, cultural and higher education: which of these elements, if any, blocks women's opportunities towards higher education. In addition to discover what are the factors of their continuation or discontinuation of higher education? These and similar questions will be scrutinised by this study.

Since 1969, most of the higher educational institutes have been restructured in western societies. This directly affected the working-class and their increased participation in higher education. There are growing numbers of women in universities, and although their participation has not reached the level of men after the post-war period in western societies, women are catching up to men in higher education (Reay, 2012). Actually, women initiated changes in higher education because the sixties was the male-dominated era; women were encouraged to enrol in teaching training colleges (Frosh, et al., 2001; Crompton, 2002).

However, there was also much social class discrimination in the education system that brought minor changes with little chance for working-class families to participate in higher education (NCE, 2003). High-status universities are only safeguarding an elite class of children but are also experiencing an increase of middle-class children (Egerton and Halsey, 2003). Plummer (2000:67) reports that in 1998 women in middle-class obtained 1.6 % placement at university level and 2% boys, this rise has reduced the difference to 0.4% over ten years. Furlong and Cartmel (2001: 34) state that:

despite an apparent increase in the possibilities to continue full-time education or embark on a course of training, young people from advantaged positions in the social-economic hierarchy have been relatively successful in protecting privileged access to the most desirable routes.

According to Walkerdine, et al., (2001) and McCabe (2005), analyses suggest that women's access to higher education increases in urban settings and that the general open-mindedness and opportunities for self-realisation strengthen their decision making power. Therefore, it would be interesting to explore women's opinions and experiences at a different time and in a different context of culture and society where geographic division (urban and rural) has had a great influence on women's participation in education (Brock and Cammish, 1999). In rural areas of Bangladesh, three to four villages share one girl's primary school while secondary schools are located in urban areas. In that situation, parents often prefer to keep their daughters at home instead of sending them to far-flung schools. Geographical location is one of the factors in the study, and I intend to find out to what extent it affects women's participation in higher education. Policies on gender in higher education in the western world are not uniform in content. Only the relative under-achievement of male students is under discussion in the US and UK (Martino and Meyenn, 2001; Francis and Skelton, 2005), while similar problems of under-achievement are evident in many other countries' report (Nobel and Bradford, 2000; Epstein et al., 2004; Francis and Skelton, 2005; Yates, 2007).

In South Asian countries, the gender gap in higher education is explicitly visible (Brock and Cammish, 1999). Indian women participation in higher education is diversified and changing along with the transformation of their culture, society, industry and trade. Singh (2007) found that the increase of women entering higher education is found at the low- to middle-class level, rather than an increase in enrolment at elite institutions. This is because of their less focus on long professional courses that delay their marriage. Furthermore, socio-economic factors affect students' choice of subject area because caste and the tribal system in

the Indian society mean that few students from the most deprived and marginalised groups can access higher education. However, their representation is better in those states where in recent years higher education for women has been higher encouraged. This is similar to Pakistan, where the socio-economic status of women has a huge impact on their access to higher education. This is because there are very few merit scholarships available for students in universities, and there is no concept of student fee bursaries as in the UK. Thus, higher education is largely restricted to those who can afford to pay for it.

Social ethics are the main reasons behind women's discipline choice and academic achievement because it is precisely those social and ethical norms that deprive women from their free choice of subject choice at schools. Generally, the parents of a young female student would take the decision regarding the academic discipline she will pursue, because they are in charge of the girl's future. Much consideration is placed on the family honour and on the girl's future marriage prospects. Also in India, most of the daughters' future decisions are under parents' consideration, because girls' earnings or outside work is a stigma for family honour. Parents support their unmarried daughters. Education is considered like jewellery (or investment) to utilise if her married life is unsuccessful (Chanana, 2000). Poor parents are always struggling for their daughter education and dowry, they know the significance of their daughter's education, but the scarce finances let them down or to choose one of them. They would, therefore, want to fulfil their primary responsibility to get their daughters married instead of planning for their higher education just as in Pakistani.

Bangladeshi gender issues in education are more or less similar to those in Pakistan. Because such a small number of girls have access to primary education, very few reach higher education. Poverty compels parents to give preference to boys rather than girls for higher education, because boys are the carrier of family lineage and considered as the strength of the family, therefore the society widely regards boys as the future guardians of and bread earners for their parents. High infant mortality encourages a high birth-rate in Bangladesh that reflects the parents' wish to produce enough sons to ensure that at least some of them survive (Brook and Cammish, 1999).

A girl, despite her contribution to domestic work, is regarded as a burden in terms of dowry and as is seen as too transitory part of the family to be worth investment in her education. In some villages all girls over 12 are married (Brock and Cammish, 1999).

Preference for sons is common in most South Asian countries. As Naz et al. (2011:81) argued the patriarchal structure of Pukhtun society assigns men the superior position in different spheres of life. Parents prefer to invest more into males' education as their old age social security is dependent upon the economic ability of their sons. Besides, there is significant misperception regarding women's education—that the investment in educating a girl will not benefit her parents once she gets married (Haq, 2003 cited in Naz et al., 2011). Such kinds of misperception reduce the value of women's education and deprive them of their basic rights.

Analyses of the present position of women in education examine how higher education institutions reflect the social attitudes of the surrounding society. Women tailor their aspirations to serve cultural attitudes and prejudices, which then mould their ambitions to gender-appropriate roles (Kathleen, 2008). Alternatively stated, women in South Asian countries negotiate their gender and academic identities when they engage in higher education.

#### **2.1.11. Women born for Care-giving Roles**

Althusser (1971) analyses the social inequality of education policies due to the belief that a woman's best role is in the family in the west; as mothers and carers because women are considered good carers of family members within the society. In the early seventies, feminist theories had considerable influence on the lives of female academics (David, 2009). Researchers (Kyvik, 1990; Lie, et al., 1994; Sutherland, 2005, cited in Hussain, 1995; Komulainen, 2000; OECD, 2006b) state that a prevailing vision of women's prescribed roles (e.g. as a wife, mother, or care-giver) impedes women from advancing in tough academic and administrative careers. While some researchers (Komulainen, 2000; Cole and Zuckerman, 2004; Coffield and Williamson, 2007) discovered that married life and children affected women's technical efficiency; that might be one of the reasons of over-crowded or male domination in the technical and scientific professions. It would be fascinating to hear Pukhtunkhwah women's opinion of this clash of career and care-giving role. There is lack of female role-models in Pakistani society who have managed their professional careers and family care-giving roles and made a success of both. Women are encouraged to take on caring roles and discouraged from taking on professional ones because all the household duties have been assigned to women, not men. Therefore it is hard for women to manage both responsibilities and do just with them. Most of the successful professional women in the

country belong to the elite or the upper-class, and have more minor responsibilities to their household and children.

According to Quality of Employment Survey (2007), women after marriage do not like to work full time as well as their first priority is their family rather than career. They found it hard to manage their work and family together and make a success of both, while their married men counterparts do not feel they have to stress one identity over the other (Rushing, 2002; Coffield and Williamson, 2007). This is example of developed countries and more independent women, whereas in Pakistani society, women do not have free choice regarding their family or career. As Naz et al. (2011:83) found, women are impeded from advancing at each and every step during the course of their domestic life, professional engagements, and educational careers. The social structure of Pukhtunkhwah manifests the hold of centuries' old customs, traditions and norms that block women's educational advancement and encourage them to adopt care-giver roles.

Furthermore, Smith and Powell (2000), uphold the women perceive that for economic success, they need to reduce their time for family matters. They further added that marriage increases men's wages of while motherhood tends to lessen the wages of women and their presence in the labour force. This is one of the theories of why women are kept away from scientific careers. In a national survey, high school girls reported that they saw scientific careers as incompatible with family (EPI, 2005; Ware and Lee, 2008). This study explores the sampled women's opinions, preferences and planning about their professional careers and care-giving roles, as well as their perceptions of whether this would be a conflict for them in their future lives.

### **2.1.12. The Problems and Prospects of Co-education**

In Pakistan state or public schools are single-sex while all private schools offer co-education settings. Lasser (2007) and Meal (2008) argue that men and women do not necessarily receive equal education just by sitting beside each other. Further, they documented that the attitudes of male administrators and instructors are biased within mixed-gender class room settings. In short, if women achieved equal access to educational institutions, it is clear that their attendance alone will not ensure that they receive a truly equal education and are being equipped to handle the challenges of practical life (Hussain, 1995).

Qureshi and Rarieya (2007) argued that co-education is one of the main impediments to girls' access to school and later on to their higher education particularly in rural areas of Pakistan.

Naz et al. (2011) revealed that the traditional norms of Pukhtunkhwah rural areas discourage women from attending co-educational schools and colleges. Naz et al., (2011: 85) conclude that the custom of patriarchy and male dominance is a deeply rooted phenomenon that is impeding women's education. Furthermore the feudal system in the area, the misinterpretation and negative perception of the common people of society, as well as the *pardah* (veiling and segregation) are the major obstacles for women who want to attend higher educational institutes (Naz et al., 2011: 85). However the above study did not capture the people's attitudes in its theorising: the study itself reinforced patriarchal attitudes and values by the people in existing society.

In Pukhtun society, as said earlier, women's honour is also linked to their immobility; attending school or higher education requires them to go outside their home. Therefore they have to be escorted by a male or female family member, so that parents are often reluctant to allow their daughters to go to far-flung located schools. Religion and culture recommend that girls be isolated from male strangers; under such circumstances, upper-class girls enrol in boarding schools in towns. Distant schools locations and co-education, available facilities for female students and teachers, curriculum and examination policies are among the other school-related factors that can contribute to the Pakistani gender gap in education (Naz, et al., 2011).

In addition, due to cultural restraints, girls are often uncomfortable in co-education settings, and this may have an unfavourable effect on their academic performance. Naz, et al. (2011) examined co-education at the primary and secondary level of education and concluded that women perform and best academic progress is highest in women's only educational environments. This study has immensely important implications for the adoption of co-education or segregated single-sex education in Pakistan. As was mentioned earlier, all the government primary and secondary schools are single-sex except higher education institutes.

Hussain (1995:37) came up with same suggestions in the Pakistani context, recommending a separate women's university for the Punjab; she supported her theories with Sandler (2007) and Lynch, and Lodge (2002), that women found it difficult to elevate their status within a co-educational learning environment. This is a popular demand by women in Pakistan, to have separate women's universities. Although two women's universities and four women's study centres (one in each province) have been established by Pakistani government, opening up more institutions would allow access to higher education for women who are reluctant to go to co-educational universities. However, it is unlikely that existing

sexually integrated colleges and universities will eliminate co-education in order to promote women's education or to avoid the difficulties it generates. Nevertheless, these doubts have stimulated thinking, particularly in re-evaluating the content of the education to which women have gained access. This might be one of the factors which accounts for the low percentage of female participants in higher education. It is worthwhile to explore how co-education affects women's participation in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah.

### **2.1.13. Women and Professional Careers**

Women with a professional career are lacking in Pakistan. We need such role models in our society to revisit the existing male knowledge paradigms that pervade Pakistani society. I agree that women should be given equal representation in this process (Renold, 2005). However, women should change their thinking, first to participate in all academic professions because religion does not put any restrictions on them, and second, that for a smooth running of society, women have to work side by side with their male counterparts. Malik and Courtney (2011) argued that increasing women's access to higher education empowers them to play a greater role as a role-model within the family as well as in the community. They further explored that higher education is one of the empowering tools that liberate women from various traditional and cultural obstacles in Pakistan. According to their findings, higher education strengthened their respondents' resolve towards fulfilling multiple responsibilities in the home and in society (Malik and Courtney, 2011). However this study is taking women's right to higher education further, and is motivated in part by a desire for women's emancipation in the Pukhtunkhwah society.

In most of the countries around the world, academic hierarchies are not randomly selected, but are rather centralised by the official leading government authorities (Hussain, 1995). Academic women complain about lower salary packages, ranks and publication rates, as compared to their male colleagues (Acker and Piper, 1984; Davis and Astin 2000; Baron, 2004; Chamberlain 2008(cited in Hussain, 1995). Lie et al. (1994) suggest that the gender gap is more apparent amongst administrators of institutions of higher education, but in spite of the fact that a good number of women hold administrative positions in some countries, their power of authority is limited (Hussain, 1995). They rarely exert authority that is associated with policy making decisions (Davis and Austin, 2000 and Lie, et al., 2004; Moore, 2007; Bown, 2009).

#### **2.1.14. Concluding Comments**

This chapter has explored the ways in which women are excluded from education and from holding positions of power in several countries and in particular in Pukhtunkhwah. The society under study is male-dominated, where women have limited access to public life. The honour of the family is linked to woman's sexuality, and that encourages her role as a housewife. Women are marginalised in education and the workplace due to a segregated society the 'over-strict' practice of *pardah* culture in Pukhtunkhwah society. Therefore co-education is discouraged at all levels of education in Pukhtun society. The lack of female role-models in Pukhtun society has a key role in blocking women from attaining a higher education and career. Women do not see any women in the society who combine being a good wife with an education and a career. Women generally have to sacrifice one role, which is usually education or career. Furthermore, each of the feminisms discussed here has played a crucial role in 20th- and 21st-century feminist theory and politics, and together they constitute a source of inspiration for future scenarios. I have described the basic exchange between feminism and western philosophy that runs through these feminisms, as well as their relationship to my theoretical framework.

#### **2.1.15. Summary**

This section has given an overview of the issues of gender in higher education within a broader global perspective. Gender inequality is an issue in all areas of life and in every society of the world. The difference is the process and parameters of discrimination which varies from society to society and culture to culture. Different approaches of feminism broaden our understanding regarding the different theories related to gender issues in higher education in different countries. I see the different kind of forces that are silencing women. They remain silenced and that increases their inequality and makes the men more powerful. In this study, I take the unique approach not only to give the Pukhtun women a voice, but to transform their beliefs to defend and fight for themselves by productive, positive arguments with their men. It does not mean they are violating their religion and ethical values. The next section is the contextual background of the study with some critical gender issues and the factors that affect the participation in higher education in Pakistan and particularly in Pukhtunkhwah.

## **2.2. SECTION II**

### **PAKISTAN: AN OVERVIEW AND THE ISSUES OF GENDER**

#### **2.2.1. Introduction**

This section presents the history of education in Pakistan as well as the history of gender relations in Pakistani society. It further discusses the geographical location, population, demography and language with an outline of ethnic and religious demarcation of the people in Pukhtunkhwah. Some critical gender issues regarding women's status in the country with special reference to Pukhtunkhwah are explicated.

#### **2.2.2. Contextual Background**

Pakistan came to existence after the termination of British rule in the Indian subcontinent that partitioned India and Pakistan in 1947. Geographically, Pakistan is bordered by India to the East, Afghanistan and Iran to the West and China to the North while Arabian Sea to the South. The total (land) area of the country is 796,096 square kilometres (PCO, 2005a). Administratively, Pakistan is a federation of four provinces (Pukhtunkhwah, Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab). The provinces are conjoined with the capital city (federal area), the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (PCO, 2005a; see Appendix I and Appendix II for area maps).

Pakistan has a large rural population with a high growth rate. According to the 2009 estimation of Federal Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan's total population is 180,808,096 of which 93,101,700 are male and 87,706,396 are female. The annual population growth rate is 1.8% (2007-2008).

Pukhtunkhwah covers an area of 74,521 square kilometres. The total population of Pukhtunkhwah is approximately 23,971,000 (estimated 2008-09) out of which 11,279,000 are males and 12,693,000 females (FBS, 2009).

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, while English is considered language of the elite class and use as official language in the country. Both Urdu and English are often used in government and business as well as in English medium schools. The overwhelming majority of the population 97% is Muslim, and the remaining 3% belongs to other religions groups such as Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Parses. In Pukhtunkhwah, most of the people are Muslims, and speak the Pushtu/Pukhtu language; therefore they are called

Pushtun/Pukhtuns or Afghans. There are a small number of other local spoken languages such as Urdu, Hindko and Saraiki (PGR, 2008).

### **2.2.3. Education and Literacy**

Pakistan's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 2.2%, slightly more than half of the desired 4%. Pakistan is one of the countries spends the least amount of money on education in all of South Asia. Thus, it caused indicators of educational attainment around the country to be low. The 2006-2007 estimates for literacy were 45.7% for those of 15 years of age and older (59.8% for males and 30.6% for females). The country's rate for enrolment in education for those aged 5 to 24 is 36% (41.2% for males, 30.4% for females), and literacy and enrolment rates tend to be higher in urban areas (FBS, 2009:11).

### **2.2.4. A Brief Historical Summary of Women's Education in the Subcontinent**

Education in the Indian subcontinent was religious and traditional only. In 712AD, Muslims came and brought their Islamic culture and education to India. Education was limited to *madaris* (mosque schools) and mosque-based religious scholars (Heyneman, 2004). The Quran and *Hadiths* were the main curriculum, along with the Arabic and Persian language and literature.

Any spread of education was thus a 'voluntary spontaneous growth' and was confined to metropolitan and urban centres (Qureshi, 1983: 174; cited in Hussain, 1995). Formal education for women was also limited to their native languages and literature and Quran studies. In the absence of official schooling systems, the elite and upper class women had private tuition at home, leaving middle and working class women uneducated. This education system prevailed until the British education system arrived.

Thus education in the subcontinent was initially the privilege of the theocracy and the upper classes. Persian was the language of official business. Structure of learning throughout the Muslim world was substantially identical till it was replaced in 1835 by a decision of the British to launch English education and western learning in India (Hussain, 1995: 47).

The change in the pedagogical structure of the *madaris* divided the people into two groups; in traditionalist and modernist. The former were reluctant to send their women to English (modern) education, as it clashed with their culture and religion. Local languages lost their status: for example, Persian and Hindi were the only ones to be selected as elective subjects in the curriculum (Qureshi, 1983).

After the downfall of the Mughal Empire in 1857, Muslims were treated as an insignificant ethnic group. They were isolated culturally and religiously from all economic, social, cultural and educational developments. Muslim educational infrastructure was profoundly theological, while the English education was more secular and based on modern science. Education for Muslims was religious education only, such as Quranic learning, translation and explanation, jurisprudence, logic, theology, metaphysics and medicine. Mosques were the centres of instructions and of literary activity. The *maktab* (school) or *madaris* sometimes hired houses to use as schools because they lacked the funds to erect proper buildings. People were reluctant to use the English education system, as they considered it to be the preaching of Christianity rather than education (Qureshi, 1983; Quddus, 2008).

However, a Muslim thinker Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan, who lived from 1818-1889, realised that the Muslims could not overthrow British rule in the near future. Muslims' social and political development was very limited at the time, because of their isolation from the English education system. Therefore, other Muslim thinkers concluded that Muslims should join the English education system. Gradually, Muslims attained an English education, which in turn amplified their socio-political awareness. Allama Muhammad Iqbal (national poet) presented the idea of Pakistan by joining the Muslim majority areas of the Indian subcontinent. His dream was fulfilled by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who politically mobilised the Muslims under the banner of Muslim League. Their struggle for independence succeeded in 1947 in the newly-formed nation of Pakistan.

Women's education brought feminism into the politics of the Indian subcontinent. The national cause of freedom provided a joint venture to the Hindu and Muslim women first for their fundamental social and legal rights, and then for their right to education. The partition of the subcontinent was a reaction against the British education policy, and was part of the new wave of consciousness for national freedom that drew the women in Pakistan as well as in Pukhtunkhwah out to struggle side by side with their male counterparts (see Khattak, 2003 for further details of Pukhtun women's role in the freedom struggle of Pakistan). Although women's participation in Pukhtunkhwah was very limited when compared to the rest of the country, it was not insignificant (Shah, 1998). Interestingly, in the freedom struggle, men allowed women in this conservative society to support them without considering it a violation of cultural and religious norms such as *purdah* (veil) (Khattak, 2003). Hussain, (2001:49) argues that sociologists wonder how much it was due to the 'need of nationalistic movements rather than an acceptance of the oppressed state of women'.

Thus, women's education was not given any importance because of the non-availability of Muslim schools as well as negative propaganda against western education. This blocked the way for women to actively participate in social and educational change in society. There were very limited opportunities for women's teaching and learning.

Veiling in the public and private sphere was a religious and cultural tradition of India. Changes occurred with the introduction of western education, which commenced the redefinition of the traditional role of women in the subcontinent, but Muslims were still reluctant to enrol their daughters in English schools. The right to education was granted to women in 1819 by the East India Company (Phillips, 1940); in 1820, girls' schools were established, which paved the way for women's higher education (Qureshi, 1983).

Western education came to the Pukhtunkhwah rather late in comparison to the other parts of India, owing to a number of factors. It was many years after the British conquest of the Pukhtunkhwah that modern education, which was in fact 'western education', spread among the people. Of course, the first attempts in this direction had been made by the Christian Missionaries too, but western education had no immediate effects on Pukhtunkhwah society because of the strong hold of traditional norms. The status of women did not improve much with the opening of the Pukhtunkhwah society to modernity. According to the Census Report of 1911, the proportion of the female population in Pukhtunkhwah was 817 women per 1000 males (Census Report of India, 1912). It reached 843 females per 1000 males in 1931 (Census Report, 1931). Literate males of all religions were 58 per 1000 and literate females were only 6 per 1000 (Census Report of India, 1931). Interestingly, only one Muslim female out of 1000 in the Frontier was able to read and write.

The unjust partition plan gave an unstable education infrastructure to Pakistan. Most of the famous educational institutes fell within the boundaries of the territory of India: Pakistan received only two of undivided India's 21 universities. One was located in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the other in West Pakistan, in Lahore (Hussain, 1995). In 1947, Pakistan possessed a total of 83 colleges, 3 engineering colleges, 108 teacher training schools and 71 assorted technical, industrial and agricultural institutions (Iqbal, 2000; Hussain, 2002; Qureshi and Rarieya, 2007 in Hussain, 1995). These education institutes were very few in number, so the allocation of places in them went to men rather than women. Most of the institutes were located in Lahore (Punjab), and therefore very few women from far flung areas could afford to travel there for education. The legacy of 65 years is still prevalent in Pukhtunkhwah, as distance is still one of the major factors affecting women's access to

education. Pukhtun women were also discouraged from obtaining a contemporary education, and the cultural preference still leans more towards religious education.

### **2.2.5. The Language of Instructions**

The education system of Pakistan (for full details see Table 1 in the Introduction) uses two languages as medium of instruction, English and Urdu. All the private schools are English-medium schools, where all the subjects are taught in English; in government or state schools, Urdu is the language of instruction while English is taught as core subject in the translation method of teaching. Using English as the language of instruction is frequently criticised by the educationists because only the elite or upper-class has access to these English-medium schools. English medium schools provide better opportunities to become proficient in the English language. This gives their students access to western education centres as well as the potential for increased social and economic mobility (Qureshi, 1983 in Hussain, 1995). Students who are taught in Urdu at school struggle when they get to universities where the medium of instruction is English. In addition, most of the reference books of higher education are available in English only. As a result, only those students who have a good English language background can hope to obtain degree level qualifications. There are also *Dini-madaris* (Islamic Schools) for free Islamic-oriented education. They also provide free accommodations and food in the mosques or in affiliated *madaris*. Poor families prefer Islamic *madaris* because of their free facilities and incentive where government schools are not available in the locality. The medium of instruction of these schools is usually the regional language. However, while the *Dini-madaris* are an important aspect of the education sector in Pakistan, they are not worth considering in detail, as this study concerns government and private schools students and Islamic Studies is a core subject up to BA/BSc in the government and private schools.

Proficiency in English is an important requirement for admission into Pakistani and foreign universities, as these schools require prospective students to pass competitive tests like the Scholastic Aptitude Test, Test of English as a Foreign Language and the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). These tests require a proficient command of the English language. When sitting these tests, students who have been educated in English have a considerable advantage over those who have been educated in Urdu (Hussain, 1995: 53).

English medium institutes are further divided into elite and non-elite English medium schools; however, the discussion about the elite English medium schools was only about who borrowed their curriculum from Oxford or Cambridge textbooks. They set good standards of education provision for the country. Indeed these institutions are the most expensive in terms of their fee structures. The Urdu medium schools have minimal admissions fees and teach only in the national language. Their educational standards cannot compete with the English medium schools because of the low standard vernacular provided by the Textbook Boards of the Provinces in the country. They do not upgrade the curriculum according to the children's needs; sometimes parents and children study the same syllabus in the schools. Thus, Urdu medium schools give more emphasis on rote memorisation instead of creativity or understanding the concepts of a subject matter.

This linguistic complexity is fostering and reproducing the class system in society, where one school system produces high class executives and the other lower class employees. Therefore, attaining education is very dependent on the economic status of the individual's family. Pakistan has a very low literacy rate as compared to the other developing South Asian countries, because of the allocation of low GDP (2.2%) and rarely produced up-standard material for the government schools.

This study considers whether the chosen language of instruction has an effect on women's ability to access opportunities for higher education. How do students from Urdu-medium schools cope with courses taught in English at university? Do they find any difficulty coping with these courses at university level? These questions are explored by this study.

Historically, education in Pakistan has developed as a privilege of the theocracy and the upper classes; a trend that has left visible imprints on the current educational milieu, class and the theocracy still maintaining a prominent stake in the politics and evolution of the process (Rehman, 2006: 89).

Rehman further argued that this elite class had a better chance with the English language, which they adopted as a culture too, to differentiate and superior them over Urdu-medium or traditional (*Dini-madaris*) stakeholders. Above all, this is the kind of cultural capital which has snob value and constitutes a class identity marker (Rehman, 2006). Furthermore, this study holds up the Marxist feminists' theory regarding education, because the education system in Pakistan is also cultivating and reproducing a class system in society by its dual language of instruction. Lower-middle and working-class people cannot afford

access to those high-fee English medium schools. Therefore the students from the working-class (male and female) are having learning difficulties and are hardly coping in higher education institutes.

### **2.2.6. The Social/Economic Class System in Pakistan**

A social or economic class in my study is relatively a homogeneous group of people in Pukhtun society. There are similar characteristics in terms of education and different income and occupations. The categorization of social or economic classes should be: upper, middle and working social or economic classes.

The upper social class are generally the high income classes of the society. Most of the highly paid professions are top-class businessmen, management leadership and entrepreneurs. They live in wealthy areas of the country; money is not a problem for them, and they are therefore educated in foreign countries in institutions like Oxford or Cambridge universities. They represent 2 percent of the total society and approximately 3.7 million people. They have 60 to 65 percent of the wealth the country (FBS, 2009).

The middle social economic class income is more modest; their houses are not too big and they cannot afford huge houses in expensive areas. They are 28 percent of the total population, 53 to 54 million approximately (FBS, 2009). Their occupations are small businessmen, middle class management, and low-ranking government officers.

The working social economic class occupy the lowest-paid professional jobs of the society. They cannot afford to build a one or two bedroom house with their limited household resources, etc. They are 70percent of the total population of Pakistan (FBS, 2009). They consist of small shopkeepers, skilled or semi-skilled and unskilled workers, lower ranked government staff (peons, drivers), and poor farmers. This social class system is one of the causes of women's lack of participation in education. Marxist feminism observes women's oppression linked to the division of class system within the society (See Section I: Marxist/socialist Feminism). This division of society into different social and economic classes has an immense impact on women's development. Marxist/socialists criticise education as an important means to maintain capitalism and patriarchal relations in western and eastern societies, and Pukhtunkhwah is one of the examples of capitalist women's oppression.

The divisions between the social and economic classes are flexible and difficult to demarcate. Since it is impossible to draw clear lines between the classes, this has resulted in an imprecise depiction of the class system in this study. The sample women's fathers' income classifies them by economic class, not by social class as the social class included so many other variables such as residential areas and living standards. The place of residence criteria was valuable, but it was not included in the main body of this study because a British reader cannot verify them. Some upper class people in Pakistan prefer to live in their big, old family houses while some upper middle class people reside in luxurious bungalows in the cities.

### **2.2.7. The Structure of Higher Education**

Higher education in Western countries is structured slightly differently than higher education in Pakistan, because BA and BSc. degrees are part of college education, although exams for these are given by the university but are not considered part of higher education. The University Grants Commission's (UGC) allocation of funds to degree colleges is another problem that affects student efficiency (Mazari, 2007). Many of the degree colleges are in miserable condition because of poor infrastructure, lack of equipment, furniture and modern library books and laboratories. Student dormitories are also poorly maintained and insecure.

In such situations, parents do not encourage their daughters to enter higher education, although, in contrast, they send their sons to private colleges or other semi-government colleges with good facilities to other cities or provinces (Mazari, 2007; Khan, 2007; World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, the diversity of option subjects and different subject combinations that are available at colleges produces un-economic class sizes, which have a negative effect on teacher and student efficiency. Too few teachers for too many subject options divides the students into small groups, which then have to be taught by a large number of faculty members. This adds to the financial and administrative muddle already in operation in higher education (Khan, 2007:13).

Moreover, the duration of the BA/BSc degree course (two years) has come under continual criticism. According to Isani and Virk (2007) and the World Bank (2007), the National Educational Policy of Pakistan (1998) envisaged extending it to four years to keep with the international standard. However, this proposal has not been fully implemented in the country because of low education budget and increased cost of studies for lower and middle-income groups (Isani and Virk, 2007). Nevertheless most of the private universities have

introduced four years bachelor's degrees on the semester system although most of the government and semi-government universities follow the old, conventional examination system.

In Pakistan, there are seven gender studies centres at the moment. It is argued that these centres are lacking trained faculty and funding. Gender as a subject is not fully introduced in the academia yet the nation needs fully mastered human resources. The subject is interdisciplinary in nature, exploring major human endeavour through a gendered lens (Safdar, 2012). The academia and the society have foggy perceptions about the concept of gender. It will take time to digest gender as a subject. The Ministry of Women and Development is working ineffectively in the field of research on gender and education due to their lack of trained staff and funds (Safdar, 2012).

### **2.2.8. The Concept of Women-only Universities**

The issue of having a separate university for women has been a burning issue for a long time. The country's religious class and most of the political parties' manifestos recommended this for the country, particularly for places like Pukhtunkhwah. After a long struggle by women activists, Fatima Jinnah University for Women was founded in Punjab in 1995. Following this example, each province of the country established at least one women's university and one women's medical college. There are also a considerable number of post-graduate women colleges or some universities have women separate campuses. The Frontier Women's University (Pukhtunkhwah) was founded in 2005. A temporary campus for the university has been provided in Frontier Women College. Women's universities provide segregated educational opportunities to female students in the region to increase women's participation in higher education. However as compared to the other government (co-educational) universities, their numbers are not sufficient for the needs of the female population (Naz, et al., 2011). Secondly they are mostly located in far flung urban areas; therefore, only urban women have access to them. The Frontier Women University in Pukhtunkhwah is facing the criticism that they offer very limited subjects for MA/MSc and MPhil/PhD levels, and the buildings are not spacious enough to accommodate a large number of students as well as administration staff. This study will explore whether or not the establishment of separate women universities can increase women participation in higher education.

### **2.2.9. The Complexities of Masculinity and Femininity in Pakistan**

The following is a brief list of some of the critical issues of gender inequality in Pakistan with a special reference to Pukhtunkhwah.

#### **2.2.9.1. Poverty: A Women's face in Pakistan**

Economic growth in the country is not strong enough to reduce the poverty of the masses in any serious way. The number of absolute poor has increased from 19 million in 1960 to 49 million in 2005 (UNDP, 2010). Gender analysis of poverty is very limited because of the limited amount gender-specific data available. Poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban areas of the country; three quarters of people live below the poverty line (UNDP, 2010). ADB (2000:7) mentioned that 'feminisation of poverty is a global phenomenon and poverty in Pakistan has a woman's face'. Women are poorer than men and are in more vulnerable positions because of their dependency on men. There is inequality in the distribution of household resources among the male and female members of family. Women's access to economic and productive resources is very limited, and they also have very unequal access to education, health, and other social services (ADB, 2000). Pukhtunkhwah rural women help their family men in agricultural labour. Urban women have some sort of liberty to study and work (within cultural limitations), but they are not exempted from their household responsibilities—they have to manage both at once. Poverty decreases both male and female access to education (Aslam, 2007). Therefore, an attempt is made in this study to explore the influence of poverty on the women's lives in general and their access to education in particular; how poverty becomes a factor that hinders female participation in higher education.

#### **2.2.9.2. Socio-cultural Imprisonment**

The patriarchal structures in Pukhtunkhwah are stronger in the rural and tribal areas. The local customs and traditions are institutionalised towards male domination. The rural character is predominately uneducated and therefore patriarchal control of women in Pukhtunkhwah is stronger than in the rest of the country. Women's oppression varies across different economic classes and in rural and urban settings. A woman has limited power of choice over her marriage, education or work. She is bought and sold like a commodity in marriage contracts. It is indeed a dilemma that these socio-cultural factors shape male and female roles in Pukhtun society.

Although Islam is often blamed for shaping gender ideology in the country, the class divisions prevailing amongst the tribal traditions further institutionalises the subordination of women (ADB, 2000). Therefore, a recurring theme through this study is that the specific form of the culturalisation of Islam in Pukhtunkhwah restricts women's access to education, and women's rights in general, more severely than in other parts of Pakistan.

Bourdieu's (1999) theory of social and culture reproduction is a sociological term referring to describes it a 'process which sustains or perpetuates characteristics of a given social structure or tradition over a period of time (Bourdieu, 1999: 37)'. Cultural reproduction transfers the existing cultural values and norms from generation to generation (David, 1997; McDonald, 1980).

Cultural reproduction refers to the mechanisms by which continuity of cultural experience is sustained across time which results (though not unproblematically) in social reproduction or the process of transferring or reproducing aspects of society (such as class, again, not unproblematically) from generation to generation (David, 1997: 119).

Cultural reproduction always manages to take place through hidden schemes and curricula. The society adapts cultural norms according to their needs and transmits certain aspects of behaviour to the next generation (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). 'This interaction between individuals resulting in the transfer of accepted cultural norms, values, and information is accomplished through a process known as socialisation (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:45). An attempt is made in this study to explore this social and cultural reproduction in Pukhtunkhwah society and its influence on women's higher education.

In Pakistan, women's socialisation and social values are negatively interpreted by the society. A female will not endeavour to be a provider for her family, because it is the social and religious responsibility of men to do this. However Islam does not stop or discourage a woman from working if she can spare sometime to raise her children and to comfort her husband. However uneducated parents do not encourage their daughter to work. They want to see her as a good wife and daughter-in-law. Educated parents, on the other hand, put their efforts into getting their daughters an education to equip them to handle future financial problems. Thus parental education and parental control are two variables that will be tested through the sample group to explore causes of family encouragement and discouragement with regard to women's education and work.

### **2.2.9.3. The Dilemma of Social Security**

Violence against women is the most powerful mechanism used by family, society, and state to silence voices of resistance to the existing gender-related social order (UNIFEM, 2005: 13). Such violence has prevailed in South Asian societies for centuries, and is the basis of unequal power relations between men and women. Pakistani society gives authority over the woman to the man; this is a misinterpretation of the Quranic concept of '*qawamoon*' (this literally means 'active involvement or role to support family women'). Pakistani society essentially allows the violation of gender human rights. The different forms of the violence against women in Pakistan include physical and mental torture, murder and honour killing, sexual harassment and rape, the kidnapping and trafficking of women, and forced prostitution (UNIFEM, 2005: 15, cited in ADB, 2000). However the report further says that it is difficult to assess these violent incidents because of the missing details; also, since the honour of the family is involved, a majority of such incidents are not reported to police.

Violence in Pukhtun society is hardly recognised as it is deep-rooted in the culture of Pukhtunkhwah. Such domestic violence occurs in every class of society. Slapping, hitting, and kicking, and even murder are some common forms of domestic violence. Since society, police and law enforcement agencies view domestic violence as a private matter, it goes unnoticed until it takes the extreme forms of murder or attempted murder (UNIFEM, 2005: 15). Domestic violence takes place in approximately 80% of the households in the country (World Bank, 2002; WDRW, 2003). Women fail to report these incidents of violence due to their lack of education, unawareness of their rights, and fear of repercussion and social exclusion. This fear is one of the causes of parents' reluctance regarding women's higher education—that their daughter will suffer in society—so they react over-protectively, taking measures such as not letting her outside of the house. Although higher education will empower women to take defensive measures against crimes, of domestic violence and rape etc. Thus higher education would be a possible preparation for women's future challenges.

According to official statistics, one woman is raped every six hours in Pakistan (WDRW, 2003, cited in ADB, 2000). The report further says, marital rape is not considered a crime in Pakistani law, because the marital relationships between a husband and wife is a private matter, which often means that in practice, it is decided by the man. This means that women have no formal right over their own sexuality. As a result of tradition and culture, it is justified to claim that women can easily be exchanged—bought or sold—as a commodity;

this is called *swarra* in Pukhtunkwah. Another such practice is, 'marriage to the Quran', which is when a woman is forced into a marriage contract (*Nikkah*) with the Quran. This means that she is considered married and not allowed to marry a man, rather like a Roman Catholic nun, who is considered to be married to God. A difference is that where this tradition is observed within Islamic societies, as in rural areas of Sindh Province, Pakistan, women are forced into this 'marriage'. Those women are unaware of their rights and they are silent due to the honour of their men and family.

There is no support for women against male's violence. The government constructed *darul-amaans* (shelters) are only 13 in the country (FBS, 2008; UNIFEM, 2005). 'The living conditions in these shelters reinforce women's subordination and oppression by establishing control over their sexuality and mobility instead of providing them with a supportive environment where they can rebuild their own lives' (UNIFEM, 2005:76). Women's economic dependency makes them vulnerable, so that they cannot protect themselves from being victims of violence. The legal system of Pakistan does not encourage women to apply for legal support, and the high costs and delays of legal action further discourage women survivors from seeking justice. Women's lack of education leaves them at the mercy of men and society's social structure. Malik and Courtney (2011: 31) maintain that women who gain access to higher education and afterwards enter employment experience a reduced amount of violence directed against them. They can manage their rights within the strong cultural and traditional values of society.

#### **2.2.9.4. Disparity in Socio-economic Status**

Women in Pakistan have restricted access to their economic resources. Rural women are involved in the agricultural sector, and a good number of women in urban areas are working as domestic labour, running family businesses and doing other non-formal economic activities, but as such their presence is invisible (Patel, 2001). Women's participation in serious economic activities is neither encouraged nor appreciated; in most cases, the country statistics do not even report it (Nasira, 2000; Cook, 2007).

Economically Pakistan is an underdeveloped country. It is suffering from decades of internal political and economic instability. The country's economy relies on foreign aid. Women work largely in the agricultural sector, but they are unskilled labour: they have no proper training to use mechanical or technological agricultural aids. Clerical, secretarial and teaching jobs are considered suitable for women, so women can be seen as typists,

secretaries, librarians, teachers and receptionists in urban areas while in rural areas women's preference is to join teaching jobs in segregated workplaces, because only these are considered to be respectable in Pukhtunkhwah. Women are professionally represented more in health and education than any other sector; constituting 30% of the teachers and 20% of the doctors in the urban areas (PGR, 2008). Nurses and health workers are usually women. The percentage of women in non-traditional professions (management, executive, industries, law and commerce) is critically low in Pakistan.

Inequality in economic participation is a major factor explored by this study. How does it affect the economic and family status of women? To what extent does it have influence on their decisions about higher education? What sort of reactions do they face from their families? Do economically sound families have easy access to higher education?

Together with the fundamental socio-cultural bias in favour of males, the economic factor, especially in terms of grinding poverty and hunger, is probably the most influential in adversely affecting female participation in education, especially in rural areas (Aslam, 2007:np).

In such harsh economic circumstances, parents are hardly willing to send their daughters to school because their parents need to buy books, uniforms and other resources while on the other hand they will lose vital help at home and on the land (Brook and Cammish, 1999).

In most cases, the contribution of females is unpaid and they may have little or no experience of handling of money, which further reduces their status and power, but increases their vulnerability. Because of the patriarchal and patrilocal predominance, investment in a girl's schooling is considered wasteful since it benefits the family into which a girl marries rather than her own (Brock and Cammish, 1999:37).

Aslam and Kingdon (2010) explored the household expenditure in Pukhtunkhwah of families with children aged 5-25 and found that they spent more on boys (4.5%) as compared to girls (1.6%). They further argue that the elite and upper classes invest in their women's education but preference is always given to their daughter's marriage as soon they get a suitable proposal. Vocational education in the country is very weak and under-valued (Aslam and Kingdon, 2010).

In other words, the men of the Pukhtunkhwah society could not survive on their own; they survive on the invisible work and support of their women. The upper classes demonstrate a range of values and attitudes, ranging from the highly conservative rural aristocracy and the urban absentee landlords to the industrialists (Aslam and Kingdon, 2010).

The elite and upper classes are strongly influenced by the west and they can easily acquire education in English private schools as well as travel abroad. Most of these women do not observe *purdah* and are allowed free access to the mixed-gendered public sphere.

Thus the variations in class in women's life opportunities in Pakistan are due to their class and geographical location. Tribal and rural traditions mean women from urban, upper and middle classes have greater access to development opportunities (Heyneman, 2004) and these classes have easy access to education, health, and income-generation in the public sphere. In the words of Brock and Cammish, (1999: 37) 'the socio-economic status of parents seems to be the crucial factor in deciding whether girls go to school/college/university or not. It is poverty, which is the main hurdle'. This study anticipated the results of Brock and Cammish findings through its sample in Pukhtunkhwah.

#### **2.2.9.5. Injustice in Education**

Women's educational opportunities are limited as compared to men in Pakistan. Statistics of women's enrolment are significantly lower than men's enrolment at all levels of education, with rural and urban divisions in the country. Furthermore gender disparities are very strong within the provinces. Pukhtunkhwah performance is particularly poor with its pitiable female literacy rate (ADB, 2000; MoEGP, 2002b; Ahmad and Sajjad, 2003). This is the case even though girls' education can give a higher rate of return than any other investment (Ahmad and Sajjad, 2003).

However, the literacy rate in Pakistan is lower than the other developing countries of South Asia. The reasons could be there are inadequate educational institutions in the country as well as inadequate access to them. Investment in a girl's education is advantageous in a long run for her financial independence and security, poor infrastructure, the absence of basic facilities, and insecure educational settings make parents reluctant to send their daughters there for education.

To remove these supply-side blockages, unwavering support and coordination between all stakeholders (politicians, bureaucrats, government departments, planners, implementers and community organizations) is required (Isani and Virk, 322).

Pakistan's educational policies since independence aspired to increase the enrolment of girls in educational institutions, but poor financial and social investments stopped the policy from being properly implemented, hence, the horrendous state in which the deprived women

of Pakistan find themselves (Ahmad and Sajjad, 2003). Gender indicators of inequality in education can be found in the following table. It shows some extent of the gender inequality in enrolment, teaching staff members and student-teacher ratios.

**Table 2: Data sheet showing number, enrolment (in thousands) teaching staff and student/teacher ratio (students per teacher)**

Type	1999-00	200-01	2001-02	2002-2003
Number of Primary Schools (Total)	162.5	147.7	149.1	150.8
Female	58.7	42.9	43.5	43.9
Enrolment in Primary Schools (Total)	19148	17135	17529	18220
Female	2044	6893	7167	7519
Teachers in Primary Schools (Total)	366.4	408.9	413.9	433.5
Female	127.2	183.6	183.5	191.7
Students Teachers Ratio	52.3	41.9	42.4	42
Teacher per School (Total)	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.8
Teacher per School (Female)	2.2	4.3	4.2	4.4
Student per School	117.8	116	117.6	120.8
Percentage Of Female Teachers	34.7	44.9	44.3	44.2
Number of Middle Schools (Total)	18.4	25.5	26.8	28
Enrolment in Middle Schools (Total)	4112	3759	3821	3918
Female	1615	1705	1506	1551
Teachers in Middle Schools (Total)	91.5	209.6	230.1	238.3
Female	44.3	127.8	139.3	145.8
Student Teacher	44.9	17.9	16.6	16.6
Teachers per School (Total)	5	8.2	8.6	8.4
Teachers per School (Female)	5.5	21.7	22.1	22.4
Student per School	223.5	147.4	142.6	139.9
Percentage of Female Teachers	48.4	61	60.5	61.7
Number of High Schools (Total)	12.6	14.8	15.1	15.6
Female	4.6	2.8	2.8	2.8
Enrolment in High Schools (Total)	1726	1565	1574	1589
Female	653	676	644	658
Teachers in High Schools (Total)	155.7	260.2	270.2	278
Female	52.2	125.3	126.1	132

Student Teacher Ratio	11.1	6	5.8	5.7
Teachers per School (Total)	12.4	17.6	17.9	17.8
Teachers per School (Female)	11.3	44.8	45	47.1
Student per School	137	105.7	104.2	101.9
Percentage of Female Teachers	33.5	48.2	46.7	47.5

Source: quoted from FBS (2008), Pakistan Demographic Survey 2008

This study explores women's perceptions of the role of education in their lives and particular their perceptions of their opportunities. The difficulties that prevent women from enrolling in and completing education are accessibility, lack of resources, a lack of female teachers in rural areas, poor teaching quality and a lack of training opportunities are widespread. The organisation of schools, colleges and universities in terms of the daily and seasonal imperatives of local economies usually renders them dysfunctional, and the curriculum is often unattractive in instrumental terms (Brock and Cammish, 1999:47). At university level, accessibility is a real problem regarding its locations and buildings, high fee structure and course difficulty are the major problems.

#### **2.2.10. Islam, Gender and Education**

Muslims of the subcontinent adopted traditional and cultured Islam. Therefore their Islam is mostly influenced by the local cultures. So it is important to examine the socio-religious and societal structure of the gender dynamics. Islam advocates the liberty of women and gives women the right to own and inherit property, to marry of their own free will, to divorce if they so desire, to obtain formal education or to make decisions about their lives (Chaudhry, 2001). However, men have to be involved in women's affairs as supporters or *Wali* (the most protecting friend), and in a household the final authority is vested in the males of the family (Karim, 2003, Ali, 2000, Silvie, 2004). This is because men and women are recognised as being physically different and their nature is considered to be biologically determined (Chaudhry, 2001). Men and women belong to two separate worlds; public affairs outside home are allocated to men while care-giving is the responsibility of women. Moreover, a woman is entitled half a man's share of her father's and one third of her husband's property.

Many critics such as Sabah (2000) Bullock (2002) Silvie (2004) Ahmad (2006) fail to understand that Islam discriminates against a woman's rights: such as inheritance, education

and work. In spite of their devotion to the spiritual text of the Quran, some Islamic feminists (Marsot, 2006; Karmi, 2006) incorrectly interpret it as viewing women to be child-like creatures who have to be provided for economically. According to them, the testimony of women cannot be given equal weight to that of men. This can be seen clearly in the context of women's status with regard to divorce, the custody of children, polygamy and inheritance—all these favour men (Marsot, 2006: 57). The traditional Islamic position is expounded by El-Nimr (2006: 59) who believes that the Quran contains Allah's words; we do not need to reinterpret its meaning. She shows that, compared to other societies at the time (the Indian and the French, for example, in the sixteenth century), Islam did empower women and give them rights, and from this point she argues that since women were better off under Islam during the Golden Age, they should still enjoy rights and privileges. This is because Islam is both 'divine' and 'evolutionary'. In other words, the divine words of the Quran incorporate an evolutionary quality making it appropriate at every point in history. It is a practical divine book for all time and all human races (Moghissi, 2007:59).

Islam also empowered women economically by giving them a share in inheritance and the right of *Haq Mehr*<sup>9</sup> and maintenance<sup>10</sup>, but the culture of Pakistani society does not encourage women to go to court over their rights (Malik and Courtney, 2011). It is considered an embarrassment for the family and a degradation of the family honour. However, for the purpose of this study, education and the Islamic right of inheritance were two selected imperative variables to be explored in the sample of students. Both education and the right of inheritance were strongly recommended by the Quran and *Sunnah* for women's empowerment; to make them independent and to make decisions about their own lives. However, *Haq Mehr* and maintenance were not discussed with the sample, because

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<sup>9</sup>*HaqMehr* is a legal right of the wife to be paid by her husband. This right arises out of the *NikahNama* (marriage contract) between husband and wife. This dowry can be in the shape of cash, gold, land, jewelry etc. As per the legal conditions of *NikahNama*, *HaqMehr* is an essential requisite of marriage and is always due to the wife irrespective of the fact that it has been mentioned in the *NikahNama* or not. If *HaqMehr* is not fixed in the *NikahNama*, it is known as '*Mehrumisl*', in that case the court will determine its value keeping in view the status of wife and the *Mehr* given to her close female relatives. If *HaqMehr* is mentioned fixed in the *NikahNama*, it could be of two types: A) '*Mehrmoajjal*' i.e. prompt *HaqMehr* which is given to the wife at the time of *Nikah*; or B) '*Mehrghairmoajjal*' i.e. deferred *HaqMehr* which is given to the wife later. If nothing is mentioned in the *NikahNama*, then *Mehr* is presumed to be *Mehrmoajjal*. (Quoted from: <http://pakistanjurist.com/marriage-divorce>)

<sup>10</sup> Under the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961, a husband is legally obliged to maintain his wife 'adequately' while the marriage exists. Maintenance includes all necessary expenses for mental and physical well-being, for example appropriate food, clothing, lodging and other similar expenses. This obligation on the part of husband remains intact even in case of separation, provided the wife has not separated unilaterally. In the case of divorce, the husband will be obliged to maintain his wife throughout the *iddat* period. A wife can enforce maintenance rights either through a family court or relevant union council. (Quoted from: <http://pakistanjurist.com/marriage-divorce>)

most of the sample women were unmarried so it was not relevant. There is a pragmatic philosophy behind each and every command of Allah in the Quran because He created all human beings, He knew how His most superior creature will act or re-act in social life. Therefore, this study attempts to highlight religious and cultural norms regarding women's access to higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, where culture is more dominant than the religion.

Islam encourages rational and logical thinking and problem solving. The Islamic jurisprudence based on four sources –the first two; Quran and *Hadiths*, trace back to the historical records of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) time and the latter two; *Ijtihad* and *Ijma* are founded on the interpretation of gradual development of science and technology of Islamic early centuries (Kamali, 2002). The Quran is a primary source of Islam but, when we cannot understand a solution of the problem or guidance in the hidden words of the Quran, the second source is the *Hadith*. The third source, *ijtihad* (interpretation) is only allowed when both of the former sources have failed to give a solution of the problem. Finally, *ijma* (consensus), where a group of people accept an opinion about a specific matter is the fourth source. 'Muslim authorities tended to rely on their own opinions to establish their interpretation of what a prescribed law should be for any given situation not founded on the Quran, a practice known as *ra'y*'(Kamali, 2002: 45). Imam Ash-Shafi'i, a great jurist, recommended the Prophet (peace be upon him) practice, known as *qiyas* (analogy), to derive interpretations of the Quran or *Hadiths* in similar situations. So, Muslim societies follow one of these schools of thoughts in practice.

Under Islam, it is equally mandatory for both men and women to gain knowledge. The Quran clearly makes no discrimination of gender in attaining education. Islam indeed gives preference to a knowledgeable person over an ignorant one:

Are those equal? Those who know and those who do not know, it is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition (The Quran, 39:9)

This is why the people who truly reverence God are those who are knowledgeable. God is Almighty, Forgiving (The Quran, 35:28).

The search for knowledge is binding on every Muslim man and women (The Quran, 17:27).

Similarly the Prophet (peace be upon him) said on one occasion,

that knowledge is a lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it then he has a right to it. (Sunan At-Tirmidhi 2687).

A believer could be a man or woman; there is no gender discrimination in seeking knowledge. However Muslim societies are influenced by their previous culture rather than Islam. The virtues of knowledge are clear from the following *Hadith* as well

If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge (Abu Darda, Kitab Al-Ilm, 25: 3634).

The knowledgeable people are appreciated more than those without knowledge. The Quran repeatedly commands Muslims to understand this book and to understand all other contemporary knowledge, because it has all been created by Allah *Subhana wa ta'ala* (Glory to Him, the Exalted). Therefore it is absolutely possible to pursue equality in Muslims' society regarding contemporary education by following the truthful Islam.

### **2.2.11. Concluding Comments**

The issues of gender in Pakistan include poverty, economic dependency, lack of a social security system and a poor education system. Gender empowerment is limited to slogans, as women's access to education and her rights of Islamic inheritance and *Haq Mehr* (bride money) are altered by cultural discourses.

Pakistani women are facing inequality in nearly every sphere of life and domains of power such as economic, legal, political, socio-cultural, educational status. Male control in women's lives is a social reality, since males constitute the central authority in all fields. Care-giving and household roles are the main responsibilities of a woman rather than a man. Men are the bread earners for the entire family and have a right to make decisions about their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. Social and economic status plays a vital role in the decision making power of women. However, the percentage of women working in professions associated with the upper classes is not necessarily higher than of women occupying working-class roles.

### **2.2.12. Summary**

This section addressed critical gender issues in Pakistan in general and particularly in the Pukhtunkhwah context. It examines the main structure of the education system with its gender perspectives and how the characteristics and parameters of gender discrimination are

created in different domains of the society. In these domains, the most powerful source of discrimination is in education, where problems start from a very early stage (primary education) and continue all the way to the top (higher education). Religion is misinterpreted as being oppressive to women and restricting their education and work opportunities, while in fact it encourages them. These incorrect assumptions are addressed in this study. Chapter III outlines the methodological paradigm of this study and research tools and procedure of data collection.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter identifies the key issues that emerged from the main research questions and develops a methodological framework for the overall study. In the course of reading for this study I have been greatly inspired by Nelofar Pourzand (2003) '*A tapestry of resistance: Afghan educated refugee women in Pakistan: `agency`, identity and education in war and displacement`*', Gayle Letherby (2003) '*Feminist Research in Theory and Practice`*' and Neelum Hussain (1995) '*Perception of female higher educational opportunities in Lahore, Pakistan`*'. They inspired my writing script; I followed their style of writing and ideas generally, yet particularly in this chapter, I start with my personal journey of transformation from a common girl to a university student. This is because it has had a deep impact on the selection of the research questions, contexts and participants. Hussain's study encouraged me to pursue her research process in a different area (North West, Khyber Pukhtunkhwah) of Pakistan, on different sample women in rural and urban settings. Her fascinating study presented women of another urban and developed part (Lahore) of Pakistan. So, our studies would provide conclusions and rural women as well as the East and North West women's voices of Pakistan. My Feminist epistemology is a core of my study, so I discuss it with some of the limitations of conducting research in Pukhtunkhwah. I move on to addressing strategies for empirical investigation and examine the methods I selected. The latter part of the chapter provides a general introduction to the mixed-methods research approach and tools of data collection. The chapter ends with some reflections on the collision of this study with my personality as a researcher because I have been engaged with this study from 2007.

#### **3.2. Introduction of My 'Self'**

I do not claim to be impartial in this research, having always opposed cultural, social and economic exploitation and patriarchy in Pukhtun society. During my education, I heard from many classmates that they could not continue their studies because the men in their families did not allow them to do so. Since I have always been critical of the marginalisation of women in Pukhtun society, I must recognize that, like any researcher, so as Letherby (2003:41) mentioned, I bring my own subjectivities and biographies, my values and interests, to every aspect and phase of my research process. Who the researchers are, and what life

experiences they have had, has a profound impact on research questions and on the ways in which researchers look for answers (Pourzand, 2003).

So, who am I? I am a Pukhtun/Afghan (Pukhtu-speaking) woman born in an educated, practicing Muslim-*Hanafi*<sup>11</sup> extended family, which has strong nationalist views towards their language and race. I have been greatly supported by my father (Baba), my first love, inspiration and strength; I was also supported by my uncle whom I have admired throughout my life and who had a doctoral degree from Germany. My mother was not an educated woman, but now I realise that her silence encouraged me to access higher education. Being a second daughter of my parents, I received less attention from my mother because my brother was born a year after. So, my sister went under care of my beloved uncles' wife (who loved her a lot and later she became a daughter-in-law of hers) and I was raised as a father's daughter, 'Shabana Shamaas Gul Khattak'.

At high school I was an average student and was very active in extra-curricular activities, especially sports. But being in the family of three sisters and a brother, I had always competed with my brother and tried to do all the things he could. In Pukhtunkhwah society, teaching and medicine are the two respectable professions for women due to the segregation of women and men's professions. I considered teaching as a career as I found that I had no aptitude in science subjects. At the college level, I studied physical education and after my BA I joined the teaching profession as a Physical Education Teacher (PET). Later I convinced my family to allow me to aspire to higher education (MA in Pakistan Studies). Very few students—about fifteen per annum—studied this subject. I dreamt about having a chance to be a lecturer in college. I also wanted to be highly educated and independent so that I could make decisions about my life. I yearned to do something different and to be prominent member of my family and village. I never wanted to be a typical Pukhtun housewife, and my Baba encouraged and supported me in this.

At the university in Peshawar, I lived with my uncle Lala's family because the dormitory accommodation was considered insecure and inappropriate for female students at that time. I was now my Lala's responsibility in the city because my Baba had handed me over to him. With my Lala's day-to-day support I took my first steps towards higher education. My mother and brother opposed my MA study because they wanted me to get married first, fearing that otherwise, a marriage might come too late but my Baba and my Lala shielded me.

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<sup>11</sup>The *Hanafi* School of thoughts is leading the teaching of Imam Abu Hanifa (80-148AH). It is also called Sunni Muslim.

My MA dissertation was entitled ‘The place of Pukhtu language in the education system of Pukhtunkhwah’. Looking back now, it seems that a deep-seated concern for social justice and equality has been central to all my academic work. I really love my Pukhtu language and even then resented the education system that privileges Urdu and English at the expense of Pukhtu. Pukhtu-speaking children who did not learn Urdu or English early on in their lives have very different and unequal educational starting points compared to others. Typically Pukhtu-speaking children are from poorer backgrounds, often in highly isolated rural areas, and it seemed unnecessary and wrong to me to view languages hierarchically and to further marginalise Pukhtu-speaking children.

After completing my MA, I gained a teaching position as a subject specialist and at the same time I also applied for M.Ed programme, because it was often said that a perfect teacher is one who has both MA and M.Ed degrees. I was accepted and enjoyed my M.Ed study very much. I remember hearing about the low participation of females in university departments and how they were planning to join the teaching profession to support their families, and that they always made this decision after a debate between their fathers and brothers, who had strict control over them. I wondered: why were the women of Pukhtunkhwah more restricted than the women of the rest of the country? Why did the Pukhtun women have to struggle so much in order to gain men’s permission to study? These were the questions that were roaming in my mind all that time. It was no surprise then that my M.Ed dissertation focused on the Azad School System of 1930s. Azad Schools were the first Pukhtu medium schools that were successfully established in the colonial era by our nationalist leader (Abdul Ghaffar Khan, commonly known Bacha Khan) to educate the people of the area.

After achieving my MA and M.Ed degrees, my thirst for deeper knowledge remained unquenched. Also, to prove my talent and to escape from the traditional role of women I decided to enrol in a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programme (in Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) in Islamabad) that would give me a prestigious and respectable place in the University of Peshawar as well as an esteemed place in my family. Most of the women in my family are educated up to the BA or MA level, and my decision set me on a different path. I would now be going against the grain of the social order, and gaining acceptance for my decision would not be easy. My family and my over protective brother in particular opposed my plan but as usual my ‘shield’ (Baba) protected me. Studying at this level gave me a better understanding of the life in Pukhtunkhwah and galvanised my drive for independence. It was my MPhil thesis that made me a feminist writer and researcher as my research was about the women

freedom fighters of Pukhtunkhwah in the Pakistan Freedom Movement<sup>12</sup>. The role of Pukhtunkhwah women has always been ignored by historians and authors, but I was privileged to meet some of the women freedom fighters. Writing about their life experiences and their struggle for the national cause was a life-changing experience. This gave rise to my newly-found determination to study for a PhD abroad. As always I had to convince everyone, but first and foremost my Baba, to sponsor me and my study. My Baba never seemed to have the word ‘no’ in his vocabulary for me: I was successful in getting his permission and support for my higher education in the UK. I studied my MA at Brunel University in West London and then began my PhD at Middlesex University.

My initial PhD proposal was entitled ‘Extremism and the Role of Religious Educational Institutes of Pakistan’. This topic was timely because my study would have been able to provide a partial answer to the many hostile media interpretations of Islam that were prolific at the time in the UK and the USA. However, I had to abandon this idea as the Pakistani government closed most of those *madris* due to continuous terrorist attacks and suicides bombing in Peshawar. I then settled on the present research focus, but sadly, throughout the process I have continued to battle with my family’s opposition.

Some of the main mechanisms of inequality in Pukhtunkhwah —prioritising one language over another, poverty, social class and gender—have triggered a number unanswered questions in my mind and over the years, my intentions to explore some answers have developed into a firm, articulated commitment for social justice and gender equality. Thus, I seek for my Pukhtun women to become highly educated and to understand their rights; and then to fight to achieve their rights with the active, positive support of their family men as described by the Quran. I born in the same area so I feel like one of my sample women, albeit with some different life experiences. I recognize that I have the unique

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<sup>12</sup>The Pakistan Freedom Movement or Tehrik-e-Pakistan refers to the successful historical movement against the British Raj and Indian Congress to have an independent Muslim state named Pakistan created from the separation of the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent, partitioned within or outside the British Indian Empire. It had its origins in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (present day Uttar Pradesh). Muslims there were a minority, yet their elite had a disproportionate amount of representation in the civil service and a strong degree of cultural and literary influence. The idea of Pakistan spread from Northern India through the Muslim diaspora of this region, and spread outwards to the Muslim communities of the rest of India This movement was led by lawyer Muhammad Ali Jinnah, along with other prominent leaders such as Allama Iqbal, Liaqat Ali Khan, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Fatima Jinnah, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Chaudhry Khaliqzaman, A.K. Fazlul Huq, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan. The movement ultimately achieved success in 1947, when part of northwest India was partitioned, granted independence and renamed Pakistan (quoted from: <https://mylovelypakistan.wordpress.com/history/pakistan-movement>).

privilege to study a doctorate in the UK, and I therefore resolved to use this opportunity to examine women's experiences of higher education.

Thus, my feminist research is grounded in political as well as academic concerns because research is an orderly, coherent and clean: as hygienic (Kelly et al., 1994). 'Yet all research is ideological because no one can separate themselves from the world—from their values and opinions, from books they read, from the people they have spoken to and so on (Letherby, 2003:12). Thus, the product cannot be separated from the means of production (theories of knowledge, epistemology) and feminists not only acknowledge this but celebrate it (Letherby, 2003: 13).

Being reflexive and open about what we do and how we do it, and the relationship between this and what is known, is crucial for academic feminists as it allows others who read our work to understand the background to the claims that we are making. (Letherby, 2003: 15).

However, none of the Islamic feminists (Afshar, 2000; Yamani, 2006; Wadud, 2000; Mernessi, 1996; Moghissi, 2007) acknowledge feminist methodologies in their studies. Their main concerns are patriarchy, social injustice and the re-interpretation of the Quran and the Islamic code of life. Nevertheless,

feminist research is a type of inquiry that deserves a place in this study, not primarily because of the nature of methods it employs or the output it produces, but rather because of the manner in which it uses conventional methods, the areas on which it focuses, and the manner in which it employs its findings. In this sense, feminist research is an emancipatory type of inquiry. This means that it's not only documents aspects of reality; it also takes a personal, political and engaging stance to the world (Letherby, 2003:17).

### **3.3. Problems of my Research**

In the literature review, I highlighted a number of critical factors which have a bearing on this study of women in higher education in Pakistan. The religious beliefs permeate fundamentally, and both overtly and covertly, the country's social, educational and legal practice, but there is also evidence of a struggle for power between the social/political elite and the theocracy (Evans, 2000; Hayes, 2007; Hussain, 1995). Education for women is considered of secondary importance: the need to marry remains the primary importance and invariably this is facilitated by a dowry, provided by the male head of the family. Not only do women need a male's permission to be able to marry or enrol in education, but also usually

require their material funds for this. Funds, particularly when resources are scarce, often go to men. They enjoy best education and status in the society. This is common practice in Pukhtunkhwah where everyday life social, traditional and cultural norms become inseparable from those of religion. The prevailing strong culture and traditions do not allow them to differentiate between cultural and religious norms that affect women's access to higher education.

Women's concept of *purdah* (veiling) and the division of women and men separate worlds affects block their way to higher education because of its co-educational setting of study. Consequently it leads to low women's representation in professional occupations of the job market in Pukhtunkhwah. Hussain (1995:82) came up with similar conclusions among women students of Lahore, although as mentioned earlier Lahore is one of the country's developed and modern cities.

It is evident that parents' social class, attitudes and values, as well as their economic status all have a profound influence on their daughters' educational lives. Women's enrolment in higher education is very low; furthermore the women that are enrolled mainly study non-professional courses in the Arts and Social Sciences disciplines (Evans, 2000; Butt and Sheikh, 2007; Hayes, 2007). Very few women take up long scientific and technological careers, for example in fields such as Engineering or Information Technology. Although parents encourage their daughters to enter medicine, that is indeed a long, five-year intensive degree, but it will give them a high prestigious status and a well paid job as well as a rich marriage proposal.

The dual language of instruction negatively affects women over all educational progress; therefore, it needs to be considered in this study. The upper classes' English proficiency gives them good grades in BA/BSc examinations and entry tests to enrol in higher education. Furthermore, it leads to good further educational and job opportunities. However it divides the society into classes: English for masters, and Urdu for labours.

### **3.4. The Main Research Questions**

The main research questions of this study are the following:

- 3.4.1. How do the interrelations of gender, culture, Islam and education, contribute towards women's higher education opportunities in Pukhtunkhwah?

- 3.4.2. How do the co-relation of medium of instruction, economic class and access to education affect women's participation in higher education?
- 3.4.3. What are women's views about men's attitudes towards Pukhtunkhwah women's higher education, marriage and career?
- 3.4.4. How is segregation (partial/full) used as a mechanism to ensure women's silence to strengthen men's role in Pukhtunkhwah society?
- 3.4.5. How do religion and culture overlap in relation to women's higher education in Pukhtunkhwah?

### **3.5. Research Methodology**

Since the principal aim of this research is to discover the particular experiences that lead some women to achieve against the odds and participate in higher education, and to analyse and theorise about their experiences in greater depth, the study is interpretative in nature, and both qualitative and quantitative methods have been employed. The gendered cultural, linguistic and social class/economic dynamics have been examined at a particular time and place in Pakistan and viewed through a lens of religious conceptions (and misconceptions) and cultural traditions.

As a developing country, Pakistan has a lack of reliable statistics. Top quality research exercise requires strong financial resources and technical expertise, which are absent in Pakistan's developing economy. Moreover, the statistical records are hardly updated the relevant organizations, therefore researchers rely on out-of-date material or alternatively depend on contract research of international donor organisations in the country (Informal discussion with the Director of Education, 2008<sup>13</sup>). As already mentioned, I found very few research studies on gender and higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, or even in Pakistan. This lack of research focus and the subsequent lack of theorisation of women's experiences in Pukhtunkhwah need to be emphasised here; the paucity of data and research studies available means that this study cannot build upon previous studies of Pukhtunkhwah. However Hussain (1995) strengthened my general theorisation of gender and education in a Pakistani context otherwise my study would be lacking a debate of gender and higher education. However my study is still unique in the Pukhtunkhwah setting, because the area is severely deficient of

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<sup>13</sup>Informal discussion with the Director of Education (Colleges) (Pukhtunkhwah) on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at Peshawar. This was my initial contact to arrange permission for conducting research in the four colleges under this Directorate.

Pukhtun gender studies. More importantly the theoretical frameworks developed by Islamic feminists (see section II of the literature review) and largely adopted here have not been previously applied to Pukhtunkhwah in a post-9/11 context. This study aims, therefore, to contribute new and original information on women's experiences in the field of higher education. The mode of inquiry is interpretative, and the on-going, continuous interpretations between initial research ideas, accumulating observations and the absence of other research studies have both made the need for this study more apparent and enabled me to formulate a more specific research focus.

Similar to Hussain (1995) experience in Lahore, it is unlikely that women's colleges in Peshawar would allow male researchers access to female students' experiences and thoughts. I went through more rigorous checks and paperwork because Peshawar is more conservative than Lahore. Also, the present security issues make the women's colleges more vulnerable in the province. Hence, our gender, religion, nationality and education were important factors that made our studies possible. The educational institutions in Pukhtunkhwah are often threatened by terrorists attack. Therefore the colleges' administrations are more careful regarding the information of the institutes. The principals of girls' colleges are understandably cautious about my research and did further security checks before allowing me to commence my study, because they feared that collecting young women's thoughts and ideas would probably have a negative influence on the women students themselves.

However, the Middlesex University official letters made possible my access to the sample institutions. It is a Pakistani tradition that we acknowledge (or are impressed by, in other words) foreign degrees and research techniques. I was given special appreciation because of my gender and struggle to access UK higher educational institutes, which is a great achievement in conservative Pukhtun society, where they do not allow their women to attend local universities and colleges. Access to higher educational institutes abroad always remains a desire for Pukhtun women. The principal of the colleges introduced me as a role model for their students; this assisted me in developing a professional relationship and trust with my sample women. It promoted an atmosphere of comfort for my sample women too, to share their perceptions about their higher educational opportunities in their institutions.

Hussain (1995:86) argues that the researcher and researched sample having the same nationality, religion and gender has possible bias and subjectivity, but as a feminist researcher I was conscious to avoid the drawbacks of my subjectivity on my research. Therefore I put

my personal opinions and perceptions aside and gave full opportunity to my sample students to openly express their perceptions and sensitivities about their experience in higher education.

Gender, religion and education were very sensitive issues because of the prevailing political unrest in the province. Therefore I took special care when discussing these issues with my sample women. To avoid potential bias, I did an objective analysis of the literature to develop a theoretical framework as a guide for the data collection, and evaluation as recommended by Cohen, et al. (2007) and Hussain (1995). It is also important to accept the reality that social sciences research is never unbiased (Foucault, 1980). This is because

all researchers operate under ‘regimes of truth’ and are strongly implicated by social control, or controlled more directly by state and other agencies, which ultimately serve the dominant group of the society (Foucault, 1980: 79).

Furthermore, Wiersma (2005) points out that as natives of our culture; daily life is a pre-analysed domain for us. In addition, Cohen, et al. (2007: 27) recommended that the researcher should try to cultivate a sense of the theoretically relevant and avoid false conclusions by adopting a scientific attitude in research and inquiry. However Weber (1949, cited in Letherby 2003) acknowledged the effect of the personal involvement of the researchers. He recognised that the personal and political values of the researcher affected the selection and conduct of research, but tried to find out ways to minimise the possible biases that could creep in as a result. This tension between subjectivity and objectivity was not really resolved in his work and is still an important issue for feminist research theory and practice (i.e. methodology and method) (Letherby, 2003). Weber (1949) further argued that ‘social scientists need to be as clear as possible about their own values and ideals and how these will affect their work, so as to avoid total subjectivity’. I was aware that when I translated and interpreted my respondents’ responses in my structured and focused interviews, I could be tempted to be biased in doing this, but I followed the recommendation of Nes et al. (2010) and made every effort to be objective and translate verbatim. Nes et al. (2010:317) recommended avoiding bias and potential limitations in the analysis, staying in the original Pukhtu language of the sample women as long and as much as possible. They further recommended ‘to delay the use of fixed—one word—translations. Instead, the analyses might even benefit from using fluid descriptions of meanings using various English formulations. In doing so, it is important to check the interpretations by going back to the codes and preliminary findings in the source language’ (Nes et al. (2010:317). Therefore, I

followed their recommendations carefully and kept the record of my interviews and discussions, which helped me to make the development of the interpretations transparent when, in later phases, the translations need to be personalised for data analysis (Nes et al. (2010:317).

The political and security issues in the Province were at their peak at the time I collected my data; it took me very long to get permission from the Directorate of Colleges to access the sample colleges' students. It is sad to mention here that in Pakistan, the political unrest made the government machinery slow to deal with public requests. Therefore I kept my study exclusively to the women sample, although men's participation in higher education and their dropout rates would give us a clear picture of gender representation and marginalisation in Pukhtunkhwah. So another separate study should be conducted with a men-only sample by future researchers.

The foundation of this feminist research is critical feminist theory, as I framed this model research for the Pukhtun women emancipation by perceiving their real academic life situations within the context of Pukhtunkhwah. This is because feminist research is about the social conditions of women in a sexist, 'male-stream' and patriarchal society (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 12). Feminist research enlightened people about taken-for-granted sexist practices and the gender-blindness of government and community practices (including publications) that displace, ignore and silence women, lead to an unequal and discriminating social order, and women captive (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 12). Hence, the focus of my study is to connect with feminist researchers, as they are struggling with strong devotion for gender-mainstreaming by creating new disciplines in the social sciences—such as gender or women studies for an equal and just society.

The socio-economic status of my sample is a main variable; it was also a personal family matter. Most of the sample women did not know about the prevailing class system in Pukhtunkhwah, so their fathers' monthly income was roughly used for their socio-economic classification.

As mentioned above, the political situation of Pukhtunkhwah limited the scope of the research. Indeed this limitation had a positive impact, as it enabled me to focus on a smaller group, and thereby gained and interpreted data which was more in-depth, focusing more sharply on how the sample women perceived their higher educational opportunities (Hussain,

1995). Also the present insecure situation in the country restricted my access to other rural areas of the province. During the course of the research, the political unrest in the country, and particularly in Pukhtunkhwah, did not allow me to access more than four sample women for my focused interviews, so sample size could be a limitation for this study. Ideally, case study was a desirable tool for this enquiry but it was not feasible in such political turbulence.

However there was no previous study on gender and higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, and the aim was to document and examine some women's experiences that have led them to achieve in higher education against all odds. The depth of understanding of what made these women successful was the primary aim of the process of analysis, rather than the quantity of women or their types of experiences. In addition, there was a general lack of data on higher education in Pakistan to build upon and the difficulty of gaining access to statistics on higher education and the unreliability of the available data limited the depth of research study (Hussain, 1995). Moreover, a limited amount of data hardly analyses about and generalise to other areas of Pakistan. In this regard I agree with Hussain (1995) that it is not easy to gain information from women in their home and educational settings.

There were some other notable barriers in conducting research in the specific Pukhtunkhwah context:

- Social and economic class: it is typical for working class households to be made up of multiple families under one roof with little or no privacy. As a result, the possibility of interviewing a working class sample women without the presence of other family members (out of curiosity or necessity because of shortage of space) is virtually impossible.
- The feeling of danger and insecurity:  
There were frequent attacks by suicide bombers in the area. The college authorities were constantly getting threats. Furthermore, this continuing uncertainty in the political life of the province and the terrorist activities created an ubiquitous feeling of insecurity in all households. Consequently, colleges frequently closed without any prior notice, prolonging my study by delaying my interview schedules and access to areas where interviews could be freely made.

### **3.6. Developing a Methodological Framework**

This study is concerned with individual women and their own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour and as such the study fits in neatly with qualitative research paradigm (Silverman, 2001). It aims to offer abundant expressive reports of the sample's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings, and the overall analysis will explore the meanings and interpretations given to decisions about higher education.

Qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007) situated in an interpretative paradigm, as opposed to positivist paradigm, is the best way to explore my research questions as it accepts that multiple realities exist in any given situation. I was primarily interested in how the women themselves constructed their educational decisions and experiences and what their views were. My aim is to analyse how they make sense of these experiences, and construe their reality, and how coherently and consciously they resolve the difficulties they faced when moving into higher education. I hope to discover how they illuminate their motivations and even the contradictions between their motivations and attitudes and their actual behaviour. This kind of approach is also known as the interpretative approach (Creswell, 1994).

I have selected both quantitative and qualitative methods, as both methods can be used to enhance the findings. The qualitative methods will provide very valuable in-depth information about the participants' actual experiences whilst the quantitative methods will yield sought-after data on the scale of their experiences (Neuman, 2006). Thus I adopted a mixed-methods research approach that includes quantitative structured questionnaires, qualitative interviews, and four in-depth focused interviews. Like Patton (2002: 10), I believe that

qualitative research, by its close and in-depth study through observation and in-depth interviews, helps in the emergence of main themes. I believe that the qualitative method 'perhaps puts flesh on the bare bones of information obtained with a structured-questionnaire.

However, as there was practically no data available on the scale of the problem in Pukhtunkhwah, both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were proofed useful.

My methodological framework has been developed by looking at feminist thought and methodologies, and over the course of my reading I am now more consciously and overtly positioning myself in the social context of women. A good example is the style of my writing. During the overall research process I have changed my writing style, from the third

person ‘the researcher’ to the first person ‘I’ because I have been inspired by Letherby’s (2003) work As a researcher I am focusing on women today in Pukhtunkhwah, and together the researcher and researched women are creating new knowledge. As Morely (1996: 7) notes:

when we use ‘I’ we question traditional styles of academic writing where ‘we’ ‘the author or researcher’ are meant to represent the distance and objectivity. ‘I’ is therefore a way of challenging traditional academic ‘authority’.

Furthermore, Fleischman (1998: cited in Letherby, 2003) suggests that all writings in which the author refers to her/himself as the ‘author/researcher’ or ‘we’ excludes any reference to the writer’s self and implies that they have no involvement with and no responsibility for what they write. Therefore, by changing my style I am openly accepting the responsibility for my writing and my deep involvement in it. At the same time, I am openly adopting a radical feminist approach in challenging the patriarchal and cultural norms of Pukhtunkhwah society as well as the traditional writing styles adopted by the male-dominated academia in Pakistan.

### **3.7. Feminist Epistemology: Me and My Sample Women in a Process of ‘new knowledge’**

This thesis is informed by the epistemological framework that the researcher’s standpoint has a great impact on the knowledge he or she produces. The recognition that knowledge is somehow subjective is important, and subjectivity ‘realises your presence’ in the knowledge. Because we all are different individuals, our life experiences, our thought and ideas are different, so we are bringing ourselves into our studies, and no knowledge is the complete or absolute truth (Hekman, 1997; Hill Collins, 1990; Harding, 1987 cited in Pourzand, 2003: 29).

The feminist research critiques (such as, Mohanty, 1998; Hooks, 2000) that the researcher’s ‘self’ has great involvement in new knowledge creation about cultural and social issues. These critiques developed the feminists’ researchers’ understanding of the dynamic complexity of multiple social categories (Pourzand, 2003). This aspect of feminists’ research has significance for my study as the sample women belong to different economic strata of Pukhtunkhwah society with different social and cultural constraints.

My limitations as a researcher – and is my own positionalities as well as those of my researched sample women – are all triangulated to understand patriarchy, unequal power relations and social injustice in Pukhtunkhwah society. This triangulation made this research

a unique study. So, like Pourzand (2003:29), my sample women of Pukhtunkhwah and I, together, are creating new emancipatory knowledge that relates to a complex web of culturally embedded social relations specific to a particular time and place. As mentioned by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002:46):

If feminists' researchers want to produce knowledge of what gender relations actually are (as a basis of emancipatory action) that is in some way 'truer' than pre-existence, partial, patriarchal or male-dominated knowledge, they still confront the problem (faced by all social researchers) of finding general criteria for making their knowledge believable (cited in Pourzand, 2003).

Pourzand (2003:30) commented that being a feminist researcher means being thoroughly well-informed in our research and in its political implications, which supports researchers to fulfil the criteria mentioned above. This self-reflection and self-criticism about our own self and research make us well aware about the context of the research (since individual experiences alone cannot always sufficiently explain a situation) and not imposing one's own ideas on the research while they will no doubt influence the research).

What I understood from the feminist researchers is that the researcher's own positionality is very important that gives honour to our own research work. This is not achieved by proving that one is 'neutral' and 'objective' as put forward by the male-centred/enlightenment rational discourse, which has contributed to the sustaining of unequal power relations (Pourzand, 2003:30).

Pourzand (2003:30) argued about Reinharz' (1992) that women's life experiences are worthy to be shared to the world. The objective is to make the research more beautiful with feminist emotions and feelings. If the same research was conducted by a male-researcher, then his approach and sentiments would be different. So realising the role of researcher herself in this process is inter-subjective. Pourzand (2003:30) introduced me to the work of Yuval-Devis (1997), and how she develops the rationale for writing about transversal politics<sup>14</sup> or the efforts to forge alliances with other women (and men) in spite of different lived experiences. To quote Yuval-Devis (1997:17; cited in Pourzand, 2003):

this approach is based on the epistemological recognition that each positing produces specific situated knowledge that cannot be but an unfinished knowledge. Therefore dialogues among those differentially positioned should take place in order to reach a common perspective as a basis for common

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<sup>14</sup> For further details see Yuval-Devis, N. (1999) *What is Transversal politics?* available at: [http://www.amielandmelburn.org.uk/collections/soundings/12\\_94.pdf](http://www.amielandmelburn.org.uk/collections/soundings/12_94.pdf)

action or policy. Transversal dialogue should be based on the principles of rooting and shifting—being centred in one’s own experience while being empathetic to the differential positioning of the partners in the dialogue, thus enabling the participants to arrive at a different perspective from that hegemonic tunnel vision.

However, no one can change the unequal socio-political realities of both genders, because gender dynamics affect their life experiences and the social structure of the society and make them different individuals. Society overhauls them accordingly to their gender specific roles. Consequently, ‘despite the post-modernist’s valid concern for essentialism and homogenisation of social categories, it is still possible and in fact, important, to understand the gendered lives of women in different contexts’ (Stanley and Wise, 2008, cited in Pourzand, 2003). This is only possible when feminist philosophy or women themselves challenge these unequal power relations in society by breaking their silence. This is particularly relevant in the case of Pukhtunkhwah women, as feminist research is also about the ethics of the sample and society.

I followed Pourzand’s (2003) suggestion to share the outcome of my research with some of my sample colleges, teachers and experts on the subject<sup>15</sup>. I presented it in a couple of conferences and have received feedback. It really helped me to have a new audience because me and my supervisors had been involved in this study for a very long time, and our minds were greatly influenced by listening to our sample women’s perceptions and experiences of their higher education. My sample women had never shared their feelings and ideas with anyone nor had they ever been asked to do so. The subjects’ voices had, up until they have been silenced. I love the following words of Pourzand (2003: 32): “I accept the limitations of this study and the knowledge which my thesis intends to share. It is based on who I am and who I am not, who I choose for my study (and who I did not) the questions I asked (and those missed). The answers given—and the silences—as well as the theoretical framework and analysis as well as language and writing are my version of understanding” .These words echo my feelings too, because my study is an initiative towards the Pukhtun women empowerment and emancipation in Pukhtunkhwah. This study will open new arenas for future gender studies in Pakistan.

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<sup>15</sup> Such as Prof. Dave Hill of Anglia Ruskin University, my doctoral supervisors at Middlesex University, Dr. Gillian Hilton and Dr. Leena Robertson

### 3.8. The Study Plan of Action

I based the selection of my methodological tools on Hussain's (1995) study, but with some different variables. However, because of the similar nature of our research enquiries, I adapted her questionnaires according to my research questions and sample women from the rural and urban North West Province of Pakistan. Furthermore, I was discouraged by my supervisors from postal questionnaires because of their poor response rate. Therefore I included another semi-structured questionnaire in my Post Survey enquiry. Thus the research process is summarised as:

Table 3. The research process

1. An informal discussion with the Director of colleges Pukhtunkhwah (March 2008)		
Research Tool	Time	Sample
Pilot Study	April 2008	10 students from a different college
2. Initial Survey		
a. Questionnaire	September 2008	40 students (10 students from each college: $10 \times 4 = 40$ )
3. Audit Survey		
a. Questionnaire (A repeat of the initial survey questionnaire)	April 2009	172 students ( $43 \times 4 = 172$ ) Other than Initial Survey Group
4. The Post- Survey		
a. Questionnaire	September 2009	Original 40 students of initial survey ( $10 \times 4 = 40$ )
b. Focused-Interviews	September 2009	4 students (1 from each college)

Following Hussain's (1995:104) instructions, the data collection process also included documentary evidence from the colleges and triangulation tests. It was in the form of information listed in college brochures along with admission criteria for university that was retrieved from online websites and various university departments and examined as part of the research. In addition, statistics on women in higher education were obtained from the University Grants Commission and Directorate of Education (Colleges) Pukhtunkhwah for in depth data analysis.

To test the variables of this study and get the most valid answers of the research questions, I employed Methodological triangulation; where I used different methods of

qualitative and quantitative data collection tools; semi-structured questionnaires and focused interviews. I also employed Time triangulation; by cross-checking the validity of my initial survey questionnaire of 2009 with my audit survey sample of 172 at a different time of the year.

### **3.9. Feminist Research: Sampling, Questionnaires, Interviews and Ethics etc.**

One of its main objectives of this study is to bring out the voices of women as much as possible. As already mentioned, a mixed-methods research methodology was chosen because there were many such situations which were not suitable for study by quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Additionally solely quantitative data collection would generate unreliable and shallow results, and for many feminists qualitative methods are more suitable for in-depth research studies. The qualitative methods used proved remarkably successful, supporting Kerlinger and Lee's (2000) and Freebody's (2003) arguments that not all studies can or should be quantified, otherwise this may lead to unreliable results. The mixed-methods research methodology involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003:3). Furthermore, its operating assumption is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell, 2003:3).

Qualitative methods encouraged me to create a close relationship with my sample women in the study that helped me to understand their perceptions and experiences about their family lives and education. Denzin and Lincoln (2008), in support of the qualitative researcher, penetrate into the real life of the people by detailed interviewing and observation. They believe that quantitative researchers lack this capacity because they rely more on remote and inferential empirical materials. They define qualitative research as 'multi-method in form involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 3).

Many feminist researchers (Letherby, 2003; Stanly and Wise, 2008; Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991) use qualitative research as it facilitates a women-centred research approach. Therefore I selected the method of using interviews and questionnaires because I was aware about cultural restrictions on women in Pukhtun society. The methodology used for analysis of the interview data was content and theme analysis, which identifies emerging themes from the data rather than predicts what themes, will occur before the analysis. This was chosen

because, as mentioned earlier, other data collections tool such as participant observation or ethnographic studies were impossible in the insecure social and political environment of the sample women's households. Similarly, as Hussain (1995) argues, case studies or ethnographic studies would have been our first choice because of the in-depth nature of their inquiry. However, these methods of analysis were impossible, first because of shortage of time—most of my time went to the official permission to access these colleges—as well as the fact that the political situation of Pakistan was not feasible for my data collection. Therefore, my study was one year late. In fact, such circumstances forced me to conduct focused interviews; the sample women after completion of their BA/BSc final examination left their colleges, and their parents did not allow them to go outside their homes for any reason.

My sample women were interviewed in their homes with the permission of their parents. Therefore I conducted three of my focused interviews at their homes and one in college, as these venues were a better guarantee of their safety. This resulted in a noticeable difference between the sample women's responses at home and college. In the college-based focused interview, my sample women's confidence was high and they discussed more complex issues openly with me. The sample women I interviewed at home were more reluctant and hesitant in their responses due to the presence of their family. Most of their answers were in 'yes', 'no', 'I don't know' and 'I think so'; they often looked around the room uneasily before giving me an answer. Consequently, they did not cooperate freely in their responses. As stated above, it was impossible to re-interview the sample women concerned at college as their parents refused to allow the students to leave their homes after the women had finished their studies.

### **3.10. Sampling Strategies**

A selection of a suitable and valid sample sizes is always hard for researchers to decide, because they are worrying about how to get valid answers for their research questions (Cohen et al., 2010). There is no specific parameter to follow to get an accurate sample size not small and not too long to conduct an ample survey or case study (Cohen et al., 1980; Hussain, 1995). However, the most important thing for a researcher to think about well in advance of any data collection is the sorts of relationships which need to be explored within sub-groups of his/her eventual sample (Cohen et al., 1980 cited in Hussain, 1995). I took particular care in the selection of my sample colleges that each college should represent its economic class (as mentioned earlier their fathers' monthly income was a chosen variable to

determine the sample women's economic class). First I decided on fifty women for my initial survey but due to social, cultural and time constraints, I managed forty women only from four colleges. Therefore my supervisors agreed on this number, due to time and security issues.

My sampling strategy was governed by the principle of suitability, the purposes of the research, the time scale, the constraints on me (as a researcher), and the sampling methodology recommended by Cohen et al., (2007:101). They argue that a researcher's research design depends on the time scale: a short time scale permits answers to short-term issues, while long term research or large questions might require a long-term period of data collection. In other words, costs in terms of time, resources and people might affect the choice of data collection instruments and the sampling (Cohen et al., 2007:101). Therefore, I randomly selected four colleges in the capital city of Pukhtunkhwah bearing in mind the economic class division of my study, the time scale, and my financial resources whilst bearing in mind that the chosen sample must be appropriate for the study to be valid (Cohen et al., (2007).

Denscombe (2007) holds that a small sample can be accurate, but serious efforts must be made to achieve representativeness. Because of the security and time issues, the sample of this study was necessarily limited. However, by carefully selecting a balanced and representative sample I collected reliable, comprehensive and accurate data from 40 BA/BSc students of four sample colleges. The inclusion of both these categories was helpful in analysing the data. The results were therefore more comprehensive, scientific, valid and suitable for drawing general conclusions than if only one category had been used.

### **3.12. Designing of the Questionnaire for Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

Unlike the focused interviews, the questionnaire has limited capacity to explore variables. For in depth details researchers rely on interviews data collection tools. It is important in the construction of questionnaires to consider question content, to ensure clarity and to check for usefulness of purpose (Walker, 2003). Moreover, in order to avoid ambiguity, my questions were specific and logically ordered.

Therefore, a limited number of clear options were given to the sample women using closed questions in the semi-structured questionnaires. They were able to easily tick boxes and thus save time when filling out the whole questionnaire. However, open-ended questions

were also incorporated to obtain in-depth information about which there was no clear data available (see Appendix V: for all sample questionnaires).

Simmons (2001) and Oppenheim (1992) suggest that designing a schedule of questions requires prior reading, designing, and checking the compatibility with and relevance to the study objectives. The questions were checked repeatedly to see whether they could produce the required results. If anything was missing, or if gaps remained between the questions and the determined objectives then the whole study would fail to produce reliable results. All questionnaires were scrutinised repeatedly to take out any repetition. Sapsford (2000) suggests that extreme care should be taken in removing any kind of repetition from the questions, because it irritates the respondents and can result in superficial data being obtained. Extreme care was taken concerning the length of questions. The long questions were split into sub-questions so that the respondents might not feel confused and viable original data might be obtained.

Filter questions (see question 4 of Appendix V, sample Initial Questionnaire), were used to ensure relevance among the related questions and to facilitate a good response. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest the use of filter questions in the questionnaire for collecting relevant, simple and reliable data. Foddy (2003: 101) also recommends their use and defines it as ‘a question or a question component that is explicitly offered to a respondent, either to establish the relevance of the question to the respondent, or to emphasise that it is acceptable for the respondent not to answer the question’. The number of questions was reduced to a manageable length by removing any irrelevant questions. Over-lengthy questionnaires also irritate the respondents particularly when filled out by the respondents themselves and not the researcher.

Moser and Kalton (1993) and De Vaus (2001) hold that the questionnaire needs to be shorter than the one used in face-to-face interviews. Respondents invariably prefer shorter questionnaires. Longer questionnaires produce a smaller return rate and poor quality data. Intense care was taken not to waste my sample women’s time but also not to make the questionnaire imperfect to the extent that it might lose credibility and worth in terms of attaining relevant data (De Vaus, 2001). A very small number of questions were left open-ended because these questions are best suited to interviews.

During the planning, impractical questions were removed because their inclusion might have disturbed the whole data and its analysis. The questions were put in a more

logical order in the questionnaire so as to guide the sample women smoothly from one to the next. According to Moser and Kalton (1993) as well as Buckingham and Saunders (2004), confused and clumsy questions severely affect the return rate. At the top of each schedule, a brief introduction was given assuring the sample women that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. I was at pains to show the sample women that I am aware of the significance of this issue and did not want them to feel any hesitation in responding the questions openly.

It is recommended that personal questions relating to age, income and children are included in the questionnaire (Moser and Kalton, 1993) while some (Oppenheim, 1992; Sapsford, 2000; Frazer and Lawley, 2000) suggest their inclusion but only at the end of the questionnaires. However, there are no hard and fast rules about their exact placement; therefore, I put such questions at the beginning of the questionnaires. The personal questions were structured with great concentration so as not to arouse any negative sentiments on the part of the sample women. I tried my best to feel at ease with my sample women before embarking upon answering the rest of the questions and to feel familiarity with the questions. Only those personal questions which were of importance and relevance to the study were included. In that part of the questionnaire, the respondents were not restricted to a particular option, despite Sapsford's (2000) assertion that factual questions need to be presented in a direct way, that the respondents may not feel any hesitation in answering them. I piloted these questionnaires on ten students of a different fifth college before using them for the purpose of the study, as suggested by Sapsford (2000). In April 2008, prior to the initial survey, I conducted pre-testing of the research instrument. This was done to detect any defects in the design of the questionnaire and interview instruments to avoid distortion, bias and invalidity in the findings. The twenty women students were selected by random sampling from a college other than my sample colleges. For the process of pre-testing the research instruments to validate the framework of the inquiry, I received 100% return for my initial and post-surveys questionnaires and 90% return for the audit survey. These high returns were because the initial questionnaires were completed in my presence in colleges and for the post survey, the college insisted the sample women fill in the questionnaire before getting their final results. Although Cohen et al. (2007) warn that it is very difficult to get a good return of questionnaires; I proved that a researcher has to make strenuous efforts to get a good return.

### **3.12. The Semi-Structured and Focused-interviews**

The core of this doctoral study is these interviews, which make it a unique study. My initial survey included semi-structured interviews and my post-survey exercise included four in-depth focused interviews (one students from each college) respectively. I had planned that if my sample women who completed the initial structure-interview questionnaires were not willing to be interviewed, then I would select at random from the available students for my focused-interviews, but no such problem arose during the post-survey exercise. The majority of the students expressed their interest in giving a focused interview. Three interviews were conducted in Pukhtu and one was conducted in Urdu.

Feminist researchers find interviewing appealing for reasons over and above the benefits noted by social scientists, which defend qualitative methods against positivist criticism (Reinharz, 1992:19). Reinharz further added that interviewing offers researcher's access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. This asset is particularly important for the study of women, because in this way, learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether, or having men speak for women (Reinharz, 1992:19-20).

I was conscious that semi-structured-interviews are useful where the content and procedures are determined by a means of an interview schedule and the interviewer is left with leeway to make modifications (Cohen et al., 2010), whereas the focused interviews allow the interviewer to play a more active role in eliciting information from the respondents. In a semi-structured-interview, the exchange between the interviewer and interviewee is similar to a teacher questioning a student. Questions are prepared in advance and require brief answers with limited elaboration, while semi-structured interviews may include some pre-planned questions, but interviewees are given more latitude in their responses (Cohen et al., 2007:373). And interviewers typically ask open-ended questions that require detailed explanations. The focused interview method (most commonly known as the focused group method), was originally formulated for use with both individuals and groups (Cohen et al., 2007). An explicit objective of the focused interview is to test, appraise, or produce hypotheses about a particular concrete situation in which the respondent(s) have been involved (e.g., a shared event or salient experience) (Bell, 2002:31). The focus of the interview is circumscribed by relevant theory and evidence and involves skilled facilitation of the process (in a one-on-one or group forum) using an interview guide. So, optimal use of the

method involves an appreciation of the paradox involved in balancing the quest for authentic subjective information through free-flowing discussion (Bell, 2002). This focused interview gave life to my thesis and voice to my silent sample women. The tone of voice, facial expressions, and even the hesitations of my sample women provided further valuable information that a purely written response might possibly have concealed (Bell, 2002).

In the focused interviews, I tried to build-up an atmosphere of confidence between myself and my sample women. To achieve this, I developed a friendly atmosphere by establishing a tension-free and relaxed environment (the use of mother-tongue for conversation was the main tool for creating such an atmosphere), as Kumar (2005) warned that the responses will be biased and superficial otherwise. To encourage in-depth responses, I followed Gilbert (2001:128) by using ‘prompting’ and ‘probing’ questions. ‘Prompting’ questions persuade the respondents to produce the required answer and by probing questions, they are persuaded through follow-up questions to provide a fuller response (probing is a key skill in interviewing; to carry it out in the field, Gilbert suggested that the researcher must prepare an interview guide that can help in remembering the questions to be asked).

### **3.13. Data Analysis**

Research on data analysis suggests that the theories of the researcher should emanate from the data generated by the research methods (Denscombe, 2007). Data analysis of each stage was recorded immediately after its completion; this helped in identifying themes and ideas to follow through.

It is necessary to code and score the data into specific categories for the purpose of analysis. I pre-coded so their responses could be converted into objective scores (e.g. checklists and rating scales in the questionnaire instrument). Open-ended questions in the semi-structured and focused interviews were analysed differently by identifying different themes from the responses, as the aim was to reveal women’s own voices. The pre-testing of research instruments had indicated that the data for open-ended questions would need post-coding and scoring. Thus the verbatim interviewee responses were subsequently subjected to response analysis.

Questionnaire data analysis was organised topically, based on categories of issues under investigation. Responses were grouped in topics and quantifiable data were expressed graphically in the Data Presentation (chapter IV). The initial questionnaire laid the basis for

investigation at the start of the research, while the post-questionnaire extracted the actualisation of the sample women's intentions for higher education at Peshawar University. However, all research tools worked as a range and supported each other.

Interviews data analysis was achieved by content and theme analysis and it was conducted as soon as the interviewing was over and the nature of the interaction was still fresh in my mind (Foddy, 2003). This approach enabled me to document different women's thoughts and perceptions about their higher education. I recorded my data under different themes to create a synthesis of my study.

The crucial part after data collection is data analysis, as Fraenkel and Wallen (1993; cited in Hussain, 1995) suggest, the lapse between conducting the interviews and indexing the meaning could be reduced by the researcher talking into the tape-recorder at the conclusion of each interview about what emerges as meaningful in it. Therefore I was very particular in following these suggestions because I wanted my sample women to be heard from my data analysis, in which I was very successful (Read Chapter 5 of my Data Analysis).

Throughout the process of my data analysis, I was engaged in memoing (i.e. listening to recordings, reflecting on interview answers). The idea was to write memos to myself to include those insights and additional data to be analysed. I was alert to selective response, and recognised symbolic and functional silences, distortions, avoidances, or blockings (Hussain, 1995).

### **3.14. Access to the Sample Colleges and Confidentiality**

When setting up any social research, it is critical to obtain the consent of the organisation or people in authority in order to access research (Cohen et al., 2007). It is an essential part of the research to inform the participants about the ground realities and risks. So from the last decade or so, there has been more emphasis about the awareness of ethical issues in relation to educational research. Ethical approval prior to commencing the research investigation at the postgraduate and doctoral level is an obligatory requirement of the researcher to comply with a set of prescribed procedures and principles as set out in the university ethics code (BERA, 2011).

I was fully aware of the necessity of complying with these requirements in order to carry out the study; as mentioned earlier, access and permission had previously been negotiated with the Director of Education (colleges) Pukhtunkhwah, Peshawar and cleared with the

Middlesex University Ethics Committee. The principals of the colleges gave initial agreement and letters were sent out to get the parents' permission. None of the parents had any objection to their daughters participating in this research study. The consents of the students were sought at the time of initial contact. At this level of research, I gained a clearer and more detailed understanding of how these colleges work in practice and as a result, a variety of ethical questions were addressed both during the research design stage of the research. Foskett (2000) argues educational research demands a good planning to access the target audience. 'This process has significant ethical dimensions, in which negotiation is normally underpinned by the key principles of informed consent, and ground rules for access to and the use of data. These include confidentiality and publication agreements' (Foskett, 2000:23). Nevertheless as the overarching purpose of this study was to empower women in higher education, it was particularly important to safeguard my sample women's anonymity and strictly follow the ethical guidelines. I wanted to ensure that no family member of the sample women could trace what their women said in their interviews and create problems for them in the future.

As recommended by writers on research methodology (for example, Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Burton et al., 2008) I reassured the college authorities that the content of the research exercise would be confidential and that the identities of the respondents would not be revealed. Therefore the entire women sample was coded, numbers being used to identify individuals throughout the research.

### **3.15. The Colleges' Context**

This study was undertaken with the agreement of the local Directorate of Education (colleges) Pukhtunkhwah. I sought the cooperation of appropriate local colleges and contacted each college so that the work was a cooperative effort between me and the four colleges in Peshawar. To maintain the comparative element in the study, I established my standardised methodology in each college of my sample. The colleges selected were Jinnah College for Women, Frontier College for Women, Home Economics College for Women and City College for Women. The sample colleges are located in the capital city of Pukhtunkhwah, Peshawar. They are all degree colleges. Special permission was granted by the Directorate to use the colleges' real names in the study. The total number of students and their economic class in each college was as follows:

The classification and selection of the colleges was given by the Director of Colleges according to the students' economic status (as already discussed, this categorisation of economic class is messy but enough to provide a rough idea about the economic class stratification for the reader).

**Table 4: Sample colleges' names and number of their students**

College	Number	Category of Economic Class
Jinnah College for Women	1193	Upper Class
Home Economics College	2050	Upper Middle
Frontier College for Women	2000	Lower Middle
City Girls College	1000	Working Class

### **3.16. Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are important keys that are very effective for research process. However these concepts arise from the positivist paradigm, so many researchers reject them and discuss these matters differently, for example Hammersly (2001). Letherby (2003) proposes that feminist methodology is an anti-positivistic orientation that employs multiple methodologies and paradigms and challenges the notion of the adequacy and validity of empirical rules and norms. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) went further in claiming that feminist methodology employs a post-positivist jargon of validity, reliability, credibility and multi-method research strategies. Validity and reliability are the requirement for both qualitative and quantitative research (Cohen et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, to check the reliability of data, the test-retest procedure has been used in which an instrument is used and then used again with the same subjects and the sets of result is compared. Cohen et al. (2007:76) state that the time interval between test and retest may be an important consideration in deciding whether to use this procedure. If the interval is too short, subjects' memories of the test may influence the retest. If it is too long, the subjects' beliefs and behaviours may have changed, and that might affect their responses (Cohen et al., 2007:76). Keeping in mind these potential hazards, the optimum time interval was fixed with great care. The interval between the test and the retest was six months after the initial survey.

This study focused on external and internal validity, as according to Hantrains and Mangen (2007, cited in Cohen et al., 2007) ‘internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. In some degree this concerns accuracy, which can be applied to quantitative and qualitative research’. Hamersley (2001:69) suggests that the internal validity of the qualitative data can be measured by its plausibility, credibility and clarity. Depending on the types and amounts of evidence, the greater the claim that is being made, the more convincing the evidence has to be for the claim. Therefore, reliability and validity are potentially very useful considerations in the design of a research study. Special attention has been given to addressing the requirements of validity and reliability in this study in order to maintain authenticity of the data. Therefore validity was achieved by considering the socio-economic background of the sample women in my study in order to compare responses.

### **3.17. Concluding Comments**

This section discussed the methodological framework and data collection tools of this study with special reference to feminist methodology, where the standpoint of the researcher and the researched sample create a new emancipatory knowledge. As a feminist researcher, I described how my background and the genesis of this research study put me in a unique position to conduct research in the present Pukhtunkhwah. My inspirations from Pourzand (2003) Letherby (2003) and Hussain (1995) took me from a daughter of Shamaas Gul Khattak to an in-between researcher making a bridge between Eastern and Western theories.

The present political situation of Pakistan, particularly in Pukhtunkhwah, means this study will be a milestone for the future researchers in terms of socio-cultural and educational experiences of Pukhtunkhwah. Although this study does not paint a complete picture of women’s higher educational experiences, it gives some glimpses of their untold stories.

Hussain’s (1995) methodological pattern further validates my methodological and time triangulations in a broader context of Pakistan. I was confident that her data collection tools would help me to find more objective answers that would help the education department of Pukhtunkhwah, because the domain of education, according to the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Pakistan Constitution, is declared as a provincial measure. Therefore, all four provinces of the country should consider their provincial social and cultural constraints in designing their new gendered educational policy.

### **3.18. Summary**

The methodology of this research has been based on theories of the relevant literature search, that socio-cultural and educational factors should be considered during the application of all research instruments at all levels. In this chapter, I have set out the feminist basis and impulse behind and characteristics of my methodology, and I have described, rationalised and justified my choice of a mixed-methods selection of data collection approaches—qualitative and quantitative. I have also described the reasons for and characteristics of the women I interviewed and of the colleges where I carried out my quantitative, questionnaire study. The next two chapters (IV, V) will give the detailed data of the research process along with linking theoretical and empirical data in order to the formulate conclusions for the research. For the purposes of clarity, stages in the research are presented in separate sections.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

#### **UNTOLD STORIES OF THE SAMPLE WOMEN**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into three sections: the Initial Survey, the Audit Survey and the Post Survey. The process of data collection that is tabulated in Table 3 in Research Methodology Chapter was implemented as follows:

The first stage of data collection was the Initial Survey, which I conducted in September 2008, and which contained a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The original sample size was 40; 10 sample women each from the four sample colleges of Pukhtunkhwah. None of these women were a part of my pilot study.

The second stage of my research was the Audit Survey, which I conducted in April 2009. The original structured questionnaire was distributed among larger sample of 172 women from four sample colleges. The Initial Survey Group was not a part of this larger survey. The larger sample was helpful because there was very little reliable data available on gender and higher education in Pukhtunkhwah. Thus, 172 (43 sample women from each college) participated in this survey.

The third stage, the Post Survey, was conducted a year later in September 2009. Once again, a structured questionnaire was distributed among the original 40 sample women of the Initial Survey and four Focused Interviews were conducted. The interviewees were randomly selected from each economic class (upper, higher middle, lower middle and working class) sample women. The selection of my focused focus group was made from my Initial Survey sample women group.

## 4.2 SECTION I

### THE INITIAL SURVEY

As mentioned earlier the Initial Survey Questionnaire was distributed among the sample women of the four selected colleges. To help better understand the pedagogical environment in Pukhtunkwah, a profile of these colleges can be found in Appendix III. My original sample comprises 10 sample women from each college following the random sampling strategy. The initial survey discussed the following issues:

- a. Economic Class
- b. Parental Education
- c. Mothers' Professional Life
- d. The Language of Instructions
- e. Preference of Marriage or Higher Education
- f. Career versus Family

#### a) Economic Class

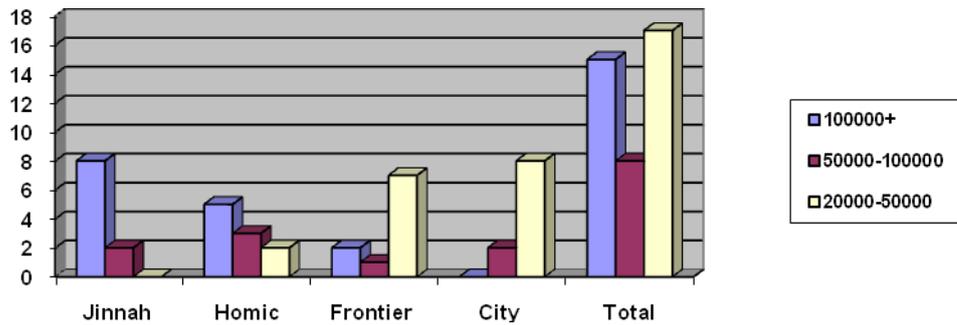
To investigate my sample women's economic class I inferred it from their fathers' monthly income (in Pakistani Rupees). The primary emphasis on fathers' occupation was checked out against monthly income. Classification of economic classes was as follows:

100,000 + Pakistani Rupees	=	Upper Class
50,000 to 100000	=	Middle Class
20,000 to 50,000	=	Working Class

For the purpose of this study, I used a rough classification of economic class in my literature review as upper, middle and working class occupations. As I mentioned earlier, the sample women's residential areas were excluded as an indication of their economic status because some upper class people in Pukhtunkwah prefer to live in their old big family houses, while some middle class people reside in luxurious bungalows in the cities.

The initial survey explored Jinnah College, with 85% upper class fathers and 15% middle class, Home Economics College, with 50% upper class, 20% middle, and 30% working class fathers and Frontier, with 30% upper, 35% middle and 35% working class fathers. City University had 5% upper, 25% middle class and 65% working class fathers.

**Fathers' monthly income, to explore the economic class**

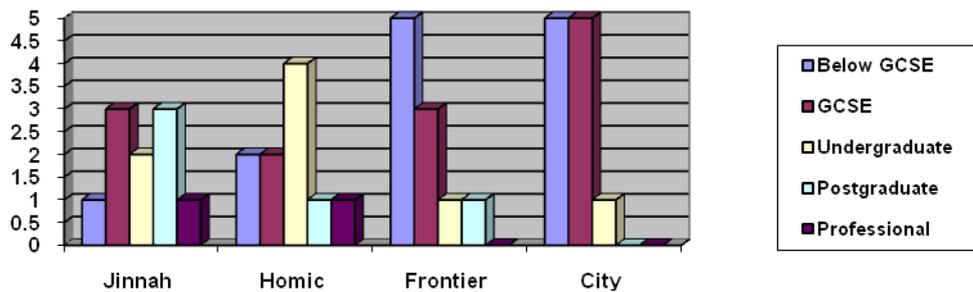


**b) Parental Education:**

The results reported a correlation between the sample women's economic class and their college attendance. The mothers' standard of education and their professional life were not considered in ascribing economic class, because in Pukhtunkhwah society, fathers are the bread earners for the family, so most of the mothers do not work. Therefore, education is also preferentially given to men in the family. The following graph shows the Pakistani qualifications compared to the British equivalent certificates or degrees.<sup>16</sup>

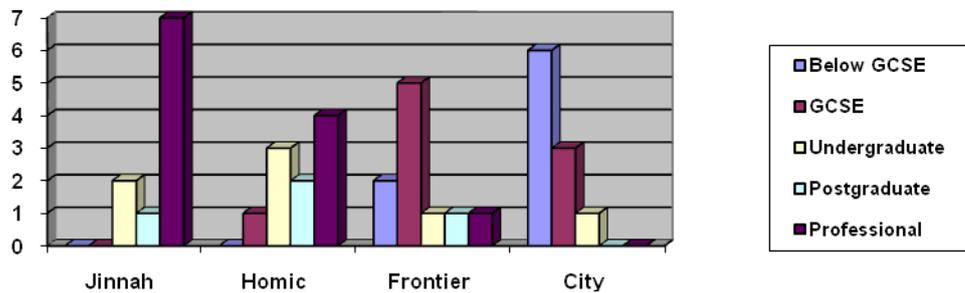
**Parental education**

**Mothers**



<sup>16</sup>Pakistani qualifications are not equivalent to the British qualifications. According to UK NARIC Matriculation (Matic) which is a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) is below GCSE, Intermediate (Inter) comparable to GCSE, undergraduate (BA/BSc) is considered A-levels and Postgraduate (MA/MSc.) is equivalent to degree.

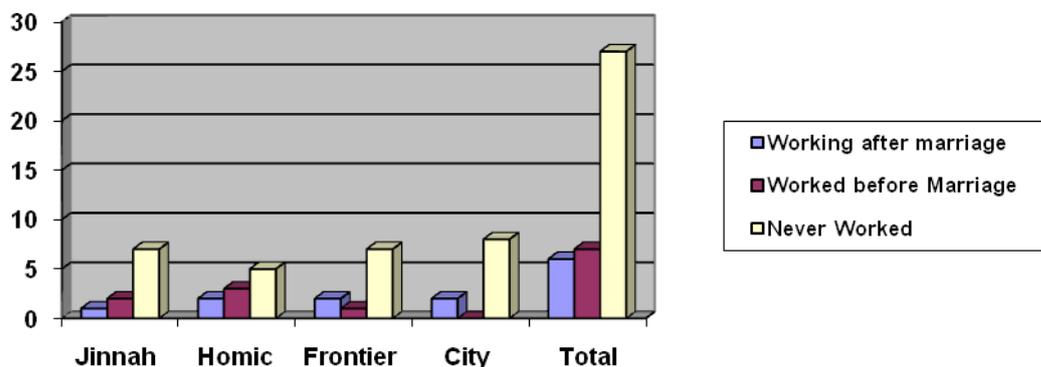
## Fathers



The data analysis indicated that higher education is highest for upper class fathers. The standard of education of mothers was lower than that of the fathers. This is because Pukhtun men do not necessarily get married to highly educated women. Most of the marriages in society are arranged by the family. However, as compared to working class, the upper and middle class parents were more educated. In other words, education in Pakistan is for wealthy people.

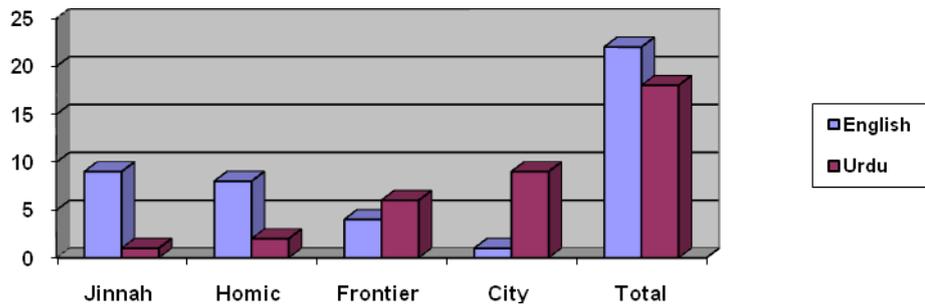
## Mothers' professional life

Hussain (1995) argued that her choice of the variable of mothers' professional life in her study was to check the inclination of her sample for higher education. However I also thought it necessary to examine the sample women's mothers' professional life because it might serve as an example for them to follow their footsteps. In Pukhtun society, we are lacking women as role models, who are good mothers as well as great professionals.



30% of the sample women's mothers did some kind of paid work outside their homes after marriage, whereas 70% had never worked at all. Therefore the sample women never have seen women with a successful professional career within the family and in society.

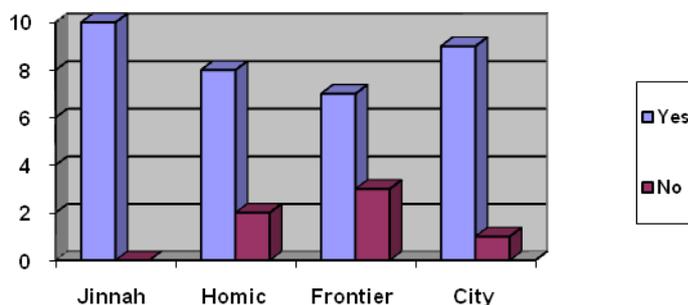
### **c) The language of instruction**



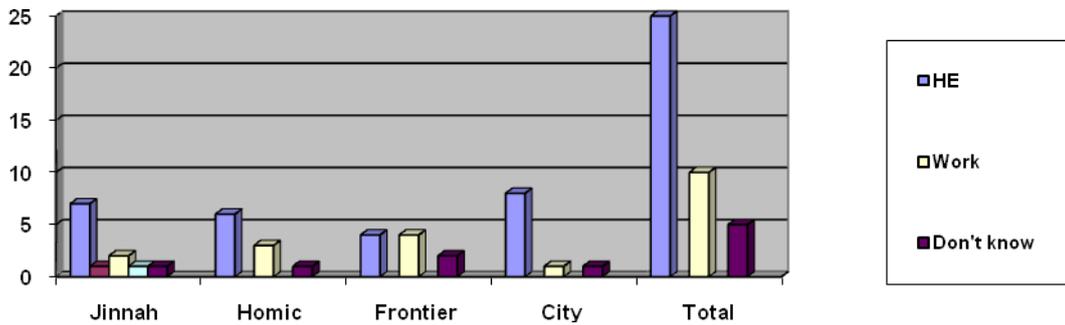
The Initial Survey found another correlation between economic class and medium of instruction. Most of the Jinnah and Home Economics upper class sample women (90%) received their education in English medium schools, while majority of Frontier and City colleges' middle and working class sample women received their education in Urdu. The middle and working class small percentage (3%) sample women went for non-elite English medium schools, which have much lower standards than elite class English medium schools in the country. I will discuss this further in my data analysis chapter.

### **d) Preference of marriage over higher education**

The majority of the sample women preferred marriage over continuation of their higher education across all the four colleges. Jinnah was the top (75%), followed by the rest of the three colleges, with 70% (Frontier), 60% (City) and 55% (Home Economics) of the sample women.



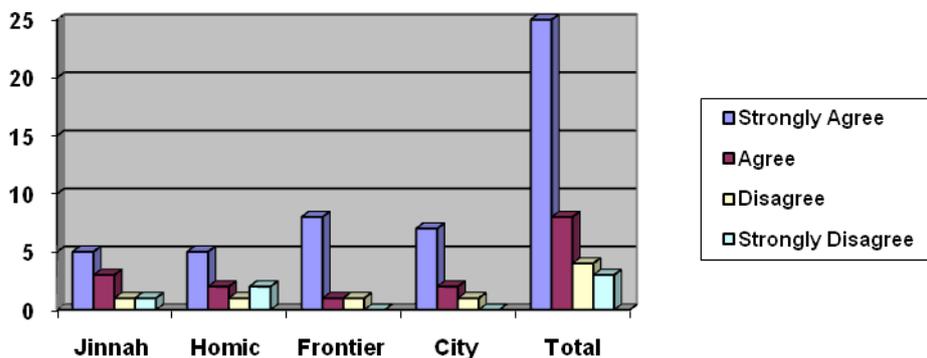
**e) Work or higher education**



It was very interesting for me that most of my sample women (60%) chose higher education as compared to work after their BA/BSc degree, while 28% wanted to work soon after their degree completion. These were mostly lower middle and working class women. This was followed by 20% sample women who were not sure about their future. Their parents will decide their future, whether to continue with the higher education or do some sort of work. I noticed variation in their responses linked to their economic class.

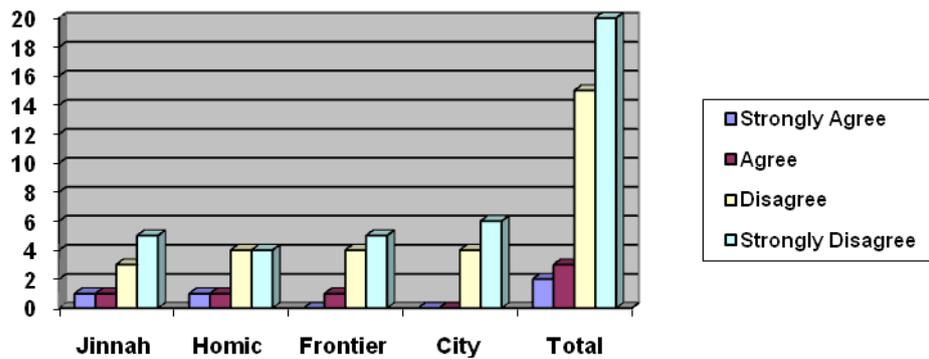
**f) Career versus Family**

The sample women were asked their feelings on the statement: **a successful family (husband and children) is more important than a successful career**. The majority of them strongly agreed with the statement: family matters, and successful husband, children are more important than a career.



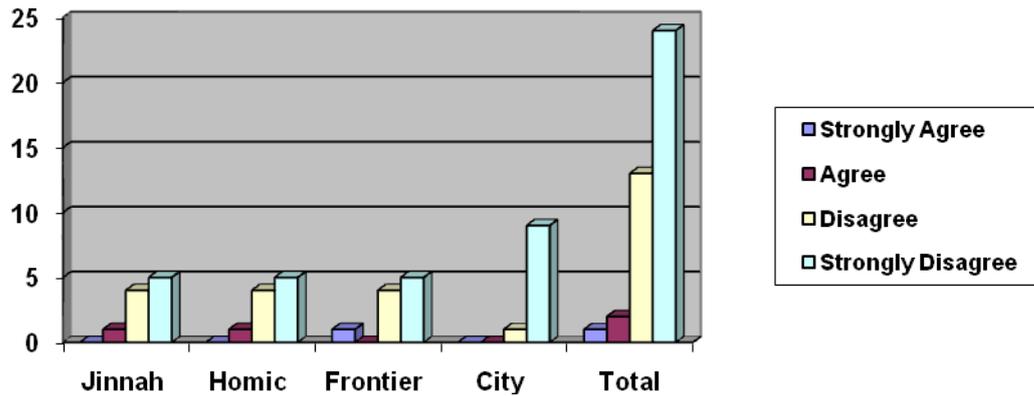
Thus, 80% of the sample from Jinnah agreed with the statement that a woman would be strongly satisfied and happy with having a complete family rather than having a professional career, followed by 75% from Home Economics and 84% from Frontier and City colleges respectively. The opposition was minimal: 20% from Jinnah, 25% from Home

Economics and 16% from Frontier and City 80% of sample women agreed and 20% disagreed with the statement. The sample women’s definition of a complete family was: a husband with a good career and salary with children, but more sons and fewer daughters. Therefore, I then asked them to give their feelings on the following statement: **women can get satisfaction with only daughters as offspring?**



Thus, 90% of the sample disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (90% Jinnah, 70% Home Economics, 90% Frontier, and 100% City). 20% from Jinnah and Home Economics agreed or strongly agreed, while 10% of Frontier agreed and none from the City college sample woman agreed. So, a total of 30% of the sample women agreed with the statement. However, in the later stages of data collection, some of these women came up with a slightly changed point of view.

In extension to the above statement, I wanted to investigate the point of view of my sample women about working or professional women status in Pukhtunkhwah society. There are very few examples of women as role models in education and medicine, such as gynaecologists, or lecturers and professors. As I mentioned in my literature review, the society does not give respect to those women who work in non-segregated environments. So, the next statement was: **a woman can be both a successful mother and a professional worker.**



A minimal 8% of sample women agreed with the statement. 93% of the women strongly disagreed or disagreed. 100% of the City sample strongly disagreed or disagreed, followed by 90% of Jinnah and Home Economics and Frontier.

Based on the Hussain (1995) triangulated pattern, the above three statements reveal much about the women's general perception of the care-giving role and career conflicts as well as the preference of having sons rather than daughters only. The sample women did not challenge the existing mindset of the society. Similarly, having a family and children, for the sample women, was more important than having a career. My sample women were aware of the conflict between care-giving and the pursuit of a career, but they gave greater importance to pursuing a care-giving role in the future, rather than pursuing a career (I discuss this further in my focused interviews).

## 4.3 SECTION II

### THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The semi-structured interviews of the original 40 sample women from the four colleges were a part of my initial survey. According to Hussain (1995), they provide the opportunity to talk to the sample women in detail to cross-check the responses against the questions in the questionnaire. Furthermore, these interviews allow the researcher to investigate the attitudes and views of the sample women and their families. I transcribed all the interviews: some of the excerpts are given below with the original question:

#### **Q1. Have you chosen this college and your subjects combination for your BA/BSc?**

The majority of the upper class sample women were studying in their favourite college and their own choice of subject combinations (Zoology and Botany or Maths and Statistics, etc.). However their first option was to join the medical colleges, but because they earned only a higher merit or below in their entry aptitude test, they were left with only one option: to enrol in BA/BSc courses. Similarly, the middle class and working class sample women had less interest in their degree; some of their subjects were not available in their colleges, but their parents' financial burden and the hassle of arranging public transport for them compelled them to enrol locally. Notable responses were:

*'I had a desire to join KMC (Khyber Medical College) but alas! I could not qualify, so there is only choice left for me to do any kind of BSc degree now' (Jinnah).*

*'I like my college and my subjects' combination; I am happy with them now, although these were not my first choices. My second option was Pharmacy, but my parents did not allow me to do that. . . they said I will work with men, so just study a BSc degree' (Home Economics).*

*'I have chosen my subjects, as the college did not offer the subjects that I wanted to study, but I live locally, so I preferred this college. Other colleges are too far from my house' (Frontier).*

*'With the help of my parents and siblings, I finalised my subjects' combination because I do not want to fail in the final year of my BA' (City).*

I felt disappointment and dissatisfaction in the sample women's responses of Jinnah, Frontier and City colleges BSc degree, while the Home Economics and BA students were more satisfied and enjoying their study.

*'I do not know why our parents and society put in our mind that the only profession in which a woman can stand out in her family is medicine. Because I dreamed about having that career, it is hard for me now to adjust with these new subjects' (Jinnah).*

*'I do not like these subjects, but I can't do anything [about it] as I have to at least finished my degree' (Frontier). 'I am happy with my college and subjects because it was my choice and my parents supported me' (Home Economics)*

Thus most of the sample women were continuing with their degree, whether they like or not.

## **Q2. What would be your family response if you want to go for higher education?**

30% of the sample women specified that their family men will encourage them to obtain a higher education, while 10% were facing confrontation from the male members of their family. Interestingly, the brothers and the cousin brothers and uncles of the sample women from extended families were more in the opposition to their sisters and nieces receiving higher education than their fathers (this aspect of brothers' influence was one of the key findings of this study and will be discussed in depth in my next data analysis chapter).

Here are a few quotations from the sample women:

*'All of my family members are interested in me pursuing a higher education. I saw mixed reactions of my family men towards women's higher education, so I would say it varies from person to person. One of my cousin's sisters was forced to get married after her BA because of a good marriage proposal from a family, but her husband allowed her to continue higher education after marriage' (Jinnah).*

*'My mother, father, brothers and sisters all asked me to study my MSc. They are encouraging me because BSc is not a good qualification now, so let's see!' (Home Economics).*

*'My father and uncles are broad minded and will allow me to pursue higher education, but my mother, brothers and cousins (brothers) are reluctant. I heard them saying to my father and uncles that girls should not be highly educated because then it would be hard to find a suitable proposal for them after their BA. Really! I am not sure about their response now' (Frontier).*

*'My family men love women to be educated and independent, but the family resources are scare. Therefore, we might go for distance education or any other postgraduate college. University education is very expensive and my family will not allow me to study in a co-education setting' (City).*

## **Q3. What would be the response of your family men regarding your paid work after higher education?**

The entire sample women were in favour of a segregated work environment, similar to their family men, but the men were more in favour of a career in teaching and medicine only. I was surprised that all medical colleges of Pukhtunkhwah have co-education, but that was not an issue for the family men. They were willing to send their women there. As mentioned earlier, these professions are considered respectable; however, the medical

colleges' aptitude entry test is very competitive in Pakistan, so very few people can join this profession. Consequently, most of the women in Pukhtunkhwah are engaged in the teaching profession because of its easy access and low standards.

*'Some of my family women are doctors and college principals—now the new generation is involved in IT professions but are discouraged due to mixed-gender work environments' (Jinnah).*

*'It's all depends on my grades, MSc. degree and the working environment. Then, my family will decide what is best for me. I live in extended family; therefore, I have to ask all my family men (uncles and cousins, etc). Apparently they might have no objection, but we are a bit strict in purdah observance' (Home Economics).*

*'I don't know . . . [Pause] we do not have a tradition of women working in my family. My father and brothers will not allow [me to work]. My brothers will kill me if I ask them (the subject appeared to be scared). But to be very honest, [I] do not really know now. . . [I am] not sure whether they will allow me [to] or not? I will try after my degree' (Frontier).*

*'I think my family will allow me; [they] would be willing to some extent... We have a traditional family pattern; we do not encourage women to work. I saw my family women always cooking, washing and serving for men. However, now my parents need my financial help to collect a good dowry for my marriage. Therefore, I am a bit hopeful that they would allow me and will show some positive response' (City).*

Jinnah and City sample women were more willing towards women's careers and well-being. However, their approaches were totally different from each other. Career for Jinnah is a status symbol, while for City it is financial assistance. Home Economics and Frontier women were reluctant or confused about whether or not to share their family men's approach towards women in a professional career, or they were unsure about the unpredictable nature of Pukhtun men. 40% of sample women indicated a kind of positive reaction or willingness of their family men towards women work, but in a segregated environment. And, in total, 60% of the sample women indicated male disapproval for women with their career. Resistance to women's work was least amongst the Jinnah's sample (20%); this was followed by City (35%), Home Economics (50%) and Frontier (60%).

#### **Q4. What are your plans/views about future (career, education, marriage etc)?**

My sample women were indecisive regarding their future plans, because they never had an experience of deciding or doing anything on their own. Their families have had a great contribution in deciding their future regarding their education, career and marriage. About

35% of the sample women wanted to teach, followed by 25 % who wanted a good career, but were not sure about the field of study and work, while 11% wanted to get married and enjoy their family life.

*'To be very honest I just want to get married to a rich person, sit at home have lovely children, and just enjoy my life [laughing] because at the end of the day I am a woman and I have to do all these household things . . . there's no choice, it's simple, so why not now?'* (Jinnah).

*'I want to join a textile designing company; I would really love to be a textile designer, have my own designer clothes and material. However there are very limited opportunities for women in Pukhtunkhwah; I need to move to Lahore or Faisalabad'* (Home Economics).

*'It would be interesting in the teaching profession. [It has] less tension, more holidays and also a relaxing, segregated, women-only environment'* (Frontier).

*'I don't really know . . . I am living in the present and have never thought about my future . . . my future is always very scary, so wherever my Allah takes me I would be happy'* (City).

#### **Q5. Is religion an important aspect of life?**

My sample women showed an apparent acceptance of religion as a set of rules that they need to follow in their daily lives. However, their understanding was limited to whatever they were taught by family members and in school. Islamic Studies is a core subject in Pakistan up to the degree level and in all professional medical and engineering colleges. The syllabus is based on most of what to do as Muslim rather than why to do it, which gives superficial knowledge to the students. My sample women's religion was stuck in their culture, and they only turned to it in times of hardships. The most sensible comments were *'I love my religion because it gives me strength'* (Jinnah), and *'religion is a part of my life that guides me throughout'* (Frontier). However, I noted the repetition of almost identical terminology with regard to religion from the sample women. They were using ideas and phraseology from their Islamic studies text book:

*'Islam is a religion of equality and peace'* (Home Economics).

*'I believe that my faith is a source of my inspirations'* (Frontier).

*'Islam is the complete code of my life'* (City).

Their answers were very superficial; at times I had the feeling that they were just answering to fill a gap under the question. For my sample women, religion means to pray five

times a day when they are in trouble and to kiss the holy book Quran before going outside their houses. Thus, their limited understanding and closed answers did not allow me to discuss the topic in more detail. Therefore, I decided to include this question in my focus interview. However, there was not a single statement from any sample women about understanding and implementing the Islamic ethos in their lives. In their understanding, religion and personal life are two separate things.

#### **Q6. Do you recommend women's only universities for women in Pukhtunkhwah?**

Women's universities across the country, but particularly in Pukhtunkhwah, are in strong demand due to the Pukhtuns' strict observance of the *purdah* tradition. There was willingness among women of all economic statuses for women's only universities. The upper and upper middle class, though, have no restrictions to continue their higher education but their sympathies were with the other economic classes:

*Yes! There should be women's only universities in our province, as most women discontinue their education after their BA/BSc because of co-education, so if separate university can solve the problem then I would recommend a chain of universities around the country' (Jinnah).*

*'I think our society is very conservative regarding co-education; because we cannot change people's mentality, than why not set up separate women's universities as an alternative solution? Because we cannot fight against patriarchy, so there should be a way out' (Home Economics).*

*'Our country is a poor country and we always have a lack of recourses for education because most of our GDP goes to Pak Fojj (Pakistan Army) [sarcastically laughing], so with such limited resources, how would it be possible? However, at the moment, the government should upgrade the existing colleges to Post-graduate to offer at least MA/MSc degrees, but I am in favour of separate women's institutes' (Frontier).*

*'Absolutely, I am not only in favour of women only universities but also free tuition or scholarships for women too, because lifelong higher education is a kind of money. We have to increase women only opportunities in the education setting' (City).*

Thus, the entire sample of women recommended the setting up of women's only colleges and universities in the country, especially in Pukhtunkhwah. They were pragmatic in their answers: for example, they wanted a platform for women to initiate a way out to achieve higher education. Their educational and societal observations and experiences made them more sympathetic towards their fellow women students to think selflessly. They expressed no confidence in unisex educational environments.

It is interesting to observe that the sample women of all economic classes were keen for their higher education. In spite of limited opportunities for women's work and education, their enthusiasm was a positive sign of encouragement. Most of the universities are located in urban areas of the province, so rural area women are deprived from higher education. Distance from educational institutes is one of the key variables of this study that I will discuss further in my data analysis chapter. Some of my sample women showed a degree of determination to pursue higher education in the future, but the lack of a women's university in their area would restrain them. One woman said:

*'if you are determined about your education than no one can stop you, but you need to find a socially and culturally acceptable way'*(Home Economics).

However, 60% of the sample women showed their fear of discontinuation of higher education.

*'My parents will not allow me to go to Peshawar University: first it is a co-education university, and second, it's far away from my residence. The university does not provide any kind of transport facility, and public transport is not a safe option'* (Frontier).

The Jinnah and Home Economics sample women were not worried about their continuation of higher education because these colleges are located within the premises of the University of Peshawar. Therefore, their enrolment was ensured. However, 10% of Home Economics sample women thought university might be a best option for them to express themselves freely in co-curricular activities.

*'I am the best player of badminton and the best athlete. As a woman, I have certain restrictions in front of men. In a co-education setting, my parents will not allow me to participate in sport activities. Therefore, I would prefer a women's only university to study whatever I want and to play whatever I want to play'* (Home Economics).

#### **Q7. Are you satisfied with the prevailing education system in Pukhtunkhwah?**

Most of the sample women criticised the present system of education, because of its encouragement for rote memorisation and because of malpractice in the examination's administration. The textbooks are rarely revised in state schools. Also, state schools are for the poor and private schools with high fees are for the privileged, dividing the society in to a class system.

*'I am not at all satisfied with our education. We adopted our education system from our colonial masters to promote the class system in our society. The English left the country ages ago but they made us slaves mentally'* (Home Economic).

*'The only aim of our education system is encouraging rote memorisation, no creativity. We are reproducing the text of our textbooks in exams, so how a person should be satisfied with such low standards of education'* (Frontier).

*'Our education system is the most deprived department of our country. We cannot compete with the rest of world. I am studying my BA only for the sake of a degree to get a teaching job –that's it. Education is limited to a piece of paper now. People judge you on the basis of your degree, not your abilities'* (City).

Most of the sample women perceived the education they were receiving to be of poor standard. They felt dissatisfied by this: *'our education is producing paper degree holders or educated Jahils (ignorant) in our society'* (Jinnah). Moreover, a feeling existed among some of the sample women that courses in education in the country were not applicable to real life and would consequently not necessarily culminate in a job for them. A sample woman stated *'I am studying my BA Maths and State (Statistics) and I am not sure what I will do in future with this degree... the only option is obvious to take a teaching job'*(Frontier).

I will discuss this further in the following chapter; the data shows a clear class correlation here. Some of the responses are class-related, with the elite/ upper class students presenting notably different views from the working class sample. As mentioned earlier, most of the sample women of Jinnah and Home economics were upper class, while Frontier had some upper middle and middle class, and City, lower middle and working class women. The class composition of the student body at these four colleges is detailed in the opening section of Chapter 4.7 (Section VI). Such an analysis would seem to build towards validating a Marxist Feminist analysis.

#### 4.4 SECTION III

##### THE AUDIT SURVEY OF APRIL 2009

To audit my Initial Survey findings, the Audit Survey was conducted on 172 women from my chosen sample, four colleges other than the original sample of 40. Thus, 43 students, each from the fourth year (BA/BSc final year), of Jinnah, Home Economics, Frontier and City were randomly selected to cross check-the findings with the Initial Survey. They were all Muslim women between the ages of 18-19 years old. I presented the data in comparison to my Initial Survey data in graphs. This survey was conducted in April 2009, seven months after my Initial Survey. The questionnaire was distributed among the sample in one of their normal college days. All the sample women of the Audit Survey did not join in any other data collection instruments of this study. Similar to my Initial Survey, the fathers' monthly income and occupation were used as rough indicators of the sample women's economic class. Thus, Jinnah was considered to have the highest number of upper class fathers, followed by Home Economics, Frontier and City.

Hussain (1995) highlighted in her study that the small sample of her study created difficulties to apply any statistical tests, such as  $\chi^2$  (Chi Square) and z-test (of proportions) for comparison of data from different research tools. However, she selected homogeneity test of  $\chi^2$  to compare her Initial and Parallel Surveys, because the sample size of these research instruments were comparatively larger.

General table and formula for test of homogeneity<sup>17</sup>

<u>Survey</u>	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
<u>Jinnah</u>	( $a_1$ )	( $b_1$ )	( $c_1$ )
<u>Home Economics</u>	( $a_2$ )	( $b_2$ )	( $c_2$ )
<u>Frontier</u>	( $a_3$ )	( $b_3$ )	( $c_3$ )
<u>City</u>	( $a_4$ )	( $a_4$ )	( $c_4$ )
<u>Total</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>N</u>

<sup>17</sup> For full statistical details see Hussain, N. (1995) Perceptions of a Sample of Female College Students towards their Higher Educational Opportunities in Lahore, Pakistan [Doctoral Thesis] Brunel University London.

To follow Hussain (1995) statistical analysis formula I compared my data of Audit and Initial surveys too which is two independent samples are calculated the values of  $\chi^2$  by

using this formula: 
$$\chi^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_1^2}{c_1} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right]$$

N = Total number of observations.

A = Sum of values of first sample.

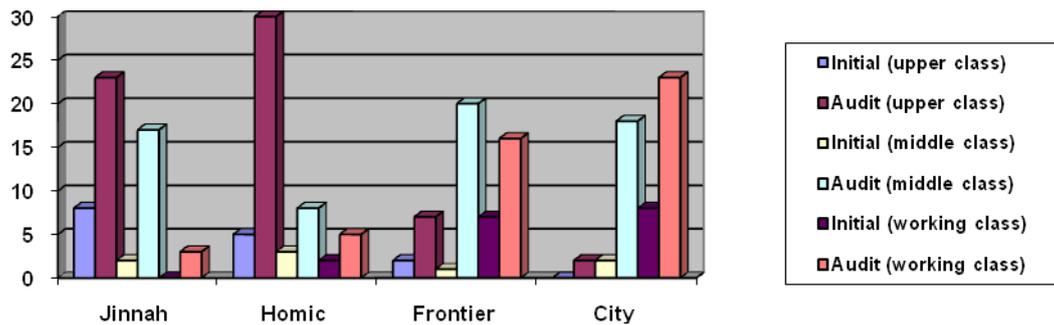
B = Sum of the value of second sample.

$a_1$  = Values of the first sample.

$c_1 = (a_1 + b_1)$  = Sum of values of first sample and second sample.

There are (n – 1) degrees of freedom.

**A Comparison of economic class between the initial and audit surveys**



The Audit Survey revealed that Home Economics had the most upper class students (60%), with Jinnah in second place (40%), unlike my Initial Survey. The fathers of the Home Economics sample women came up with high income as compared to the Jinnah. As I mentioned earlier, both the colleges are situated in the premises of University of Peshawar, which is a learning environment that attracts the top students of Pukhtunkhwah. Also, there is a quota for the University of Peshawar employees, so some working class (7%) women appeared in the Jinnah and Home Economics sample too. Another significant change from the Initial Survey of 2008 was that more working class women in Frontier and City colleges appeared. Few upper class fathers also arose in City as well, which thus provided one of my high numbers of working class sample women. Thus the statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	08	23	31
Homic	05	30	35
Fortier	02	07	09
City	0	2	02
Total	15	62	77

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{ with } (n - 1) \text{d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

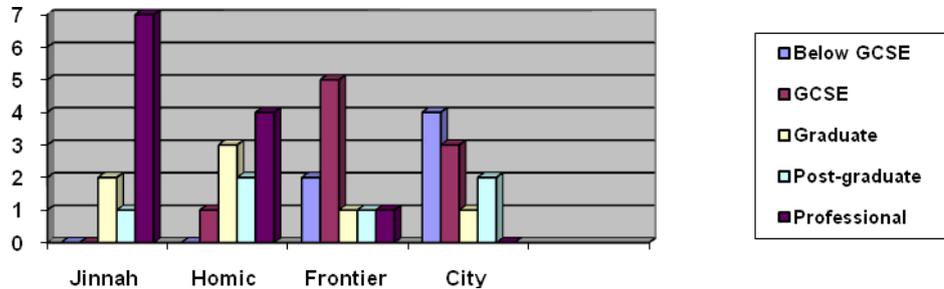
Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(77)^2}{(15)(62)} \left[ \frac{08}{31} + \frac{05}{35} + \frac{02}{9} + \frac{0}{02} - \frac{(15)^2}{77} \right] \\ &= \frac{5929}{930} (0.294) \\ &= 1.87 \end{aligned}$$

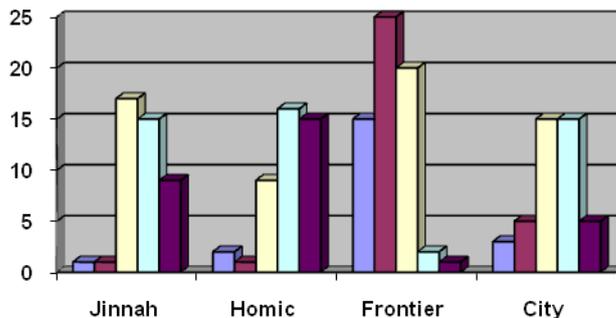
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 1.87, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and consulted that our both surveys are homogeneous.

## Fathers' standard of education

### Initial Survey



### Audit Survey



The Audit Survey about the standard of sample women's fathers' education was slightly different from the Initial Survey results. The largest percentage of below GCSE fathers were from Frontier (35%), followed by City (7%), Home Economics (5%) and Jinnah (3%). However Home Economic has the largest body of professional (35%) and post-graduate (40%) fathers. The second largest college with post-graduate fathers was City (35%), which also had 12% professional fathers. However, at City College, most of the fathers were from the education sector, which is one of the lowest paid departments in Pukhtunkhwah. There were a good number of fathers in Jinnah with graduate (40%) and professional degrees (21%). Home Economics had the largest number of qualified fathers, while Frontier had the lowest qualified fathers according to my Audit Survey.

I found a co-relation between the sample women's fathers' education and their monthly income. However, only holders of medical and engineering professional degrees had the high income that I categorised as upper class. The percentage of undergraduate fathers was high at Frontier (47%) as compared to Jinnah (40%), Home Economics (21%) and City

(35%). Most of the fathers of Frontier and City colleges go for distance education, which is the lowest standard of education in the country. I will discuss this further in my data analysis chapter. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	42	52
Homic	10	42	52
Frontier	10	63	73
City	10	24	34
Total	40	171	211

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{ with } (n - 1) \text{ d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

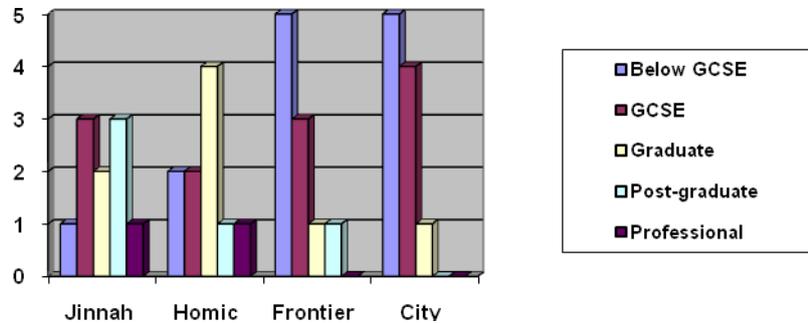
Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(211)^2}{(40)(171)} \left[ \frac{100}{52} + \frac{100}{52} + \frac{100}{73} + \frac{100}{34} - \frac{(40)^2}{211} \right] \\ &= \frac{44521}{6840} (0.5) \\ &= 3.254 \end{aligned}$$

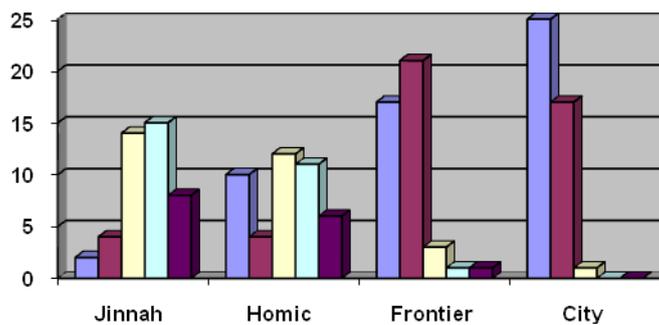
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 3.254, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous.

## Mothers' standard of education

### Initial Survey



### Audit Survey



The Audit Survey revealed that 18% of the Jinnah sample had a professional degree, though the college had also a large number of mothers with postgraduate degrees (35%) and graduate degrees (33%). 23% of the Home Economics mothers had left school before GCSE; only 10% had a GCSE qualification; 28% had graduate and 26% had postgraduate degrees, with a good number (14%) of professional qualifications. In a conservative place like Pukhtunkhwah, this is indeed a good percentage of professional degree qualification, but most of the mums were housewives and did not do any work after marriage.

40% and 50% of the mothers of the sample women of Frontier had below GCSE and GCSE qualifications, respectively. A minimal number of 3% had achieved postgraduate and professional qualifications. Similarly, 60% of the City sample had mothers with below GCSE and 40% with GCSE. None of their mothers had postgraduate degrees or professional qualifications. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	42	52
Homic	10	42	52
Frontier	10	43	53
City	10	42	52
Total	40	169	209

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

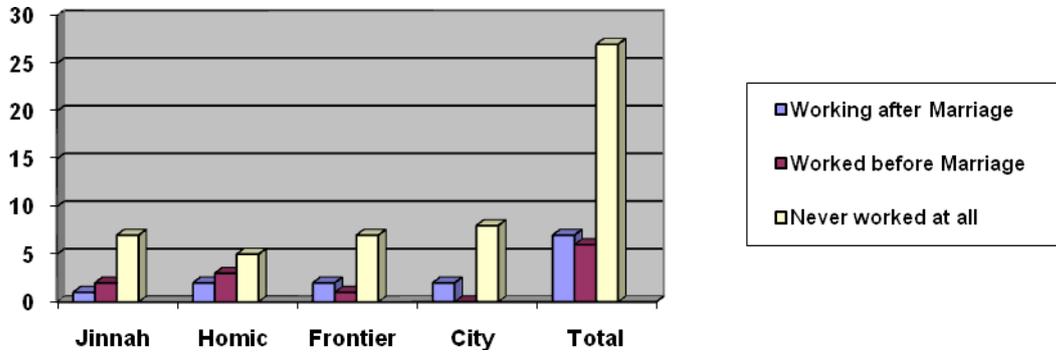
Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(209)^2}{(40)(169)} \left[ \frac{100}{52} + \frac{100}{52} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{52} - \frac{(40)^2}{209} \right] \\ &= \frac{43681}{6760} (0.101) \\ &= 0.652 \end{aligned}$$

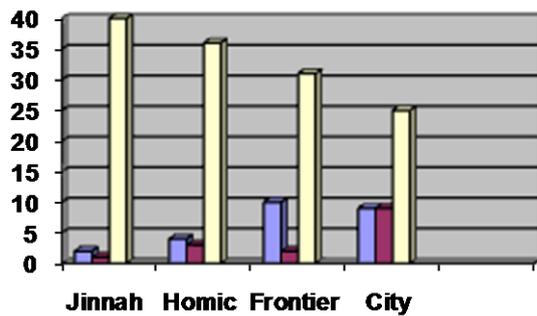
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 0.652, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and consulted that our both surveys are homogeneous.

## Mothers' professional lives

### Initial Survey



### Audit Survey



The sample women's mothers appeared to have no professional life, because the majority (77%) of the mothers had never worked in their lives. Only 15% did some sort of work after marriage, but those mothers were mostly from Frontier and City colleges. There was not a big difference between the sample women's responses as compared to the Initial Survey. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Frontier	10	43	53
City	38	43	81
Total	68	127	209

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{ d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

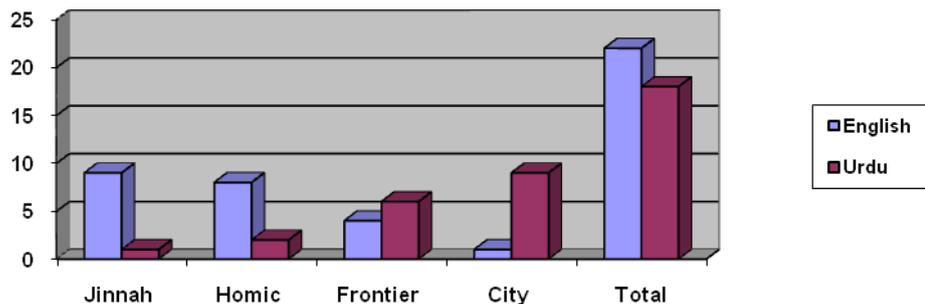
Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(209)^2}{(68)(127)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{1444}{81} - \frac{(68)^2}{209} \right] \\ &= \frac{43681}{8636} (0.28) \\ &= 1.416 \end{aligned}$$

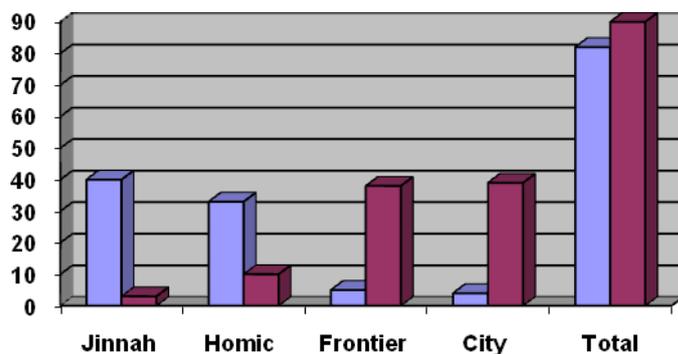
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 1.416, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous.

### Sample women's language of instruction

#### Initial Survey



## Audit Survey



95% of the sample women from Jinnah and 80% from Home Economics College used English as a medium of instruction and had been instructed in English since primary school. However, there were a small percentage of sample women in Frontier and City colleges (12% and 9%) that used English as well, but those English medium schools grow like mushrooms in Pukhtunkhwah society because of their low standards and low fee structure.

Compared to the findings of the Initial Survey, I cannot see a difference in the Audit Survey. Jinnah and Home Economics sample women studied and are studying in an English medium of instruction, while Frontier and City have some non-elite English-medium-instructed sample women, but they could not express themselves in English at all. The upper class fathers of City College did not send their daughters to English medium schools. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Frontier	10	43	53
City	38	168	206
Total	68	297	365

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

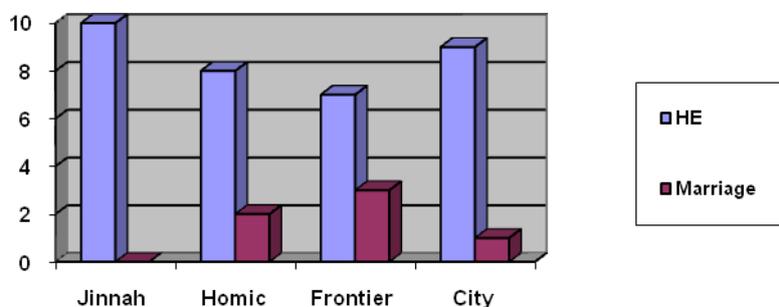
Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(365)^2}{(68)(297)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{1444}{206} - \frac{(68)^2}{365} \right] \\ &= \frac{133225}{18972} (0.20) \\ &= 1.404 \end{aligned}$$

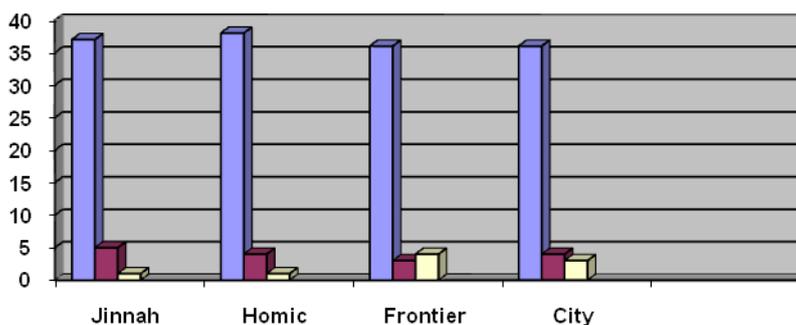
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 1.404, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous.

### Preference of marriage over higher education

#### Initial Survey



#### Audit Survey



Majority of the sample women gave preference to higher education rather than marriage. This was in contrast to the result of the Initial Survey; however, there was a minor shift among the sample women regarding marriage. The percentage who preferred marriage over higher education was 12% in Jinnah, 10% in Home Economics, 7% in Frontier and 10% in City. Furthermore, there was an adequate number of sample women who were unsure and ticked “don’t know” in their responses. They were very few from Jinnah (3%) and Home Economics (3%), but a good number from Frontier (10%) and City 7%.

The Audit Survey revealed that some sample women had a preference for marriage, and some were unsure. I agree with Hussain (1995), that cultural and social implications were involved in the data analysis process. However the issue of women and security provided a new theory form data analysis: my sample women were reluctant and fearful to discuss their intention for marriage and higher education. I will discuss this variable further in my data analysis chapter. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Frontier	10	43	53
City	10	43	53
Total	40	172	212

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$x^2 = \frac{(212)^2}{(40)(172)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} - \frac{(40)^2}{212} \right]$$

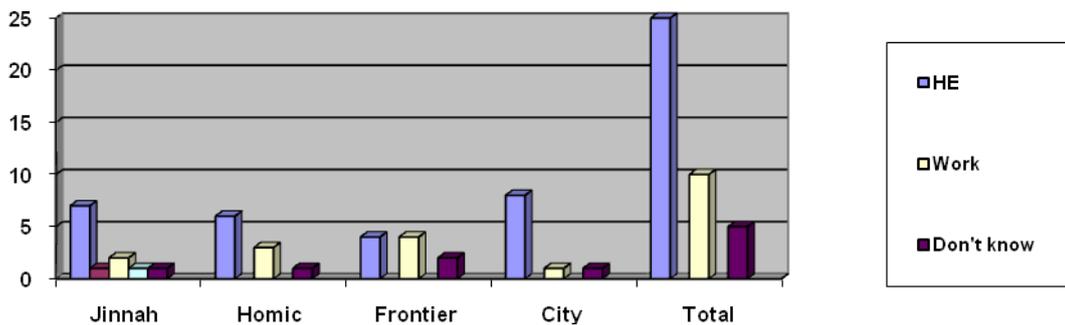
$$= \frac{44944}{6880} (0.20)$$

$$= 1.306$$

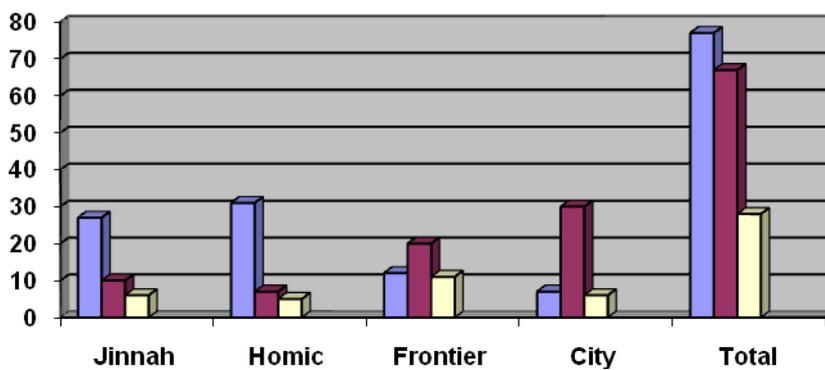
**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 1.306, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous.

**Work or higher education**

**Initial Survey**



**Audit Survey**



44% of the sample women chose higher education as compared to 40% in the Initial Survey; while 16% of sample women were unsure about their future in work and education. However, the majority of Jinnah (62%) and Home Economics (72%) sample women wanted to continue to their higher education. The sample women's perception was different from the Initial Survey; the Audit Survey revealed nearly an equal percentage of women wanted to continue higher education and work. Thus the statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Fortier	10	43	53
City	37	158	195
Total	67	287	354

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{ d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

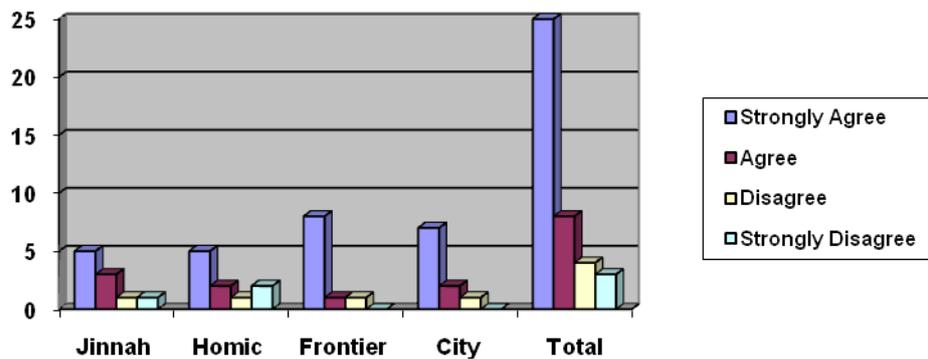
$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(354)^2}{(67)(287)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{1369}{195} - \frac{(67)^2}{357} \right] \\ &= \frac{125316}{19229} (0.07) \\ &= 0.45 \end{aligned}$$

**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 0.45, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous

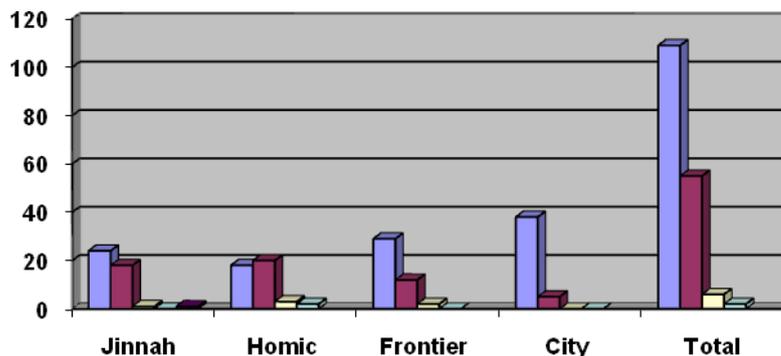
## Career versus Family

**A successful family (husband and children) life is more important than a successful career.**

### Initial Survey



### Audit Survey



Once again, a majority of the sample women strongly agreed (60%) or agreed (37%) with this statement; a successful family life is more important than a career. This is in contrast to the Initial Survey, in which 80% of the sample women strongly agreed with this statement.

In both surveys, there was no economic class difference in their perceptions about family and career. The sample women did not even think for a single minute before writing their answers. They immediately showed their preference for family over career. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Frontier	10	43	53
City	40	169	209
Total	70	298	368

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{ d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

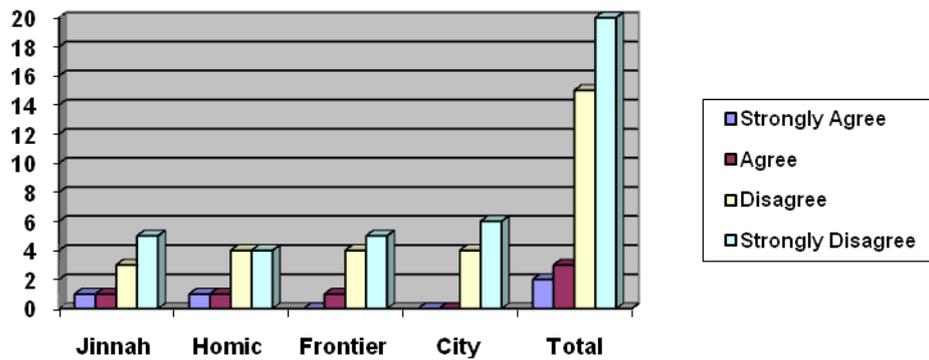
$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(360)^2}{(70)(298)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{1600}{209} - \frac{(70)^2}{368} \right] \\ &= \frac{129600}{20860} (0.301) \\ &= 1.87 \end{aligned}$$

**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 1.87, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous

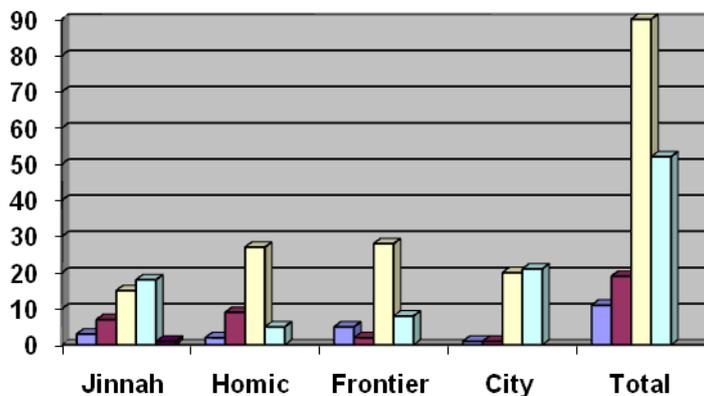
### **Perceptions about daughters-only offspring**

As I mentioned earlier, the sample women's definition of a complete family was a husband with a good career and salary with children, but more sons and fewer daughters. The Initial Survey explored the sample women perception; **would you be satisfied with the daughters-only offspring?** Surprisingly, none of the sample women wanted to be a mother of daughters only. The Audit survey responses were as follows:

**Initial Survey**



**Audit Survey**



The majority (83%) of the sample women in the study strongly disagreed and 17% disagreed with this statement. Once again, there was no economic class variation in their responses, which was similar to their responses to previous career versus family question. A mere 7% of sample women strongly agreed and 11% agreed. However, in the Initial Survey, 90% of the sample strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement (90% in Jinnah, 70% in Home Economics, 90% in Frontier, and 100% in City). 20% in Jinnah and Home Economics, 10% in Frontier, and none from the City sample woman agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. So, a total of 30% of the sample women agreed with the statement. The statistical analysis is:

Survey	Initial Survey (2008)	Audit Survey (2009)	Total
Jinnah	10	43	53
Homic	10	43	53
Frontier	10	43	53
City	40	176	216
Total	70	305	375

Formulation of null and alternative hypotheses:

$H_0$  = Two surveys results are homogeneous.

$H_1$  = Two surveys results are not homogeneous.

Level of significance is 5%.

Test statistics is:

$$x^2 = \frac{N^2}{AB} \left[ \sum_1 \frac{a_i^2}{c_i} - \frac{A^2}{N} \right] \text{with } (n - 1) \text{ d.f.}$$

Critical region is defined as:

$$x^2 \geq X^2_{0.05(1)} = 3.84$$

Now to calculate the value of  $x^2$ :

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{(375)^2}{(70)(305)} \left[ \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{100}{53} + \frac{1600}{216} - \frac{(70)^2}{375} \right] \\ &= \frac{140625}{21350} (0.501) \\ &= 3.82 \end{aligned}$$

**Conclusion:** As the tabulated value is greater than calculated value i.e. 3.82, hence we cannot reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$ , and concluded that our both surveys are homogeneous.

## **4.5 SECTION IV**

### **THE POST-SURVEY**

In September and October 2009, I conducted my post-survey exercise, which comprised a questionnaire and focused interviews involving the original 40 sample women. According to Hussain (1995:160),

The primary objective of the exercise was to ascertain the extent to which the respondents had adhered to their professed plans for higher education and to detect the interplay, if any, of socio-cultural factors, such as economic class, on their opportunities for higher education.

To achieve this aim, in September/October I contacted them through their colleges. These students had previously undertaken to come to the college to complete the questionnaires, which I sent together with their names list, to the principals of the colleges. In Peshawar, a graduation ceremony (convocation) for BA/BSc students only takes place every 2 to 3 years, depending on the number of students waiting to graduate. Therefore, most of the students collect their degree and transcripts from their colleges. Because of this situation, I was quite confident about the efficacy of the post survey questionnaire exercise. In order to ensure maximum participation, the college principals had all guaranteed that they would make sure that the sample women completed the questionnaires at the time of collecting the degree, certificates, transcripts or character references. I am really thankful to the admin staff who fulfilled their job tremendously.

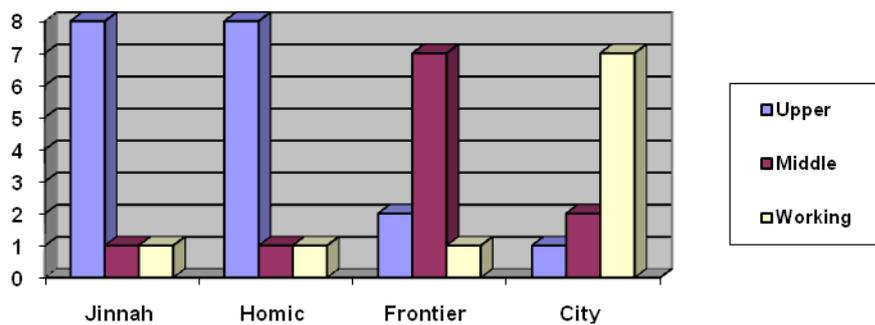
A few of my sample women were out of town, and some were unavailable due to one reason or another. One of the sample women had married and was living in another town, so I contacted her there via her parents to complete the post-survey questionnaire. As I mentioned earlier, being a Pukhtun native of Pukhtunkhwah, the same as my sample women, sample colleges' staff, the directorate of colleges, and sample women's parents, so they were all very co-operative. They really appreciated my study and the struggle to uplift Pukhtun women. They hoped that these academic research studies increased our women's participation in the higher education of Pukhtunkhwah.

The sample women who responded to the post-questionnaire received a reminder from the college to complete their questionnaire on schedule. None of my sample women discontinued their education; therefore, they were contacted easily by the college authorities and were asked to complete the questionnaire. Consequently, I retrieved 100% of the

responses from my sample women, which was indeed a good indication of the success of my study and its popularity in Pukhtunkhwah.

I was keen to access the economic class factor about the post sample after a year's time. Once again, their fathers' monthly income was a criterion to recognise their economic class. The post-survey slightly changed their economic class variation; now Jinnah and Home Economics both had the most upper class fathers.

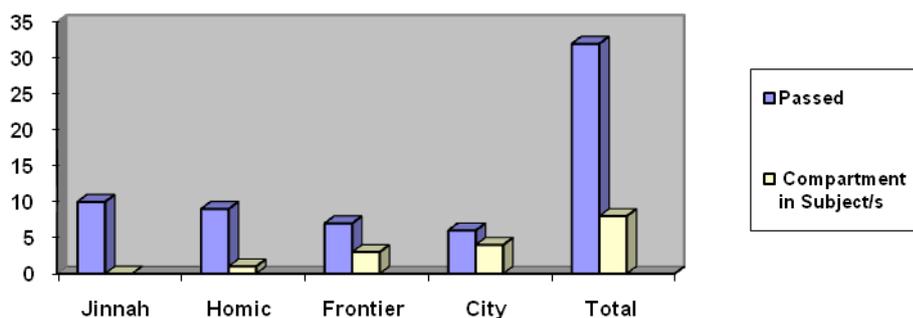
### 1. Sample women economic class



### 2. Eligibility of the Sample Women for their BA/BSc Examination

The eligibility criterion of the BA/BSc examination is unanimous around the country. Both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of the examination are conducted by a university to which a college is affiliated. In the case of my sample colleges, all of them were affiliated with the University of Peshawar. Similarly, across the country, all the regular students (that is, students who attended lessons regularly in the college) have to secure good grades in their internal written and practical examinations with 90% attendance. Keeping in mind the above said criteria of sitting in external final examinations, all the sample women were eligible to appear in their final examination.

### 3. Sample women's BA/BSc results

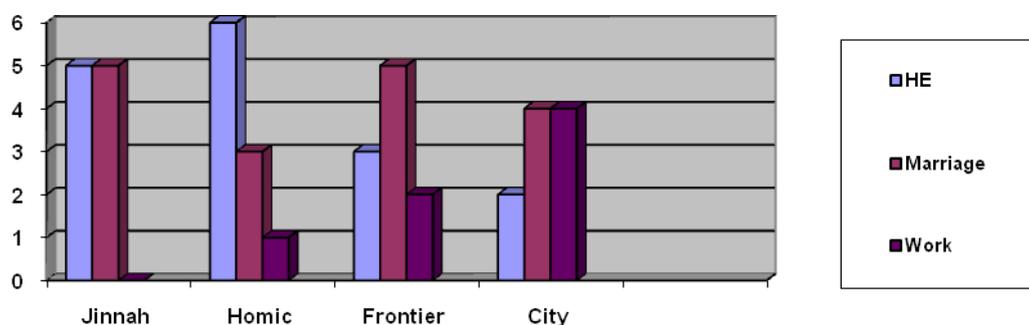


In Pakistan, there is conventional form of BA/BSc examinations in most of the colleges, which means an examination, will be conducted by the end of each academic year (September-June). As mentioned earlier, the majority of these colleges offer a 2-year BA/BSc degree that is not equivalent to the British 3-year first degree. The total percentage of sample women who passed was 80% (100% in Jinnah, 90% in Home Economics, 70% in Frontier and 65% in City), while the compartment subject/s percentage was 20% (0% in Jinnah, 10% in Home Economics, 30% in Frontier, and 35% in City). The sample women who passed their examination were eligible to enrol in postgraduate studies. The compartment sample women need to re-sit their examinations after 6 months to clear or pass all of their subjects.

#### 4. Higher Education, Marriage or Work

There are so many different categories of admission to enrol in higher education in Pakistan. For example, there are quota seats for tribal areas, disabilities and sports, but the most important is the BA/BSc grade and passing the entry test of the chosen postgraduate school or department. There are fixed limited number seats allocated to each department of semi government universities. However, now there are a number of private universities in the country too, who have high fee structures and their own entry requirements of admission in the BS (semester system) and MA/MSc. courses.

The majority of upper and some middle class sample women showed their intentions for higher education in the Initial Survey. The Post-Survey identified some sample women enrolled in higher education, while most of them discontinued education because of their marriage and some worked.



The sample women of Jinnah who showed a high level of enthusiasm for enrolling in higher education dropped to 50%, as the other 50% got married, since their parents found suitable proposals for their daughters. This was followed by Home Economics, where 60%

sample women enrolled in higher education and 40% got married. The Frontier 30% sample women enrolled in higher education and 50% got married or were engaged to be married soon, while 20% went for work because of their failing in one or more subjects. Similarly, 40% of City College sample women got married or were going to married, another 40% and a mere 20% respectively went for higher education.

The Post-Survey revealed that 50% of sample women discontinued their education because of marriage. 30% continued with their higher education. 20%, which is the majority of middle and working class, went for teaching jobs in schools. They indicated limited family resources were the main reason of their choice of starting work instead of continuing higher education.

The sample women's scope of admission was mainly affected by their marriage and engagement, as they clearly indicated in the Initial and Audit Surveys. Other than that, the quota system of the tribal areas limited the scope of the sample women to gain admission into higher education. The majority of the sample women were dissatisfied with this quota system of Pakistani higher educational institutes. There was also a quota for university employees that further decreased their opportunities. The procedure of the entry test and its criteria was found irrelevant to the subject matter of MA/MSc. courses. However the dominant factor was the preference for marriage and family life.

##### **5. Sample women and their families' perceptions and attitudes towards higher education**

This section highlighted the following triangulations patterns of perceptions:

- i. Allocation of family resources and preference of son or daughter's higher education.
- ii. Family investment in daughters' post-graduation dowry and marriage.
- iii. Family enforcement of early marriage in the case of a suitable proposal

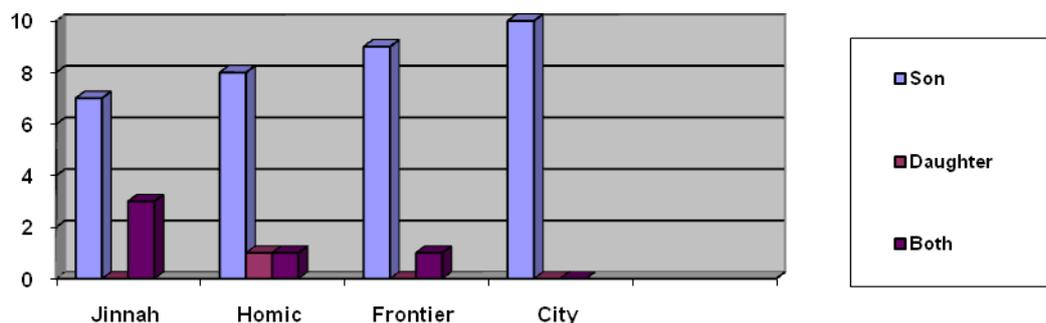
##### **i. Allocation of family resources and preference of son or daughter's higher education**

From the Initial Survey, the sample women and their parents were not excited about their daughters' higher education; they were also not satisfied with the existing education system in the country. The Initial Survey also explored a great tendency of marriage and

collecting for the dowry among the sample women’s families. Therefore, I realised the importance of family pressure and the preference for their daughters’ or sons’ higher education within the sample women’s families, because in Pukhtunkhwah, men are the bread earners for a family. And after the father, it is the responsibility of a son to take over and look after the entire family rather than a daughter.

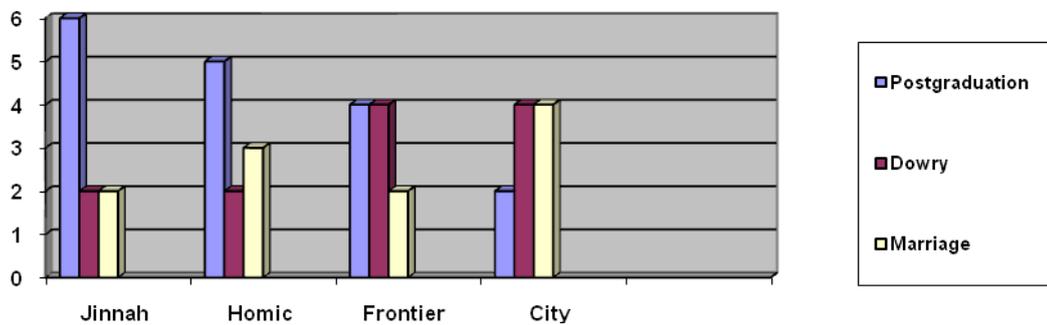
Consequently men’s education, particularly higher education, is always given preference by the parents, as they see their sons as their old age benefit. They consider a daughter like a guest in their house: she is the one who has to get married as soon as she gets a good, suitable proposal. In other words she is considered as a burden; her education is not as important as her training in household and care-giving responsibilities. So, I asked the question: **if the family resources are scarce, who your family would prefer to send for higher education, a daughter or a son?**

**Preference of son or daughters’ higher education**



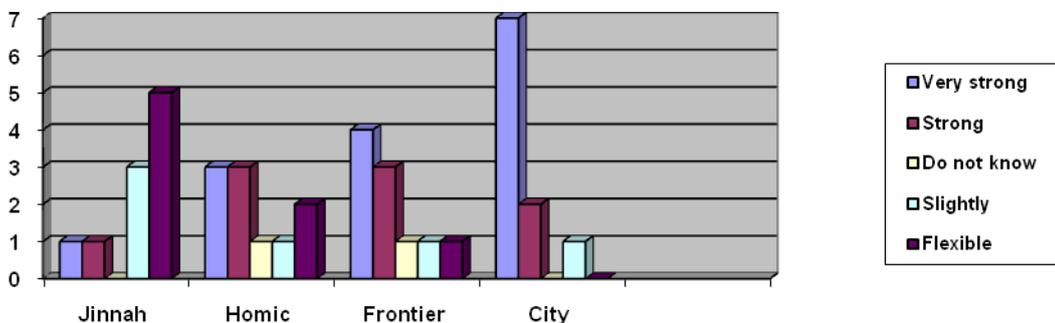
85% of the sample women answered the son’s higher education would take precedence (70% in Jinnah, 80% in Home Economics, 90% in Frontier, and 100% in City). 13% percent answered both son and daughter would get equal consideration, whilst 3% mentioned daughters only. The sample women realised that the family pressure of discontinuing education was aimed more towards daughters as compared to sons. However, 30% of Jinnah and 10% of Home Economics and Frontier indicated both, but those sample women belonged to the upper and upper-middle class respondents. They did not experience the real life situation because the majority of the lower-middle and working class explicitly mentioned the son’s higher education would take precedence.

**ii. Family's Investment in daughters' post-graduate education, dowry or marriage**



Although the parental tendency towards marriage and dowry was higher than post-graduation education, however in Jinnah (60%), Home Economics (50%), Frontier (40%) and City (20%), the sample women thought that their parents would prefer post-graduate studies in the absence of a good marriage proposal for them. This was followed by the percentage that preferred marriage: 20% in Jinnah, 30% in Home Economics, 40% in Frontier, and 40% in City. The percentage of those who would rather invest in the dowry was 20% in Jinnah, 20% in Home Economics, 40% in Frontier and 40% in City. So the overall percentage of families who preferred to pursue post-graduate education was 40%; those who preferred to invest in marriage was 20%, and those who preferred to invest in a dowry were 40% among the sample families. Therefore marriage and dowry were dominant in the discontinuation of women's higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, which ultimately forced them to accept a suitable proposal soon after their BA/BSc.

**iii. Family enforcement of early marriage in case of a suitable proposal of marriage**



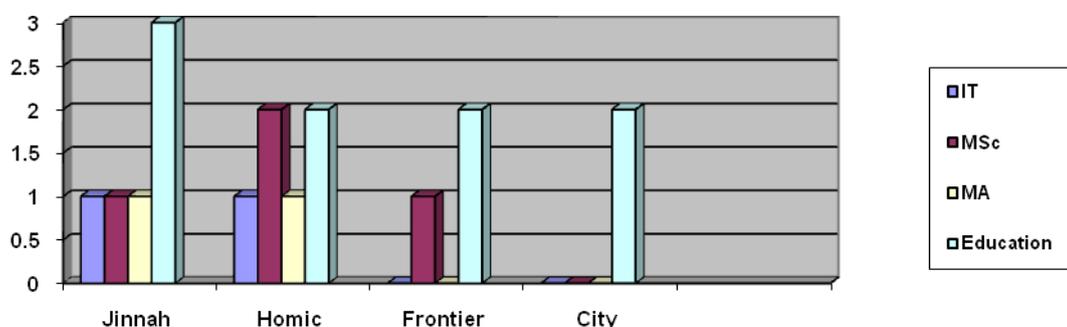
65% of the Post-Survey sample women professed that there was a strong or very strong pressure from their families to get married as soon as a suitable proposal occurs.

However, the Initial Survey's structured questionnaire also indicated that the sample women themselves also desired to get married and have a complete family. 5% were not sure about their family's reaction, while 15% felt a slight pressure and 20% felt that the pressure on them in such a situation would be flexible. However family pressure and social pressure on sample women were strong indicators that they would have to get married otherwise they may not be able to get married to a suitable person after their MA/MSc degree. As the literature review revealed, Pukhtunkhwah men prefer to marry young and not very highly-educated women because of their flexible attitudes and the possibility of moulding their personalities accordingly (Naz et al., 2011).

### **6. Sample women's perceptions about course work, work and work environment**

The Initial Survey explored dissatisfaction among the sample women regarding their study and the subjects of their BA/BSc coursework, because most of the BSc. students wanted to enrol in the medical colleges, but were unable to due to their high admission and entry test criteria. This left them only one option to continue with their BSc degree. Their morale had dropped and they wanted to get that degree for the sake of the degree only.

Now, after the completion of their BA/BSc, most of the sample women and their families were waiting for a suitable proposal, but some of the upper class women had the opinion that during their MA/MSc. degree, they might find a better proposal or at least they would have good qualifications to get married in future. Likewise, they were not aware of their future work either; as mentioned in the literature review of this study; teaching or lectureship and medicine are considered respectable professions in Pukhtunkhwah. Therefore, the majority of the women are encouraged to enter these professions.



As the Post-Survey questionnaire explored 30% of the sample women gained admission to higher education. The percentages for the respective colleges were 45% in Jinnah, 40% in

Home Economics, 30% in Frontier and 20% in City. A majority (57%) of the sample women were enrolled in the Institute of Education and Research for their B.Ed degree, 13% in MSc. Information Technology or Computer Science, and 25% of the sample women chose biological sciences for their MSc. Only 10% of the sample women enrolled in other MA degrees, such as economics, English Literature and Islamic Studies.

It is worthwhile to mention here that in Pakistan, the MA/MSc. degree is 2-years because the BA/BSc degrees are only 2-years without a work placement. However, similar to the Initial Survey, my sample women were more interested in teaching and lectureship. In Pakistani universities, a person can easily get a lectureship in college and university because their selection criterion is only MA/MSc. degree and couple of years' experience, and with the successful completion of the Public Service Commission test and interview.

The sample women preferred a teaching and lectureship career because of its segregated environment and because they are considered respectable professions in Pukhtunkhwah. However, they did not go for the other respectable profession, medicine, which is a partially segregated but a prestigious and high salaried job with a high status symbol. I will discuss this further in my next data analysis chapter.

## **4.6 SECTION V**

### **THE FOCUSED INTERVIEWS**

The Post-Survey exercise was a combination of a semi-structured questionnaire as well as four Focused Interviews; using women from a BA/BSc. batch of the sample college. As mentioned earlier, I followed Hussain's (1995) data collection tools, and thus we share some common variables and research questions, but the difference is time and culture as well as the rural-urban and developed-under developed divide of the sample that further manifested the need of feminists' theories in the Pakistani context. This marginalisation of theory and practice in gender and education is only evident in documentation.

The political situation of Pukhtunkhwah made my sample women's households reluctant for a long time to allow me into their houses because the terrorist attacks on educational institutes, particularly girls' institutes, made them suspicious of every individual. Even the official letters of Middlesex University and the Directorate of Education did not convince them. Therefore, with the support of the sample colleges' principals, I conducted three of my Focused Interviews at their colleges and one at home, which was only possible because of the particular college staff's personal contacts.

Thus, the four colleges were best divided into four economic classes: upper, upper-middle, lower-middle and working. However, the Focused Interview women sample did not allow me to mention their real names in this study. Therefore, I used fake names: Nawal (from Jinnah (upper class), Gulalai (from Home Economics (upper-middle), Aiman (from Frontier (lower-middle), and Kiran (from City (working) (see Appendix VII for their brief background information).

The focused interviews were constructed with a view to exploring the socio-psychological processes which exist in women's lives. An effort was made to trace elements within the sample women's lives which ultimately might uncover patterns across the sample. For this, it was necessary to be very familiar with the responses and ways of thinking of the different interviewees (Hussain, 1995:179).

These in-depth focused interviews are much closer to the life stories of my sample women, although I divided them into certain variables that helped me to understand their lived experiences in Pukhtun households and in society as well as their and their families' perceptions about higher education.

The sample women I interviewed might not represent the entire Pukhtun community of Pukhtunkhwah, because of their division into different tribes and the complexities of rural, urban and educated and uneducated families should be taken into account. These interviews made at least clear one truth about the Pukhtuns: not all of them are narrow-minded and seek to dominate women. I explored the following variables, which are briefly highlighted here. A thorough analysis and discussion of these variables will be presented in the next chapter of my data analysis.

#### **4.6.1 Patriarchy versus Matriarchy**

I tried to investigate how the household of my sample women are treating their gender. Is there patriarchy or matriarchy within the family? Most of the sample women gave similar answers: that their position in the house was less powerful than that of the men.

#### **4.6.2. Authoritarian attitude of Family Men**

The complete authority of the family was in the hands of the family men. They were the supreme authority to decide all family matters. In a nuclear family, the father and brothers shared this decision making power, while in extended families it was distributed among the father, brothers, uncles, cousins, and the grandfather. Most of the sample women were not allowed to talk in front of their family men. If they wanted to share any thoughts or desires, they were allowed to convey them through their mother or aunties only. Although the majority of the sample women showed extreme respect and love for their father and brothers, they also showed fear of them.

#### **4.6.3. Family Women involvement in Decision making**

I felt male-domination in the household of my sample women, where family men got the complete authority of decision making power over family matters. Youngsters of the family were not a part of serious family affairs, particularly women. Women's education, career and marriage all need to be decided by the family men, because they are considered immature and might not make the right decision. However, their mothers, or in extended families, grandmothers or aunties are allowed to express or recommend their wishes and desires to the family men. The final decision would rest with the men. It would not be challenged or revised by mother, daughters or sisters. Men's approval means their guaranteed financial and moral support for education or marriage. All the research tools (the Initial and Post Surveys and the Focused Interviews) found similar data: that the family men of the

sample women have a significant role in the decision making power rather than the family women. The education of the family women does not mean that have the authority to challenge the decision of the family men, nor can they can go against it, because the tradition and culture of the society force them to follow these social norms.

#### **4.6.4. Women and Seclusionary Practice**

Hussain (1995:184-5) addressed differently the idea of seclusion in her study that;

Seclusion is the confining of women to only appointed location and spheres. It is not only as isolation by physical veiling. Its observance was viewed as a broader principle of the exclusion of women from economic, political and social power, authority and influence.

Keeping in mind her definition, my Focused Interviews also explored that variable. I found similar findings: that across all economic classes, my sample women were bound to a degree of seclusion. Their houses especially were clearly demarcated into '*zanana*' (women) and '*mardana*' (men) compounds as in a traditional household. The sample women were not allowed to go on their own outside their homes. They practiced the Pukhtun traditional veiling (a big shawl that covers them from head to toe). However, they were allowed to go out with an elderly woman member of the family, because for the lower-middle and working class, public transport is not a safe means of travelling to a college or shopping centre, etc. The upper and upper middle classes have the liberty to go out with their driver. These families keep a trustworthy person from the family or best-known relative as a driver. There is no concept of women drivers in society. Usually it is considered a low-prestige job; therefore, most of the upper and upper-middle class women are reluctant to drive a car. I found my entire sample women veiling to some extent, partially (not fully covering the face) or fully (covering the face).

#### **4.6.5 The Position of Career-oriented Women in the Society**

Career-focused women were not appreciated in my sample women's households, because this is considered a threat to the family men's ego and honour. In society, it is dishonour for family women to work outside the home. However, teachers at all levels of education and doctors are exempted from such categories. The Initial Survey and Post-Survey explored a low tendency toward work among the sample women and their mothers. In the Focused Interviews, however, I twisted the words of the question to scrutinise the attitude of the household toward career-oriented daughters and sisters. There was some frustration

among the sample women, but they do not have the courage to go against their family men. I felt an extreme social pressure on the family men under which they must take their decision. A famous Pukhtu saying, '*chi, da khalaq ba sa wai*' (what people will say) was repeated by few of my sample women during their conversation. Pukhtun society is compelling them for certain rules and regulations which they have to follow.

Careers other than teaching and medicine are considered inappropriate because of their mixed-gendered working environments. Although medicine is not a fully segregated profession in Pukhtunkhwah, it is a prestigious job and often lady doctors open their own practices for women patients only. However, no other job titles, such as nurses and midwives, are considered good professions in society. Nevertheless, strict *purdah* observance in the society does not allow such mixed working environments. Therefore, most of the lower-middle class and working class were engaged with the teaching profession and youngsters were following in their footsteps.

#### **4.6.6. Religious Practices in the Household**

I felt an increased domination of cultural practices in the households of my sample women, because Islam does not prohibit any kind of work and education (music and sex education are not part of the Pakistani curriculum). Second, the Islamic right of inheritance of a daughter is to make her independent to make decisions about her education, career and marriage. This is permissible in the Islamic religion, but the sample family men mould a woman's rights in the form of a dowry, which is indeed a Hindu culture that still exists in the Muslim societies of South Asia. After centuries of living together, the Muslim societies adopted many cultural rituals from Hindu culture. They have such strong roots that in spite of knowing the Islamic custom of female inheritance, no one can violate this cultural practice, including the religious minded Pukhtuns.

Some of my sample women's households got their right of inheritance, but only at the time of marriage, but both the sample women belong to extended families and were engaged with their cousins. The idea was that the family property would stay within the family after marriage. These further limited women's personal lives and access to economic resources, as these resources will transfer from father and brothers to their husband and then sons.

#### **4.6.7. The Effectiveness of Women's Education in Pukhtunkhwah**

According to the sample women, women education is ineffective in our province. They thought that '*the prevailing syllabus could not help women achieve their inner*

*transformation*' (Jinnah). They felt that women are marginalised in all fields of life. All the household expectations are related to her. *'If she works, then she needs to perform the double duties of outside work and household work, because help in the household is against men's prestige'* [laughing] (Home Economics). *'The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) helped his wives in their household'* (Frontier). They demanded more women's colleges and universities in at least each district of Pukhtunkhwah. They were happy and comfortable in women only gatherings, so they asked for women only medical colleges too. From years of segregation in family and education environments that is recommended by Islam, Frontier women were used to it. Therefore I did not find any preference for mixed gatherings in the sample women.

### **Concluding Comments**

There was a co-relation between economic class and parental education and the medium of instruction of the sample women. Money is a matter of this triangulation. However, my sample women did not see any role model in their family and society. Most of the sample women thought about marriage and having a complete family to a great degree. They did not want only daughters as offspring. They preferred family life over a career and higher education because they believed that being a good wife and mother should come first. Early marriage was a common practice among the sample women. They agreed upon the assumption that as soon a woman gets a good proposal, she should marry, because after higher education it is hard to find a suitable man to marry. The sample women agreed that a woman cannot manage her family and career both at the same time because of her priority to household responsibilities. All the economic strata were happy with the seclusion practice in their personal and public life, and therefore strongly recommended separate women's colleges and universities. Most of the variables in the Focused Interviews were more or less similar to the results of the Initial and Post-Survey data.

### **4.7. Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the main findings of Initial Survey Questionnaire, Semi-Structured Interviews, Audit Survey, Post-Survey Questionnaire and Focused Interviews. An attempt has been made in this chapter to display a picture of the sample women's points of view in graphs. The presentation of data is further highlighted in percentage with the names of the given colleges. In the following chapter, the data is

analysed in the light of the main themes of the literature review. This will now provide a clear opportunity to focus on women's own voices.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **FOCUSING ON WOMEN'S OWN VOICES**

##### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter is constructed according to the emerging themes and content analysis that provide a sharper and more explicit focus on women's own voices, which is the central aim of this study. The majority of the extracts in this chapter derived from focused-interviews and all the different data sets that were used in the discussion. These are:

- (i) the Initial Survey, including:
  - (a) the semi-structured questionnaire (ISSQ)
  - (b) semi-structured interviews (ISSSI)
- (ii) the Audit Survey Questionnaire (ASQ)
- (iii) the Post-Survey, including:
  - (a) the Post-survey questionnaire (PSQ)
  - (b) the Focused-interviews (FI)

As already mentioned in the methodology chapter, it is important to emphasise here that for gaining deeper insights, I conducted the interviews (ISSSI and FI) in local languages and I translated them verbatim, as one of the central aims of this chapter is to allow women's voices to be heard.

This chapter, then, crystallises and elaborates on the central themes that had emerged from the literature review and shows their pertinence and relevance to the research questions of this thesis by examining and triangulating data very carefully. The themes form particular lenses that are used for examining this data from Pukhtunkhwah; they are:

##### **Women in society**

- Preference for educating males
- Women's seclusion in society
- Economic class and its effect on educational opportunity
- Insecure social, political and educational environment for women

- Ineffective women's education
- Misinterpretation of religion in Pukhtunkhwah society
- Lack of women role-models in society, academia and politics

#### **Women at school**

- Co-educational settings and the institution of *pardah*
- Medium of instruction
- Segregation of educational institutes
- Lack of infrastructure and women staff in women's educational institutes

#### **Women at work**

- Women's preference for the care-giving role rather than a career
- Segregation in the work place
- Suitability of work and course work

#### **Women at home**

- Women as the source of family honour
- Women's right of inheritance
- Parental education and parental control
- Family enforcement of daughters' early marriage

### **BREAKING THE SILENCE: LISTENING TO PUKHTUN WOMEN**

For the examination of the research findings, theme and content analysis was adopted. This approach facilitates the holistic use of information from the different data sets and employs a rigorous triangulation process.

#### **5.2. Economic class: Education for Money or for Status Symbol?**

The father's monthly income was employed as a rough guide to the economic class of a family, together with the parents' standard of education. The purpose of this focus on class was to explore whether or not the economic class and the degree of economic security in the family affect the higher educational opportunities for the sample women. Women from a financially strong background were confident:

1. *'I have no problem to continue my higher education'* (ISSSI, Jinnah).
2. *'My family would invest in higher education; it is not a big deal'* (ISSSI, Home Economics).
3. (After a long pause)..... *'Oh .... It depends on our financial position my parents will decide then...but I think....let me finish my degree first ....than they will think about it'* (ISSSI, Frontier).
4. *'I cannot say anything right now, [about] whether I would be able to continue my higher education or not.'* (ISSSI, City).

The above statements reveal the real and immediate difference in the sample women's responses. The positive statements, together with a confident and loud tone of voice of those sample women who came from financially secure backgrounds, contrasted with the uncertainty and weak tone of voice of those who came from financially underprivileged families. It was, therefore, astonishing that none of them – not even the confident – were willing to challenge the prevalent model of society. This is an interesting aspect of this study and one which will be explored in greater depth later. In other words, none of the sample women were challenging the present situation of women.

The analysis of economic class in this study revealed a transition from traditional to modern women's education, because across the sample, all classes favoured women's education. They emphasised that *'higher education is the only means of women's increased opportunities, but alas! We are still struggling for primary education in the new millennium'* (Home Economics). However, the realities of access to higher education were very different between different groups: higher education is accessible to upper and higher middle classes only because there are no scholarships or other financial support schemes available for the students in the local universities that cater for the lower socio-economic groups. All students have to rely on their parents' financial resources, and indeed some poorer students are forced to take a few years out from their studies to earn enough money to enable them to resume studying at a later date. Women from low-income groups are often encouraged to undertake distance education<sup>18</sup> as a cheaper solution for access to higher education. The socio-economic

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<sup>18</sup>The procedure for distance learning in Pakistan is as follows: students get admission to the university as a private candidate (at a lower fee than the regular students). They do not need to attend lectures and seminars at the university; instead they study and prepare themselves for the final examination at home and take part in the examination. Such students have limited knowledge and most of them rely on rote memorization by using the prepared notes that are commercially available. This system of examination and study is a serious issue in the education system of Pakistan, but as such, is outside the scope of this study.)

status of parents seems to be the critical factor in deciding whether girls go to school/college/university or not. Poverty has been and remains the main hurdle.

In the Initial Survey, the majority of the sample women had shown their intention to enter into higher education. However, the Audit and Post-Surveys revealed that economic class and marriage was the major factors which affected women's continuation in higher education.

There was a co-relation between the analysis of the parents' standard of education and their economic class, similar to the findings of Hussain (1995). However some fathers of the sample women who attended Jinnah and Home Economics were comparatively highly qualified (doctors and professors) more so than the fathers of the Frontier and City sample women, but some fathers' economic upper class strata was due to their family business, or inherited property. Similarly, mothers of the sample women of Jinnah and Home Economics had a good proportion of higher education degrees than the mothers of the sample women from Frontier and City. This variable helped in that educated parents encouraged and supported their own daughters' higher education. As anticipated, the women in this study tended to aspire to higher education if their parents had followed this route. Their sound financial position paves their way towards higher education. The following quotes illustrate this:

1. *'My parents want me to be highly educated. They allow me to study as much as I want but they are also looking a good marriage proposal for me'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'Both of my parents are educated. They always encourage all our brothers and sisters (2 brothers and 2 sisters all together) towards education. They said we will not be with you guys throughout your life, but the education would, and that would help to make good and rational decisions in your life'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'My father has a degree but mother has some basic primary education, however they give me the understanding of education, as the only means through which I can support my family by having a good job afterwards. So, they said: okay, finish your degree first'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'My parents are not formally educated; however my father can read and write. It is understandable that as soon as I finish my degree I will look for a teaching job, so in that way I will support them. They said I need to do some teaching courses to get a good job, otherwise this degree is more than enough for girls'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Upper class parents encouraged their daughters to enter into higher education – to follow in their footsteps as it were, but at the same time, they did not stop searching for a good marriage proposal for their daughters. They were also financially sound and able to support them (*'I don't think ... there would be any financial obstacles for me in continuing my higher education'*), said a sample woman from Jinnah.

The daughters of middle and working class parents have other motivations for continuing their education. They prioritised their economic needs: *'through education we will be able to obtain socially acceptable (and better paid) jobs and will support our families, so our parents encourage us towards education'* (ISSSI, Frontier and City).

Although encouragement and discouragement were not only an economic class phenomena, there were some elements in the upper and upper-middle classes too, however: across the all economic classes, women faced a greater degree of resistance to higher education because of early marriage traditions and the reluctance of sending daughters into a co-education setting. Women choose educational institutions, courses of study and future careers and husbands with caution, keeping in mind possible patterns of social discouragement. However, middle and working class women were even more careful in their choices. They were aware of the traditional conservative views and practices determining much of their lives, as opposed to upper class families which had some degree of conservatism pervading in their households. Yet, interestingly, education for upper class was a status symbol – holding-up the supremacy of their family status – and the sample women were far less explicit in expressing the need or purpose for education. Their answers were somewhat vague: *'everyone in my family is attaining education so my parents want me to be educated'* (FI Jinnah College). For the middle and working class, education was clearly related to their economic needs and in order to support their families and collect a good dowry for their marriage. The upper class women were, in effect, pursuing higher education for maintaining the status of the family and thereby reproducing the social order of Pukhtunkhwah society. They were not able or interested in challenging the plight of women per se, nor did they articulate the possible power of education for all, even though they had a better opportunity to do so than the other sample women.

### **5.3. Where to Find a Role-Model in the Family and Society?**

There was a lack of women role-models in education and work or nearly all fields of Pukhtunkhwah society for the sample women. Their mothers were mostly housewives. A

small percentage was teachers and lecturers, while one of the Jinnah parents was a doctor, but not practicing her job because of her husband's strong political position in the society. Most of the mothers stopped working after their children's birth and other household responsibilities. Economic class classification was not a determining factor in this finding. It can thus be inferred that the sample women had been raised in a domestic culture where women did not work. Not only are working mothers discouraged from work, but also if they do some kind of work outside their home, it is considered dishonour for the family men. Men must be seen to be the main bread-earners for the family in Islam as well as in Pukhtunkhwah culture. This issue of women's work cropped up in many sample women's reflections:

1. *'My mum is highly educated but my father never let her work because my father is involved in politics and a MNA (Member of National Assembly), so she does not need to work for money'* (ISSQ, Jinnah).
2. *'We have a prestigious place in our society, so it would be dishonour for my father if people found out about my mother working in a school. She can stay home with honour. I think woman's first responsibility is to look after her family'* (ISSQ, Home Economic).
3. *'The majority of women in our family are housewives. They are not highly educated and our family men preferred them to stay home'* (ISSQ, Frontier).
4. *'My mum comes from a poor family. They were too many sisters so they all got married at an early age. She did not even complete her primary education'* (ISSQ, City).

All the stages of the enquiry found women's work to be a dishonour act for the family. Therefore, most of the mothers of the sample women were housewives. There was no class variation on this finding. Although the educated upper class mothers have no need or desire to work, they sometimes work part time to change their life routines or for fun, or to keep their status symbol. They were happy with the existing culture of society. The prevailing education system did not change their conservative views of women's role in society. The still had the opinion *'it doesn't really matter how highly educated you are your husband will keep you under his shoe here'* (finishing with a sarcastic laugh and a deep breath!) (FI, Aiman, Frontier).

However, from the Initial Survey to the Post Survey, my sample women did not change their perceptions about women's family life and work. The majority (77%) preferred family life over work as well as higher education. There was a slightly different opinion about higher

education: that in case of the non-availability of a suitable proposal, a woman should continue with her higher education (if her family resources allow) *'instead of sitting at home doing nothing, but as she gets a good proposal, a woman should get married, because in our society, only at certain age can a woman get good proposals, otherwise she would be left for widowers and second married-men only'* (City sample woman). Family life was more important than career for my sample women. They were not ready to replace it with career or higher education. Although. In the absence of a good proposal, they were willing to continue with higher education if they had the opportunity. This is because of the prevailing culture, where only married and child-bearing women are honoured. Aged, unmarried women always have their chastity and character questioned.

Women's social role in Pukhtunkhwah society is perceived to be that of a wife and mother. Liberal feminists have raised questions about this, because it is based on two erroneous assumptions (Evans, 2000; Evans, 2002). The first is that a women's natural place is in her home, and the second, that work only takes place outside the home. Women (and men) are adaptable social beings and can be persuaded into a variety of social roles to suit the constraints of particular situations. Although it is inevitably true that women rather than men bear children, they do, however, create them together, and the attempt to base female identity on this physical difference is a social, rather than a natural process (Thomas, 1990; Francis and Skelton, 2005).

Added to this was the realisation amongst the sample women that a woman cannot be a successful mother and a professional worker outside her home. *'She has a 24/7 unpaid job at home, so if she goes outside home for work that would double or triple her responsibilities because we haven't got a culture of men helping women in her household'* (Home Economics). All my sample women agreed to the above notion and its gender-typical role. Different writers have commented on this and raised questions about the contribution women are capable of making, both socially and economically, if only they were educated as individual people in their own right, and not as future wives, mothers, nannies, secretaries, and providers of other support services for husbands, sons, brothers and (male) bosses (Byrne, 1978: 67). The educational future of women is a central theme in all feminist literature, calling for their freedom to be a person, rather than a daughter, wife or mother, and to participate in future economic and political leadership and in powerful positions of employment. All women, including all western women who have better access to higher

education, face this problem. However, the problem of education is more serious and prevalent in Pukhtun society.

There were some interesting views of women's 'work' and the sample women were not calling for change. Rather in terms of the prevailing feminist literature their views were stuck in their traditional discourse. The sample women said: *'women's work!, toba obassa* [God forbid, she touched her ears, which is a sign of something considered really bad and evil] *my family would never allow me for this; 'it is the responsibility of men to work'; 'there is no concept of work in my family'; and 'none of the women in my family have ever worked'*. As said earlier it is considered as dishonour of the family in Pukhtunkhwah.

One of the main reasons for women not working, with the exception of teaching and medicine, is a non-segregated work environment. Work in a segregated environment was another variable which the sample women of all economic strata clearly rejected. One of the sample women said *'we cannot think about other professions (although we need to), except teaching, because no one in the society will respect us. And you know, under strong social pressure, we middle class [people] cannot go against it'* (Frontier). This is a particular issue faced by Islamic feminists and by Pukhtun educators.

In the Focused Interviews, the sample women thought that integrated work environments are not acceptable in Pukhtunkhwah society; *'The men at work would be more interested in [a woman's] appearance rather than her work'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics). Similarly working women are not appreciated. The restraints on women's work are misinterpreted under the Islamic discourse: household, family and children are responsibilities of both the wife and husband. However, due to years of cultural sharing and adapting Hindu social norms and culture that specifically articulated these norms as women's only, these practices are now deeply embedded in Pukhtunkhwah culture. I found that these restraints existed across all economic classes among my sample women. The women are dependent on male consent and social sanction and economically dependent on their fathers, brothers, uncles and husbands. This rendered them further powerless to make decisions about their lives (Hussain, 1995). Moreover, Hussain (1995:222) further argued that the prevalence of seclusion, chaperonage, and care-giving and domestic activities controlled women's lives and often prevented them from becoming productive participants in the workplace.

My sample women did show some interest in working in the education department (teaching in a segregated environment), as their second option of medical college remained

unfulfilled because of not passing the entry test. In addition, other medical related professions, for example nurses or ward-girls and midwives are not socially acceptable professions in Pukhtunkwah. They are low-status professions; however, usually Hindu or Christian minorities are recruited for these professions because of the non-availability of locals. Also their non-observance of *purdah* and integrated social environment make them ideal for certain jobs. Higher education and work were not co-related by my sample women. These are two different streams: education for the sake of education is favoured for women so that they can be called educated. Work (in socially acceptable places), for the middle and working classes was a matter of economic need, whilst for upper classes, work is not an option because of their strong financial position in the society. They were not interested in work, because in their opinion, it '*threatens men's honour*' or the honour of the family. In terms of family and career, most of the sample women choose family in the Initial and Audit Surveys, although they preferred higher education rather than work.

#### **5.4. Dual Language of Instruction: English for upper-class Urdu for lower-class**

The analysis showed that all upper class students had been taught in English throughout their education. Lower-middle and working class women had been taught exclusively in an Urdu medium. Therefore, the majority of the Jinnah and Home Economics women sample used English as a teaching language, as indicated in each college's prospectus. The lower-middle and working class could not express themselves in the English language, which affected their overall BA/BSc result, and consequently their ability to enter into higher education. Most of the subjects at university level are taught in English except languages (Urdu, Pukhtu, Persian and Arabic etc.), but a student must have first degree with at least second division (50% marks).

1. '*We all (my brother and sisters) went to English medium schools. You know we adopted English as a status symbol. We speak English because of our superiority complex. As being colonised by the British, we still see English as the language of the superior class. To keep this status quo, everyone in our society wants to send their children to elite English medium schools if they can afford it*' (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. '*My parents were aware of the importance of English, so they send us to English medium schools. Most of my cousins and relatives are abroad, so my parents thought that English medium schools would increase our confidence and language fluency to interact with them*' (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).

3. *'English medium schools were very expensive and were far away from my home, therefore my parents sent me to an Urdu medium school, and later on it was impossible to gain admission into an English medium college [she was trying to hide her economic status by expressing distance as the main factor]. However, now my brother is going to an English medium school'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier College).
4. (With a sad smile.....) *'My parents hardly afforded the expenses of my study in Urdu medium school. I never thought about studying in an English medium school or college'* (long breath and closed her eyes for a while). *I think it doesn't really matter for me now'* (FI, Kiran, City).

As I discussed earlier, economic class, parental education and the language of instruction are all factors that help determine whether my sample women will continue or discontinue their higher education. English-proficient, privileged, upper class sample women achieved good grades at the BA/BSc level, which opened doors for their higher education within the country and abroad. However, lower middle and working class women failed their English core subject at the BA/BSc level, which not only delayed their entrance into higher education but also cautioned them that the English medium at university would bring lots of language difficulties for them. The resource material of higher education is only available in English. It is worth repeating here that this study is considering private elite English medium schools, which are the country most expensive educational institutes. Their infrastructure and curriculum is imported from Oxford and Cambridge universities. There are some differences between non-elite private English medium and Urdu medium schools in Pukhtunkhwah. Non-elite private English medium school books are in English except Urdu and Islamic Studies, but their medium of instruction is Urdu, mostly because of untrained staff. Their fee is very reasonable, and can easily be afforded by the lower middle class. Therefore a couple of my sample women of the lower middle class came from a non-elite private English medium background. However, I did not feel any difference between them and my Urdu medium sample women. We can conclude that this linguistic complexity divides the people into a class system, a strong Marxist feminism critique, where one school system produces high class executives and the other lower class employees.

## 5.5. Higher Education versus Work

A substantial part of the sample women indicated that if there is a choice between work and higher education, they would prefer to continue their higher education after the completion of their BA/BSc.

1. *'No way to go for work! I would prefer to go for my higher education. I have got admission into my MA course'* (PSQ, Jinnah).
2. *'Yes, I am studying for my MSc. after the completion of my degree (BA), because my parents said it is better to continue your education, while we are waiting for your marriage. A simple graduation is not enough[in Pakistan graduation means first degree]'* (PSQ, Home Economics).
3. *'Wow! That would be amazing....to join a university after my BA but' ...* (made a sad face, to give me the impression of how would it be possible?) *I am hoping for the best'* (PSQ, Frontier).
4. *'I would love to, if a miracle might happen or I won a lottery'...* (PSQ, City).

Most of my sample women were very excited about joining university for higher education. However, the upper class sample women have no inclination toward work, while the lower middle and working class were trying to kill their desire for higher education because of poor family finances. Some of the sample women were ready to get married after their BA degree. *'I think a BA is enough, as I am already engaged therefore I would prefer to get married'* (PSQ, Jinnah). The sample women from the working class had no choice: *'I don't think that my parents will allow me after my BA, though I really want to! So I will go hunting for work [smiling]'* (PSQ, City).

The Post Survey Questionnaire explored a hierarchy among the sample women who passed their subjects (Jinnah 100%, Home Economics 90%, Frontier 70% and City 60%). A 2-year BA/BSc. degree in Pakistan has only four subjects, therefore failed or compartment means that a student has to re-sit one or more subjects. The compartment percentage was: Jinnah 0%, Home Economics 10%, Frontier 30% and City 40%. However, it is understood that without clearing their BA/BSc subjects, the women cannot enter into higher education (MA/MSc.).

The upper class sample women complained that their parents were never interested in their (daughters') working. *'After our BA/BSc we have two options: one, to enrol in higher*

*education, the second is to get married; our parents did not give us the third option of work, ever'* (PSQ, Home Economic). For lower middle and working class there was a third option: *'My father died last year, I am the eldest sister of a brother and 5 sisters. Although I've got couple of good proposals, my mum said I have to work to support my family now. She said that when all my sisters and brothers are married or have a good teaching job, then I'll think about my marriage'* (PSQ, City).

It is such a pathetic cultural practice that after marriage, a woman cannot help her paternal family. A husband has all authority over his wife's belongings and salary. Nevertheless, Islam gave clear instructions that a wife's needs have to be fulfilled by her husband and her salary and belongings (jewellery, property) are her own possessions, and she can do whatever she wants with it.

## **5.6. Early Marriages, Children and Higher Education**

Marriage and having children is one of the subjects that are socially taboo to discuss in Pukhtunkhwah. An unmarried woman is not allowed to discuss these topics outside her home. She is allowed only to converse about it with women members of her family, such as her mother, aunt, sister or cousin sisters or close friends. For the purpose of this study, however, I tried to make my sample women comfortable and develop trust with me, and I explained the question by reflecting on my own choices (such as *'If you guys asked me a question about my marriage and family, so I would say that yes, like other Pukhtun tribes, we have the tradition of early marriages but I got married a bit late because I wanted to complete my higher education first, and, my parents allowed me to do so, so how you would explain your point of view?'*). There was no average age limit of girls in Pukhtunkhwah. As it is a land of so many tribes, every tribe has their own customs and traditions of marriage and family. However, usually when it comes to women having children, the sample women agreed on the stance of tradition:

1. *'I think... as soon a girl gets a good proposal she should get married. I know I might sound weird, but it is a reality of this society. Because at the later age your parents will give you to any kind of man; a second marriage candidate, or a widower, or divorcee. So, it's good to get married to a single man on time. And to be very honest! Children are not your option; it is always your husband choice. You live your life on his mercy after marriage'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).

2. *My family has both early and late marriages traditions. Because you never know when you will get a suitable proposal. My sister and two cousins' sisters got married when they were 17-18, because from childhood they were engaged with their husband cum cousins. These were indeed purely arranged marriages, but obviously when a person is engaged for such a long time, there is automatically love or involvement feelings for one another. And they married to be carrier of their families' future generations. So, now they look like elder sisters of their children [laughing], which is so cool!' (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).*
3. *'In my opinion, I would prefer to continue my higher education first than to go for some sort of job to invest in our dowry... and marriage is a key to start a family, we are getting married to have children...simple [shrugged her shoulders]. As far as my extended family is concerned, we preferred early marriage, but due to this Hindu tradition of a big, dowry delayed our marriages.'* (FI, Aiman Frontier).
4. *'In my family, girls get married at a very early age (14-18) or as soon as they received a suitable proposal, because in that way, parents want to decrease their financial burden by marrying off their daughters. However, I really want to continue my studies(regular or a distance learner) to support my family; I am not recommending early marriage, but when our parents decide something, then obviously we cannot refuse[making a sad face]' (FI, Kiran, City).*

As indicated from the above extracts, the sample women were in favour of early marriage and children soon after. In their responses, there was an element of social and cultural acceptance rather than challenging the patriarchal status quo. There was not even a hint of concern, frustration, or anger in their voices or words. Most accepted this as given. It was their reality. A suitable proposal was something that my sample defined as *'a handsome good looking man, with a professional degree and good job, also belong to respectable family'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah). Although, my sample women did not mention it, their definition of a 'respectable family' was an upper or upper middle-class one.

The issue of dowry is getting to be a serious problem in Pakistan overall. Women are pushed towards unnecessary expenditure on big weddings. Therefore, a daughter is considered as a family burden because as soon a daughter is born, mums start collecting a dowry for her. They think their first and foremost responsibility is their daughter's marriage rather than higher education. So the investment goes to the dowry with which most of my

sample women agreed: *'It is our parents' responsibility, therefore they worry about the dowry first, and we try to help them as far as we can'* (FI, Kiran, City).

I hypothesised that parents would be investing in a dowry for their daughter's future marriage rather than continuing in higher education, however, the Jinnah and Home Economics sample women's parents would have the money to do both if they wanted to. In such instances, the marriage of the sample women would be a major focus of parental intent. Significantly, all the sample women of the Focused Interviews supported their parents' point of views.

1. *'My parents don't need to invest in both my dowry and higher education now because my father has more than enough to get me married any time. They just are waiting for a suitable proposal after my degree'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'My Baba (father) opened a separate account for me since I was in year 8. My Mum already made couple of jewellery sets. So there will be fewer expenses at the time of marriage. They are our well-wishers, how we would not agree or be unsupportive toward them?'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'Parents are always worried about their daughters' weddings. It is their great desire to give her as much as they can in a dowry. Unfortunately, it is a custom that the more we have in the dowry, the better treatment we will receive and the more we will be welcomed by our in laws. So, my Mor Jan (my beloved mother) has been collecting dowry since my childhood; she said there will be a lot of other arrangements at the time of marriage'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'My mum is sewing clothes for people and saving some money for my dowry... as we are three sisters and we do not have any savings at the moment. My father's entire income is spent on our day-to-day expenses'* (FI, Kiran, City).

I concluded my sample women are a part of the Pukhtunkhwah status quo. They do not even think that higher education is more important than jewellery and expensive designer clothes, even though education can never be stolen or wasted. They can use it in every hardship to enlighten their hearts and minds. The sample women synonymised marriage to children as both are compulsory to each other. In their point of view, marriage is a starting point of bearing children for what do they need to wait? *'My husband will divorce me if I say I do not want children yet'* (PSQ, Frontier).

## 5.7. Dowry for Daughters and Learning for Lads

As discussed above, the majority of my sample women (90%) claimed that their parents are most interested in their dowry collection or investment before education. Therefore, I decided to explore the family attitude toward their sons' education. It was surprising that my focused interview group's families invest in the best education for their sons and the best dowry for their daughters. This discrimination of family resources was common across all the economic classes of my sample women. The only upper class woman came up with a different opinion:

1. *'My family sent all my siblings to the same private English medium school like my brothers. They spent more on their daughters' education and tuition, but when there was a professional field option; my parents forced us to choose pre-medical rather than pre-engineering. I didn't pass my medical entry test but my sister did. She is a doctor now, but is not practicing; she preferred to teach in a private Army School and College, because her husband is an army officer'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'My only brother is Studying in Kohat Cadet College; I think it is one of the country's best cadet colleges. I am happy that my parents are giving him the best education, because after my Baba (father) he needs to take the entire household and our sisters responsibilities. Therefore, he needs strong finances and a good career'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'There is no difference between the education of a daughter and a son because knowledge is obligatory upon both men and women in Islam. However, we will marry and go to another house, but our brothers have to look after our parents and their wives and children, so they deserve better than us'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'It is understandable that men in Pukhtunkhwah get the best share of everything: parents' love, food, clothing and education. So if there is nothing equal, then what is the point of getting upset? I have accepted this reality. My parents love my only brother the most, so do I. He would take my fathers' generation further, not me. I am happy for him, and have no complaint'* (ISSQ, City).

My sample women accepted that they are a kind of burden on their parents' finances. Their actual place and home is their husband's home. They are living temporarily in their father's home. So, investing in their dowry was actually a preparation for sending them to their husband's house, while their brothers are the actual heirs and are in charge of their

father's house. Consequently, their rights are fewer as compared to their brothers. The best of the family resources should be spent on their brothers' education. If there is any left, then that would be their portion. However, I was astonished that despite this unequal distribution of family finances and attitude, they love their brother/s dutifully and never protest to their parents.

It is worthwhile mentioning here that the Pukhtunkhwah tribal tradition is threefold in terms of the dowry. Some tribes give an expensive dowry so that their daughter will be respected and well-honoured by her in laws. However, in the extended family, the bride and the groom's family sit together and make a list of all marriage necessities and then divide by two. So there is an equal burden on both families. The third tradition is when the groom and his family have to make all marriage arrangements. This tradition is slowly passing away from society but is still prevailing in some villages.

#### **5.8. You really mean daughters are diamonds?**

The largest number of women in the sample of my Initial and Audit Surveys said that they want both daughters and sons or only sons as their offspring. They strongly did not want only daughters as offspring. I found this to be a contradiction to my sample women's own personality, because they are daughters themselves, but they do not want only daughters for their future families. Therefore I discussed it further with my focus group. Some of their extracts are:

1. *'Indeed daughters are diamonds and 'rahma' [an Arabic word for special mercy, care and love] of Allah Subhana wa ta'alla [the supremely praiseworthy], but for a successful married life we need both boys and girls. Otherwise a woman would be mental tortured for her uncommitted sin by her in laws and husband. Or her husband might re-marry, which will throw her alive in the hell fire. So, for a successful marriage, sons only or more sons and one or two daughters is indispensable'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'I want to be a mother of two boys only. I was engaged with my cousin when I was seven days old. Our families decided then. So, I grew up loving my cousin. Sometimes we talk about our future life, and we always think about twin boys, I've a great desire; we even selected their names [laughing and shying by covering her face in her hands]. I would be the luckiest woman on earth'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).

3. *'I am a woman, and its more than enough, I do not want daughters only offspring to suffer like me. We are all the time killing our wishes and desires because we know there are certain restrictions that are only for women, for example where to go? What to wear? Whom to go with? What to study? So many restrictions!!! We cannot even think about violating or going against those social and cultural parameters. So the best idea is to pray for no daughters'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'I don't know: whatever Allah bestows me, I would be happy with. Offspring are his special gift that He bestows on whomever He wants. We are so many sisters, therefore my parents always worried about our expenses and good marriage proposals. We cannot help them financially. If I had more brothers, then our household situation would be totally different' but no one can change the existing culture, otherwise being a daughter, we could help too'* (FI, Kiran, City).

For the first time, my sample women showed some of their frustrations about patriarchy and cultural restrictions for women in Pukhtunkhwah. They did not want daughters only because of the male-domination: men get married to produce sons, and if a woman fails to give birth to more than one son, and then her life becomes miserable. The Pukhtun today have the same centuries-old tradition of having more sons to be proud of. Though the culture is under a transition process, it will take centuries more to reach the point where there is no difference between a son and a daughter.

My sample women were also afraid of cultural restrictions that they thought would be enforced on their daughters, therefore they did not wish for a daughter. Their opinions were based on sentimental feelings, that they cannot see their children in such a situation.

### **5.9. Position of Professional Women in the Society**

As mentioned earlier, the sample women were not happy with the existing attitude of society towards professional women, especially other than teaching and medicine. As the early variables explored, women were discouraged from pursuing professional careers because of their care-giving role within the household. A woman's first responsibility is as a daughter, to provide care and comfort to her parents and siblings, and after her marriage, the characters change to the husband and in laws (mother and father in law as well as sisters and brother in law). So, throughout her life, she is running in a vicious circle: when she herself

becomes a mother in law, her caring responsibility never stops. Therefore, her professional career does not exempt her from her primary role as a carer.

1. *'Some conservative families consider professional women to be a stigma for their family honour. I have very few examples of lecturers in my family. But they choose a hard life for themselves, because at home they have to fulfil all their responsibilities as a daughter in law and wife. If she gets a little bit of time, she uses it to prepare her lecture for her students. Before going to college, she has to prepare breakfast for the entire family and get everything ready for lunch as soon she comes back, and then she needs to give lunch to everyone. I do not even think about such a hard life. Although the family has a few servants, she has to take the supervisory responsibility. (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).*
2. *'I do not know where we got this negative assumption about professional women. She is a human and Allah subhana wa ta' a'llah has given her right to gain whatever knowledge she wants and choose whatever profession she wants within Islam. But our society is creating complexities for career oriented women. They (society) will decide her career and field. You know medical college is overwhelmingly over crowded with women students, while within the same campus of the University of Peshawar, the Engineering college has few women students, so few that you can count them on your fingertips. Who decides this? The society! It is easy for them to manipulate women without a career or within certain career' (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).*
3. *'We are living at the mercy of men. So if they allow us, we will go for certain careers with their permission, or, if they are not happy, then we cannot do anything. But I really want this negative approach towards professional women, especially those who work in integrated professions to change now. But how? Our society needs to be restructured. I do not know where they got the impression that these women have a loose character. Some bad examples create negativity towards those professions. Each and every society has some norms, but I suggest that you forget about society and just care about your religion and family, and that's it!' (FI, Aiman, Frontier).*
4. *'Till this date, I am searching in the Quran for where it says that the household responsibilities are only women's job? I know that I will go for a teaching job because my society likes it. We, the women, are struggling throughout our lives for societal approval. When there is nothing to eat in my house, none of this so called society members come to ask or provide us something. I am going for work, first in a*

*non-elite private school that is local, and then I will study my B.Ed as a private candidate to get a job in a state primary and secondary school, because everyone said that their salaries are good. If someone is happy to accept me with my teaching career, then fine, otherwise I will prefer to remain unmarried'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Evidently, most of the sample women had not developed many feminist or emancipatory ideas. They were not challenging the existing norms of society (although some of their frustration came out during FI when Aiman yelled! However, she had no courage to challenge the existing culture of the society. Kiran was really articulate about her economic needs that encouraged her and her family to enter into a socially acceptable profession, but she knows that her teaching profession will not be challenged by the society's flag bearers. The society needs in-depth overhauling to accept and appreciate professional women. However, the sample women, despite their different economic classes, agreed upon continuous struggle within their capacity: for example, to take both household and career as far as they can. However, Nawal (Upper class) sounded lethargic, and might choose household responsibilities because, she further added, *'if we cannot do justice with both then we need to choose one and the most important is our family life'*.

### **5.10. The Prospects of Pukhtun Women for their Future...**

Some excerpts from the reactions of the sample women begin to highlight, when I asked a question: where you would see the future of Pukhtun women after ten years?

1. *'In my same traditional role of a Pukhtun women, because I do not have the courage to go against my family and parents. I can only pray for good and effective peace and prospects'* (PSQ, Jinnah).
2. *'I can see myself with loads of children running around with them [smiling] joking! It is not really bright because we need our men's support. Although in my family they are very supportive, at the same time they are worried that if they allow me to pursue certain things, it might not good for me. I remembered, once I asked them that I wanted to go abroad for my MBA, so they got really worried that as a woman, I would not survive there: who will look after me?, etc. And I know that money was not a problem for my Baba [father], but the way they are caring us, made them over conscious'* (PSQ, Home Economics).

3. *'Not anywhere else here in Peshawar; I might be married or teaching in a government school,'* (PSQ, Frontier).
4. *'Working as a teacher or lecturer depends on if I would be a lucky one. I have no financial support at the moment. However I am not disappointed from Allah Subhana wa ta' alal' mercy. So I am waiting for Allah's help!'* (PSQ, City).

The sample women were unsure about predicting something better for the next ten years. Their hesitation was an obvious element in their responses *'I can't say anything now, wherever Allah takes me'*(a sample woman). The upper class sample women were ready for their married lives, while the middle and working class were looking for job in their local non-elite private schools or looking for B.Ed or MA distance learning courses. Because a MSc. degree involves an intense amount of practical activities, those subjects are not offered in a distance or private degree examination.

My sample women were not enthusiastic about, nor did they show any determination towards challenging the existing position of women in society. Their attitude was very compromising to their family restrictions, educational and career opportunities. Furthermore, most of the sample women did not think about career or future; they rely on their parents, and society at large, to make decisions for them. They passively accept the social roles available for them and were not interested in going against the odds.

Islam is often considered a hard patriarchal religion that promotes the current dominant conservative view of society, which is not necessarily the original Islam (Yamani, 1996). However it is these hard patriarchal and cultural values that have made the women in Pukhtunkhwah more conservative. From the Initial Survey to the Post Survey exercises, I was examining the socio-religious and societal structure of gender dynamics. As discussed in the Literature Review, Islam advocates the liberty of women and gives women the right to marry of their own free will, to divorce if they so desire, to obtain formal education or to make decisions about their lives (Chaudhry, 2001). However, men have to be involved in women's affairs as supporters or *Wali* (the most protecting friend), and in a household, the final authority is vested in the males of the family (Karim, 2003, Ali, 2000, Silvie, 2004). This is because men and women are recognised as being physically different and their nature is considered to be biologically determined (Chaudhry, 2001). However, in Pukhtunkhwah, men and women belong to two separate worlds; public affairs outside home are allocated to men

while care-giving is the responsibility of women. A woman's religious understanding is also kept limited, because if she references anything from the Quran or the *Hadiths*, then her men counterparts would have no excuse. Moreover, a woman is entitled to half a man's share of her father's and one third of her husband's property. However, people merged the cultural practices with the religious; in other words, the society culturalised Islam rather than Islamising their culture.

### **5.11. 'Zama Deen, Zama Imaan' (My religion, my Faith)**

During the Focused Interviews I realised that my sample women are using lots of Islamic terms, i.e. '*in shaa Allah*' (if Allah wills), '*Alhamdulillah*' (all praise and gratitude to Allah) and '*JazakAllah*' (May Allah give you reward, usually an expression of thanks), etc. These are common phrases that are used by religious families in Pukhtunkhwah, who have a good understanding of the religion of Islam; however, my sample women expressed some knowledge and understanding about their faith. Their *deen* (religion) was stuck in cultural practices:

1. *'I am a strong believer and Allah Subhana wa Ta' ala allowed me to live my life according to His will, not the Pukhtuns' will. I am allowed to go for knowledge wherever I want; however, being a daughter I've certain restrictions. Although my parents are not forcing me to get marry with a lot of dowry, but I am not comfortable with it, such as a huge dowry, but under strong social and societal pressure, we are following this status quo. People do not let us to live according to the deen, we are following their deen'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'My deen is a complete code of life for me. However some cultural norms are stronger than religion. They dominate the society, therefore we cannot violate them. Co-education, integrated work environments and mixed gatherings in public are considered social evils. We cannot violate this, because we do not want our parents to be ashamed or embarrassed because of our unsocial behaviour'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'Our religion is limited to our Islamic studies books. The social power is in the hands of the wealthy people. They can take any bold steps. For example, most of the rich people do not observe purdah, but they don't care, and the society cannot scrutinize them, as they live in a posh area where everyone practices the same way.*

*Their appearance in public is also in their expensive cars, so the religion is for the middle and working class to follow strictly (FI, Aiman, Frontier).*

4. *'My parents taught me to have an unseen trust in Allah. Whatever is happened in our life is with the will of Allah. We are weak humans, we cannot do anything, and we can only try our best. Therefore we should leave the rest to Allah, our Creator and Sustainer. He loves us more than our parents, So, I strongly believe in it, and live in my present because my future always depresses me' (FI, Kiran, City).*

From the upper to the working class sample women, none has the courage to violate their cultural or religious norms. However, I felt that their responses were indicative of limited knowledge of contemporary and religious education in the country's curriculum. Indeed, this further supports Mernissi's (1996) and Yamani's (1996) theories that the religion of Muslim society is stuck in a strong patriarchal culture that is, for sure, not the original Islam.

The sample women's responses sounded cultured Islam in practice. Religion was limited to personal likes and dislikes or keeping Allah's book (the Quran) at home for blessings, and whenever they are in trouble, to take it out to read without understanding or kiss it to go outside of the home for protection. One of the sample women said *'I think religion is something personal.....I mean something of yours inside (pointing to her heart) ... that you feel it as strength, courage when you are upset or in trouble' (FI, Kiran, City).*

## **5.12. Pukhtuns Protagonism towards Women Education**

The sample women's families approach towards their daughters' education and career was not very encouraging because of the preference of their marriage responsibilities that they want to fulfil as early as possible. Mums and aunties were preparing their families' daughters for early marriages, for which sometimes they quote the Quranic verses for effect.

However, I did not find any economic class difference in this regard, because they were thinking, like their parents that the most important task in life is to get married to the most suitable person of the society that will give them the most prestigious place. Then, if they have time or they want to, later they can continue their studies as a private candidate or join the teaching profession, for fun for the upper classes and an economic need for the lower classes. Higher education was considered to be ruining their daughters' beauty:

1. *Mor Jan (my beloved mum) says; that I should not study till late night during my exams because that will affect my skin and hair or might cause dark circles around my eyes. If I am not good looking enough, who will marry me? Everyone here is in search of beautiful daughters in law. So, we need be more careful about our food and skin care' (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).*
2. *'Yes, higher education is important according to my Baba (father), but not more than our parents' will. They are our parents and they know what is best for us. Whatever they decide about our future, that is indeed for our good interest. We can work and study at any time of our life, but girls have a specific time for good marriage proposals, after that particular age, no one will ask about them. I do not want to have regrets later in my life for rejecting suitable proposals' (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).*
3. *'My father is willing for higher education but my brother (including cousins) says, "only finish your BA no more!" [Mimicking his voice], they are not in favour of women's higher education because then my marriage would be too late. Also, there is no other women's post-graduate college in my locality and the Frontier Women University does not offer an MA in my subject. I hope my parents would make a better decision for me' (FI, Aiman, Frontier).*
4. *'They (family) want us to marry, but everyone in the society is after rich pretty girls. I need to work for a good dowry collection then get married. But it all depends on our financial position in the future...my father and uncles are in favour of women's only post-graduate college. I, myself, am not comfortable in co-education settings' (FI, Kiran, City).*

Most of my sample women's family members opposed coeducation: their brothers and cousins were stronger in their opposition than their father and uncles, because they do not want their family women sit in the same classroom as their local men. All the economic strata demanded segregated higher education for themselves: *'we are not comfortable sitting in a same classroom with men, they will concentrate less on the lecture more on us [laughing]'* Nawal, FI, Jinnah.

Some women in the sample felt that they have to obey their family men's decisions and their own attitudes or opinions have no value for the men. Aiman, showing some irritation, and yelled out! that *'I love my father and brother and I respect them a lot but they are*

*deciding everything about me and my life ... so sometimes I am thinking where am I in all this?'*(FI, Frontier). It is evident that the sample women were the most obedient daughters and sisters, but they wanted their opinions to be valued. The family men accepted education more readily than a career in case of the non-availability of marriage proposal.

All the sample women in this study support the male-domination culture in Pukhtunkhwah; they continue to support the social order where their opinions are not valued and where they remain passive. Surprisingly, women accepted this position happily because they felt safe under men's support. Most of them do not think that they have the courage to decide solely about anything related to their future role.

Christ (2013: 217) wrote that:

Patriarchy is a system of male dominance, rooted in the ethos of war which legitimates violence, sanctified by religious symbols, in which men dominate women through the control of female sexuality, with the intent of passing property to male heirs, and in which men who are heroes of war are told to kill men, and are permitted to rape women, to seize land and treasures, to exploit resources, and to own or otherwise dominate conquered people.

Patriarchy is a very complex set of ideas, especially in the Pukhtunkhwah setting, because male members do not have bad intentions in controlling women's lives, rather they want to protect them from all social and emotional evils. My sample women further highlighted:

1. *'Men's permission means their overall support and help. This is also a surety or a guarantee for a life time. We are used to this culture; we never been trained to make major decisions in our life against their will or ideas. We are scared of such scenarios: what will happen if we go against their will?... nevertheless, you know what would happen to a woman in Pukhtun society who goes against the wishes of men in her family, such a woman would be killed straightaway in the name of honour, because our extended family system has strong roots. We consider all women as an honour of the entire family rather than your daughter or my daughter. Therefore, we are not independent, nor do we have decision making power'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'It is important to have male support in making our decisions. It will secure my future; just in case I get married of my choice then my family will not support me. So now, at least they can defend my rights and talk to my husband and in-laws on my behalf? They will take me for granted and I would be like an unpaid slave in their house, who serves the entire family by cooking, cleaning, and washing for them and*

*as a child-bearing machine. Therefore, our family support is very important they can stand beside us in family disputes’ (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).*

3. *‘Yes, obviously it is very important in my family that a woman cannot make any decisions without male sanction. One of my aunts refused to married her cousin; she went for higher education to Islamabad because there was no university in Pukhtunkhwah at that time. After her studies, she got a lectureship and married her class fellow. Unfortunately, her marriage failed. She wanted to come back to the family but my uncles and father did not allow her to. Now she is living a very miserable life, she cries and begs that she was wrong, that she made a wrong decision, but there is no place for her in my family. It is such a lesson for all of us: now none of the women of the family go against their will. Women are the ‘izzat’ (honour) of the family. My entire family is educated; therefore they did not harm her. They just said she is dead to us’ (FI, Aiman, Frontier).*
4. *‘We, the women are very emotional; therefore we make emotional decisions about our lives. Our inexperience attitudes and illogical thinking sometimes takes us to wrong decisions. I am really scared, so I left everything for my parents because limited financial resources make us more vulnerable’ (FI, Kiren, City).*

Culture and social norms, traditions and misunderstanding of Islam are some common features of Pukhtunkhwah society – for example that if women talk or argue with their men (in a polite way) it would be considered as disrespect in Pukhtunkhwah culture – and economic dependency makes women more vulnerable in society. The most important element was women’s own pre-cautions and negative predictions and false assumptions about future decisions. They have never been asked, nor they were included in any family decision making process, therefore they do not have any experience in handling difficult situations.

Furthermore, the family’s negative examples are brought up and quoted for psychological effect, to instruct daughters not to go against the decision of the family. Nevertheless, it is not important that all women’s decisions regarding their education, career and marriage have a negative impact or are unsuccessful. The family should stop treating women like immature adults, and then they will learn how to deal the situation later on.

### 5.13. The Prevailing Education System Encourages Rote Memorisation

The sample women were dissatisfied with the prevailing education system of Pakistan. The country adopted the English education system from their colonial masters, which is only suitable to make the colonised more superior slaves. The British were successful in their motive: people are still slaves mentally.

One of the sample women commented that *'lack of funds and infrastructure made our education system the worst in the South Asian region'* (ISSI, Frontier). They felt education for the sake for education is prevalent in society. Paradoxically, they were not interested in gaining a job or a career in the first place and yet thought that Pakistani education does not open their minds towards creativity and betterment of their gender role:

1. *'I think the problem is with our education system, because we are reading the same course work that our parents studied 15-20 years ago. Loads of things you have to learn by heart (rote learning or memorisation text)... this is how you can get good marks here. The stress is on memorisation rather than creativity and practicality of it. Our education system is increasing educated jahils (ignorant) in society'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'Our education system is distributing degrees, which are pieces of paper. We are thinking of education only for our status symbol, not for arousing our creativity and opening new mental faculties for us. Very rarely, our syllabus is revised according to our calibre and societal needs. Each political party when they came into power adds their own political manifestation through academia. It will remain until they are overthrown by another political party. In this tag-of-war, no one cares about the role of the education and its impact on young minds'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'The main problem with our education system is the curriculum, why the foreigners' language and ideas are imposed on us. In the beginning, children in schools struggle to learn three different languages (Pukhtu, Urdu and English). None of the South Asian countries make anything other than English as a core subject. We spent our life learning English; our teachers were not qualified in English subject. They taught us in translation methods, so how should we be good in English, till date I am translating every single word of English in my mind. As a result, our creativity*

*is only limited to learning languages and the person who speaks good English in our country, we consider him/her intelligent. Can you believe this is our mentality? We are impressed by English speakers like our English masters' (FI, Aiman, Frontier).*

4. *'There is only a name of education structure in government schools and colleges. English and good education is only for the privileged classes. Only they deserve to occupy the civil service jobs. Only their children have the right to be educated. We, the poor people, have struggled throughout our lives for our fundamental needs. Corruption is a common practice in all education departments' (FI, Kiran, City).*

#### **5.14. Women's only Institutions: A struggle of Liberalism or Conservatism?**

The sample women were in favour of women only schools, colleges and universities throughout the country. There was a mutual acceptance of the perception that *'acceptance of coeducation within Pukhtun society needs another century'* (FI, Frontier). Thus, women's universities were recommended by the sample across Pukhtunkhwah because most of the sample women will discontinue their education after their BA/BSc, as the higher education in a co-educational facility was forbidden to them and because Frontier Women University cannot fulfil the demands of such a vast majority of women students.

1. *'I studied in co-education, so I don't think my family would have any problem in continuing my higher education in co-education settings. However, I am thinking if coeducation is an issue of this society, then why not establish more and more women only postgraduate colleges and universities? It's really easy to criticise women's higher education and ask them to sit at home, but there are very few parents who are really looking for a way to provide their daughters with higher education. We need those kinds of fathers' (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).*
2. *'We should demand separate women's educational institutes throughout, not just women only universities. When the percentage of girls is critically low at the primary and secondary level, how we can improve women's participation in higher education? This problem needs to be addressed at the grassroots level. What if there are too many women universities and no women to study in them? [smiling]... there is need for a drastic of overhauling the mindset of the society towards this' (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).*

3. *'Women universities!! Hmm, this is a good idea, but we need to accept the reality that a lack of budget allocation to the education sector is the main problem of this country. The federal government deliberately adopted this strategy as they are spending more on the country defence. And Pukhtunkhwah is a step brother of Pakistan's other three siblings; since the creation of this country we have had a tussle with federation. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the constitution allotted education as a provincial domain, and every province has to sort it out according to their need. But the budget deficit is still in control of the federal government. How will the number of separate women universities be increased? I am the greatest supporter of it!'*(FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'It is so strange that we are only Muslim in name. We copied English education systems that didn't suit our culture and traditions. Progressive minded parents with money moulded the religion towards westernised Islam; learning English not as a language but as a culture of the elite class. They benefited from co-education, not we working class people. We are still waiting for Allah to help us. We are very disappointed with the present gender marginalisation policies'* (FI, Kiran, City).

The entire sample women agreed with the reality that separate women institutes as well as universities are indispensable for Pukhtunkhwah society. They believe money, marriage and men (in co-education) are the main obstacles to higher education. These universities would be a salvation for women in Pukhtunkhwah. In other words, they support the culture of the Pukhtun society and seek a way to be educated. They see these women's universities as a platform for women's liberation by keeping the cultural and traditional norms of the society. The non-segregated educational environment of higher education became a major factor of women's access to higher education.

Women cannot be treated equally in a co-education setting because of the assumption that equal access to education is sufficient to ensure equality between the sexes (Lasser, 2007; Meal, 2008, Hussain, 1995). However, this research revealed a different aspect of the issues surrounding the co-education of the women of Pukhtunkhwah: due to the strict *purdah* observance in the province, parents are reluctant to send their daughters into higher education which is offered in a co-educational setting, as the province has not enough resources to establish separate women's universities.

Nevertheless, the provincial government does not manage the infrastructure of the existing few universities adequately. As mentioned earlier, the only one separate women's university in the province is Frontier Women University, and it is not yet fully established. Thus, the sample women perceived conservatism as liberalism for themselves: *'we have our own religion and culture, so why not be conservative'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).

Families' resistance to co-education was based on centuries-old conservatism; however, in the Pukhtun social order, the sample women across all classes (upper, upper middle, lower middle and working) indicated love and respect for those cultural norms. The upper classes sample women study in co-education settings throughout, but at the higher education level, they showed their discomfort with the un-segregated mixed environment. It could be that the hidden curriculum of colleges and schools allocates girls and boys to different sections. However, my sample women defined their conservatism as their liberalism for women in Pukhtunkhwah. *'We want our own space, our own way of freedom'* (ISSQ, Jinnah), *'we are aware that in coeducation we need to follow our Islamic code of dress, and then we are allowed, but still I am not comfortable'* (ISSQ, Home Economics).

Moreover, the sample women did not link women's educational institutes to the Talibanisation processes, which demands complete segregation of women and men from primary to higher education. Thus, once again, the sample women stick to their own stance of understanding their Pukhtun culture and traditions. Rather, they take a pragmatic and concerned approach within the prevailing societal structure. *'We cannot fight our own society, nor we can fight our father, brothers or uncles, their concerns are right to some extent, so why not just to be educated? It does not really matter where and how? just get this higher education for women's well being'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).

*'I think marriage should not be a problem in the way of our higher education too, because we have to compromise to our family as well. If they are worried about our marriage, if possible let's get married, but let's make sure by mutual understanding that a husband should be a husband cum friend who will support you, stand by you and trust you!'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).

### **5.15. The Institution of *Purdah* (veiling)**

Private and public life seclusion is a common practice in Pukhtunkhwah society, which is also recommended by Islam. Seclusion of Pukhtun women by veiling (with a shuttlecock type

*burqah*) still exists in the society. As mentioned earlier, houses are divided into *zanana* and *mardana* portions to keep women's and men's private and public lives separate. I further discussed this topic with my sample women during my Focused Interviews because most of my sample women were veiling, although they did not use the Pukhtun traditional one, but rather black *abayahs* (Arabic style veiling), an Islamic headscarf with a shawl. However, it was according to the Islamic code of dress.

1. *'I love to wear my hijab (three quarter shawl veiling), I feel secure and protected, and the recent attacks on girls' educational institutes forced us and especially our parents to take some protective measures. However, I am not covering fully because I think my college uniform is quite a loose fit. So, I feel its okay! This is a part of my dress, so how should I be uncomfortable with it? Also, at college we all girls, so if I want I can take it off, but to be very honest I am used to it now'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *Being wealthy does not mean I forgot my dress code, [laughing]. I had studied in a co-educational school, but studying in an English environment did not have an effect on my covering, I mean my veiling. I cover my head with a scarf most of the time. Similarly, my family women wrapped themselves with long 'chaddar' (a large shawl to cover her head and body, and face), when they go outside of the house. You know it is a sign of our family women, whenever we go to a wedding and come out from cars, people recognise that we are from such and such family'* [her eyes was shining with proud feelings] (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'I am a proud Muslimah, Alhamdulillah (thanks be to God)! I strictly follow my Islamic code of attire (veiled from head to toe, it is not because of the Taliban [laughing]. All my sisters and brothers are following the Islamic code of dress. Purdah is not only for women, it is also for men too. They need to be dressed decently and lower their gaze as instructed in the Quran. So, Alhamdulillah, my entire family is not only practising Islam, but also celebrating it'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'Veiling is a part of my dress and following seclusionary practice in our house. However we do not feel oppressed or restricted, as the western media says. It is our choice now; indeed our parents forced us to in the beginning when we did not understand our religion, but by the grace of Allah, we understood that it is for our best. So, now I am doing it by my own choice'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Paradoxically, seclusion at home and veiling is a traditional practice of Pukhtunkhwah. *'You know what? When Islam came to the Indian subcontinent, who embraced Islam first? [pause] the Pukhtuns! You know why?, Because it was similar to their own traditions. We grew up in this society and went to school, so it is a part of our lifestyle, although we are covering in a different way, but it really does not matter because Islam encourages us to cover, it does not specify with what way, so in your words, we Islamised our culture'* [smiling after saying the words in my (researcher) tone] (FI, Kiran, City).

Furthermore, practicing regional culture is a prestigious act which was traditionally practiced by the upper classes as an assertion of their class status (Hussain, 1995). However, my sample women were practicing because of their culture and Islamic ethos as well as because of the political unrest in the society.

My sample women have to be accompanied by one of the family members to go outside. Upper class sample women are allowed to go with their drivers; as mentioned earlier, these are the persons most trustworthy to the family. There is no concept of women drivers, although some upper class families send their most trusted house maids with their daughters.

Thus Nawal, Gulalai, Aiman and Kiran observed veiling according to their own understanding of cultural and religion. They felt a liberty to go out with their family or be escorted by a driver or house maids. They do not have the feeling that they are neglected or have less as compared to their brothers, because they accept and enjoy the role that is defined by the social order. They did not have feelings of deprivation. However, public transport was not a safe choice for middle and working class women; for their mobility, therefore, their parents would hire a vehicle to drop them off and pick them up from school and college. Otherwise, a male member of the family has to fulfil this responsibility. Therefore the opposition of higher education was stronger by the brothers rather than fathers, because they need to fulfil that duty if ordered by the family elders.

The upper and upper middle class English-educated women sample had broadened and liberalised their living perspective, so seclusion was not an issue for them. Their wealth gives them the strength and power to make strong decisions which they can follow through. Nevertheless, when a family is economically sound, they are able to make bold decisions for themselves that sometimes go against the culture and religion. For example, the sample women of the upper class said, *'my parents do not mind mixed gatherings of our cousins, sisters and brothers'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah), which is an un-Islamic practice, or talking to a

*Namehram* (a stranger man other than, father, brother, uncle, nephew, son) without any urgency or reason, or to travel without a *mehram* (a person she is permanently prohibited to marry, a close blood relationship as mentioned above). Islam does not allow a Muslim woman to talk to a man without a reason. However, the lower middle and working class do not have the courage, resources, or prestigious status in the society, which makes them more strict in following the patriarchal rules.

### **5.16. Equal before Allah, Unequal before Men**

*'Allah created the entire humanity from a man (Adam, peace be upon him) and woman (Eve, peace be upon her), so why do we treat men and women differently?'* (PSQ, City). My sample women confessed that men are economically and socially independent in society, they are indeed treated as most superior creatures in the household.

1. *'There are two set of rules in our household; one for men and another for women. The way we were brought up in our home should be understood in two ways: one that our family is over protective: they wanted us to be safe from all kinds of mishaps. Secondly, my brother has to get married, he will sign a nikkahnama (a marriage contract) to another woman that he will support and look after her. Then he brings her home. And at the same time, he has to look after my parents because after my marriage, I will not be able to stay with them for a long time, it will be my brothers who will look after them and his own family. So I compromise, thinking that all this is for a reason...'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'My Mum loves my brothers and my Baba loves daughters. Once I asked my parents who they liked the most, daughters or sons? They told me "look at your fingers, they all different—the thumb, forefinger, middle, ring finger and small finger, but when one hurts, their pain is the same". I was speechless at that time. Their role is different; their biological needs are different so how could they be treated equally? Whenever my brother goes out with his friends, I really wish to go out with my friends too, but then I say to myself why I am comparing myself with him? He is a man and I am a woman. I will go to my friend's house tomorrow and have some fun during the day time. I do not understand why we compare ourselves with the western women's life style. Their culture is totally different from ours'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics)

3. *'My parents said that your brothers would be our old age supporters. He should be prepared and trained for those responsibilities. He should be familiar with the public dealings: we cannot send daughters to do grocery shopping nor to the hospital by themselves. Man has to be the supporter, provider and bread earner of the family. And a women should be the best caregiver to make a home Jannah (paradise) for him. Then, the house vehicle will move smoothly'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'Both women and men are the 'izzat' (honour) of the household. I do not understand why men considered themselves exempted? Why this 'izzat' carried out with women's chastity only? So confusing! As I am careful outside in public, my brother is more so, because he knows my old father will suffer. And obviously, my only brother is the apple of my parents' eyes, out of all of our six sisters, so he deserves the most'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Astonishingly, the sample women beautifully justified their position in the household. I felt a calmness and willingness in their responses towards the gendered-centre role. The unequal power relation starts from household and has been accepted by the majority of the sample women.

Nawal followed a realistic approach; she justified the inequality in the household as a social and cultural phenomenon. Her household environment and parental attitude was giving her a clear message that she is a guest in their house until she gets married. And sooner or later, she would be replaced with a daughter in law, who would be the new owner of the household because of her brother's authoritative position.

Gulalai expressed her parents' language and tone. The different attitude towards daughters and sons is natural because Allah created men and women for different tasks and responsibilities. However, there was a hidden desire to be like her brother, but she suppressed those feelings by visiting her friends in their house during the day time. Moulding feelings towards positivity within a culture of domination is indeed an excellent alternative to becoming depressed.

Aiman's answers were influenced by her parents' teachings of a daughter's role. Her household clearly demarcated her role as care-giving for the comfort of men, and her brother's role is for public dealings outside in society. That exempted her from paid work sometimes. She got the impression that she is not born for masculine activities.

Kiran was confused with this unequal role allocation within the society. The social and cultural constraints made my sample women conscious about their answers, as they felt uncomfortable or bad to talk against their family, in which they are treated differently. Therefore, they constantly gave explanations for their household behaviour.

The sample women recognised the fact that their status in the home was lower than that of men, though they are equal before Allah. Allah created men and women with certain rights and responsibilities. Therefore both the genders share superiority within the *Sharia* law. As mentioned earlier, a mother has three times higher position than a father. Similarly men and women have certain responsibilities that put them one step ahead of the other to make that balance; such as men are in charge of their household and responsible for all kinds of provisions for their families.

Men are *qawamon*, (the Arabic word in the Quran used for guardian), constantly engaged in women's affairs, and have an active role rather than an authoritarian. It is also a commitment to the relationship with the spouse. He is a pillar of the home. As the person responsible for the entire home unit, he has to value women in the households. My next variable was women's status and treatment in the households by the family men.

1. *'We give preference to our family men's thoughts. But it does not mean we have no value in our household. We trust them that they will think and decide everything best for me. I do not want to make any decision alone about my life that I might regret in future. Therefore, I am allowing my family to make decisions on my behalf'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'My parents are my entire world. I am a part of their body, how they can do injustice to me or think me invaluable? They are keeping and protecting me like a diamond. Therefore I have a blind trust for their love and decisions. I know they will ask or inform me, but I am happy that they make a decision about my personal and professional life'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economic).
3. *'Whenever something is being decided in my family, all the family members, my father, uncle, grandfather, get together like a roundtable conference [smiling]. So, whatever they decide, they inform the women later, for their opinions, or for what would be the next step. So everything is decided with mutual understanding, rather than force'*(FI, Aiman, Frontier).

4. *'You know people exaggerate our Pukhtun extended family structure. I know we are lacking privacy, but we live like a fist: all my family members stand by one another in every hardship, every sorrow and happiness, so why not to give them the right to decide about our future? I have only one brother, but my father considered all his nephews like his own sons, his shoulders. My uncles and aunties are supporting us financially and morally. I do not feel imposed upon by their decisions'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Thus, my sample women felt secure in their family decision making process about their education, career and marriage. They were happy with their men's attitude and decision making abilities, because they had no idea and no practice about how to make decisions for themselves, due to the overprotective attitudes of their men. Moreover, the cases of Aiman and Kiran in the extended family structure have a positive impact on their personal and family life. Although they accepted the reality that lack of privacy is one of the drawbacks of the joint or extended family system, their working class limited finances and lack of brothers bound their ties strongly to their family men, as in times of need, only her uncles and cousins would stand by their father. Therefore lack of confidence, training and fear about their decisions (that they might be unsuccessful and will lose the support of their family men) are the social forces of the prevailing culture; that is why men only make decisions about their family women.

### **5.17. Religiosity of the Sample Women**

Since most of the sample women have shown their love, understanding and friendliness towards Islam, I tried to establish whether my sample women can see a fine line between culture and religion, or whether they overlap it like the other uneducated people of society. Islam empowered women 1400 years ago by giving them a prestigious position and rights. As a mother, paradise lays under her feet. Her rank is three times higher than a father. Similarly, she has been given half of a share of her father's inheritance because she also gets a due share from her husband's property before she gets married to him. Parallel to inheritance, the concept of *pardah* is both for men and women; the religion says a woman should cover her body, but before this command, Allah commanded the Muslim man to lower his gaze.

Some excerpts of the sample women are as follows:

1. *'My family is okay! We are keeping religion and worldly life side by side, for the sake of culture we cannot leave our religion but sometimes we do this injustice by following the cultural norms. We are living in a culture dominated society. For example I will get loads and loads of dowry but will not get my share of my father's property as this is not a prevailing tradition. To get a share of my family property, I have to get married to my cousin, who I would not mind if he is handsome and well-educated'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'Islam says acquiring knowledge is an obligation for every men and women. Similarly, for seeking knowledge one could go as far as China. Also, knowledge is a lost inheritance of the Muslims. However, we are not allowed even to go to our college. Cultural barriers are strong, and people gossip and degrade our family men that they cannot look after us properly. We have to be accompanied by someone at all times, why not our driver or guard? Co-education is considered a stigma and a non-religious act. Most of the women left their education after their BA and BSc. although religion does encourage single gender universities or separate women university campuses, but it is not a hard and fast rule. We are following our own assumptions'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).
3. *'The most powerful tool of Islam to make women economically independent is a woman's share in her father's and husband's property, as well as bride money. However both are snatched away by culture. First, this for the sake of brothers, that they give us a huge dowry, so they are compensated with property. Also, being unmarried, as we are totally reliant on our father's and brother's finances, we cannot think about getting our share'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'I am so confused with these "religion" and "culture" terms. One is dragging us to one extreme and the other is on the opposite. We live in fear of social evils, our lives and living standards are fixed and moulded by culture, and religion has a very limited role. I have an only brother: how can I get everything from him? Rather than I would try to help him to be a successful man of society'* (FI, Kiran, City).

Thus across all classes, my sample women perceived culture as a more dominant force than religion. In their households, they act under social pressure. *'Allah Subhana wa tallah does not dishonour us in front of society, but people do in society'* (FI, Kiran, City). Sometimes the sample women did not feel the overlapping of culture and religion because the

centuries-old prevailing customs and traditions deprived them from their Islamic rights of inheritance. Women's silence on the issue is strengthening the prevailing culture, which has itself stitched their lips. Moreover this deprivation of inheritance is influenced by the culture of the society; socially it is not a good practice for a daughter to take a share (of her fathers' property). It should rather go to the brothers, and the husband asks for forgiveness of *Haq Mahr* and the bride money. These are only given at the time of divorce or separation.

Therefore, Pukhtunkhwah women have a passive role in their households and society. The unwritten code of *Pukhtunwali* is over emphasised by the local *jirga* (counsellor). Indeed, men are granted some extra responsibilities; yet, they are obligated to look after the family women to get their full potential in each and every step or phase of life.

### **5.18. Gender, State and Education**

The literature review of this study conceptualised gender marginalisation and a vast gender gap in the education sector of Pakistan. Furthermore, the poor educational infrastructure and lack of country's budget allocation to education further discourages women from pursuing higher education, because women only educational institutes need double funding. Interestingly, my sample women put the responsibility of women's increased participation in society on women's shoulders: that there is the state law and policies, but that these need implementation by the people, not the government.

1. *'The state has failed to improve the status of women. I felt that the state implemented 'few' so called "laws", and therefore has a lack of practical measures. The already existing law for women did not make any difference in women's lives. So, now women need to rethink their own ways of empowerment within the Pukhtunkhwah code of life'* (FI, Nawal, Jinnah).
2. *'I think we need new theories for Pukhtunkhwah feminism, [smiling], but that feminism should be with the collaboration of men. This is because of how long we will be waiting for the state machinery to decrease the gender gap. The federal government is dominated by the Punjabi politicians, so loads of educational developments are taking place in the province of Punjab. We are far behind the women of Lahore and Karachi. Indeed, we are traditionalist, but the traditions need to accommodate contemporary education. We, the women, need to re-establish our own ways of educating ourselves. For how long we will be waiting for Allah? Allah does not help those who do not help themselves'* (FI, Gulalai, Home Economics).

3. *'It is a long debatable issue, but our government failed to reduce this gender gap in education. So many reasons are responsible for this failure: culture, lack of funds, patriarchy, so on and so forth, but I think, you [pointed to me] have noticed during your data collection process, [looking at me for conformation] that we the women are too responsible for this gap. We see a successful and happy woman as one who gets married to a successful, wealthy, educated man of society. This is our definition, so if a state builds educational institutions, who will go there? Women in society have to change their own thinking, their roles in society. It is very easy to blame the state. I am telling you, a state cannot do anything for us, unless we change the pattern of our thinking'* (FI, Aiman, Frontier).
4. *'We need to fulfil our education needs with our limited resources, although the task is spread out over unlimited time. Our state is a victim of serious corruption. So, forget about the state! We need to understand the importance of education rather than to get a piece of paper called a "degree". There are lots of ghost educational institutes, which means that in the government records, these institutes are available and the staff are getting their salaries, but in reality these schools or further educational institutes do not exist. Similarly, policy makers should keep local culture and traditions in mind in the formation of their policies. They should not compare us to the rest of the country, please, for God's sake!'* (FI, Kiran, City).

The sample women's views really changed to a genuine feminist discussion about gender, education and the role of the state in Pukhtunkhwah society. They admitted the reality of insufficient funds but accepted society's mindset. The state is creating an unfair society for women, so women have to be critical about themselves rather than state law and policies. For the first time, I felt a clear rejection of liberal feminists' thoughts with their strong voices.

They were critical at the macro level of society and state infrastructure to education, because most of them favoured women's only universities, but the government had failed to establish adequate universities in Pukhtunkhwah. In addition, they did not realise that the state and society is the made up of their families' men; politicians who are making government policies for the society. The sample women did not criticise their families, as it is a social taboo in Pukhtunkhwah. However, their opinions were slightly changed regarding women's higher education from early marriage.

They blamed society and said that women's own attitudes are the barriers towards their higher education, but at the same time, admitted that higher education has the capability to

change women's own thinking. They were hoping that women only institutions will at least give women a platform, '*when the society sees educated women role models that would be the transition period of Pukhtunkhwah society*' (PSQ, Home Economics).

## **5.19. NEW THESES OF GENDER AND EDUCATION**

After considering the findings of my data collection tools, the following new theses emerged:

### **5.19.1. A complex and paradoxical role of men in the women's lives**

This study found a complex and paradoxical role of men in women's' lives, educated, broad-minded men (who support women in all fields of life) as well as un-educated, narrow-minded men (who do not support women's education and work, even forcing them into their traditional roles in the family). These traditionalist men's approach is highly influenced by the culture and society; they ignore the real teachings of Islam. The difference between these two opposite attitudes of men is due to their secular contemporary and religious education.

Male support for women's education, marriage and career was considered obligatory across all economic strata within the sample women's lives. My sample women did not even imagine it for a little while, because men's support means both moral and financial support for the women at both times of ease and times of difficulty. Men defend their rights and stand by them in all situations before and after marriage. Therefore, my sample women cannot make any independent decision about themselves. They were bound to their fathers, brothers and husbands, and in extended family uncles and cousins too.

My sample women have a passive role in the household, which they willingly accepted in the social milieu. They considered their family men as their well-wishers and protectors from all evils. They cannot put them into trouble, and all their social and economic measures are for safeguarding their family women. My sample women did not express any frustration or overbearing control in their personal and emotional lives. This might be because of the social taboo to criticise their family. But with the overall interaction with my sample women, I did not feel it at all that they were pretending about the positive aspects of their family men.

In other words, they feel honoured to go out in the company of their family men. Therefore, they avoid going out by themselves or with friends only. However, they were

allowed to see their friends during the day. My sample women were born and brought up in the same culture, before them they saw their mother, aunties and other family women in the same pattern of life. So, the acceptance of such social and cultural values does not bother them. There was not an active (men's) and passive (women's) role clash. The sample women were happy in their allocated role. *'I cannot talk to my father directly; whenever I need anything I ask my mother, she always conveys my needs, feelings and emotions to my father'* (a sample woman). I concluded my data analysis with an extreme love and respect for the family men by my sample women.

### **5.19.2. The role of the extended family in women's lives**

The sample women's male extended family members (uncles and cousins) and their real brothers were more influential than the fathers. The majority of my sample women live in their extended family system with their grandfather, uncles and cousins, who are considered as part of their family. Some families have different houses with the same courtyard, while some live in one roof in different rooms. This is an old family tradition that all men run their family business or agricultural land. They believe in the concept that sharing is caring.

They make a joint family decision regarding their women's lives. Sometimes having older fathers encourages their sons to make decisions on the family matters, as after the father they will be the supporters of the entire family. It is also in the culture of the society that fathers give preference to their sons' opinions instead of their daughters'. The data shows that the sample women's brothers were reluctant for their sisters to enter higher education. Instead, they wanted to get them married as soon as the family received a suitable proposal for them. Secondly, public transport is not a safe method for college or university students to use for travel on their own. If the women do not attend college, then the brothers can avoid the responsibility of picking up and dropping off their sisters. The sample women further explained that brothers have to become responsible for the whole family when a father gets older; therefore, parents accepted their sons' decisions rather than their daughters'. So, they were happy with their brothers and cousins learning from their father and uncles. It is a tradition of Pukhtun society that each woman should be known by her father's, brothers' or husband's name. Men do not mention their daughters', sisters' or wives' names in front of men from outside the family.

Therefore, women in the sample often rely on their family men for important decisions. There was no class variation in the value of men being responsible for all their women's

actions and decisions. The sample women confessed: *'my family men always ask our opinion but as we have no experience of making decisions and a fear of wrong decisions, we are reluctant'* (sample woman). Their limited exposure and interaction within the society further limited their choices and likes and dislikes. However, this was not considered as a matter of oppression by my sample women.

### **5.19.3. Money is power: economic status impacts all aspects of women's lives**

The wealthy sample women were more confident about their continuation of higher education or how to live a prestigious life in society. Sometimes the upper and upper middle class women take some bold decisions, such as not observing fully the Islamic code of dress (*pardah*). Those women studied in private elite English medium schools that fully opened the doors of higher education in Pakistan and abroad. Because of their parents' strong financial position, they can afford the high fees and other expenses of attending those schools. The working class sample women attended Urdu medium schools because their families could not afford the expenses of English medium private schools. As this study has shown, since they have not been educated in English, they may experience difficulties in accessing further and higher education (where most of the reference books are available in English only, although the higher education staff delivers their lectures in mixed of Urdu and English to make the concepts clear for native students). Women belonging to well-educated and financially secure families can make decisions regarding their higher education and marriage after family consultation. In these families, brothers have little influence over these decisions, as they are not considered to be responsible for their sisters. Affluent families, as mentioned earlier, usually have a car with a driver who can fetch and carry their daughters to and from school and college, or they can hire private transport for them. They can also afford for their daughters to stay in college hostels (which are the most expensive accommodation in the cities). Money is a source of power for them; they can hire tutors to teach the girls at home, so they can facilitate their daughters' education by any means.

### **5.19.4. The language of instructions and its impact on women's education**

Their economic class further facilitated my upper class sample women with a strong command of the English language as well as confidence. I felt a clear difference between the working class and upper class sample women's mode of interaction, apart from language, because I allowed my lower middle and working class sample women to choose a language (English and Pukhtu or Urdu) with which they felt confident. However, they were quiet,

hesitant and did not display a smile or hope. They were constantly correcting and rephrasing their own sentences. They sounded very serious and mature in their attitude. By the way, it is hard for two Pukhtuns to speak in different languages, but my upper class sample women were using many English words and phrases with full confidence and were enjoying the interview process with me.

As the literature review of this study found, linguistic complexity is a tool of fostering and reproducing the class system in society, where one school system (English medium) produces high class executives and the other (Urdu medium) lower class employees. Therefore, attaining education was very dependent on the economic status of my sample women's families. Pakistan has a very low literacy rate as compared to the other developing South Asian countries, because of the allocation of low GDP (2.2%) and rarely produces up-standard material for the government schools, which are Urdu medium only.

This study concluded that the chosen language of instruction has a great effect on women's ability to access opportunities for higher education. The sample women from Urdu-medium were hardly coping with courses taught in English at their college and university level. Rehman's (2006: 89) criticism suitably fits here: that this elite class had a better chance with the English language, which they adopted as a culture too, to differentiate them and make them superior over Urdu-medium or traditional (*Dini-madaris*) stake-holders. Above all, this is the kind of cultural capital which has snob value and constitutes a class identity marker (Rehman, 2006:90). Furthermore, this study holds up the Marxist feminists' theory regarding education, because the education system in Pakistan is also cultivating and reproducing a class system in society by its dual language of instruction.

#### **5.19.5. Social Taboos**

My sample women criticised the state, the government and the education system, but none of them extended their critique to their own families, especially their family men. They were following women's traditional role in Pukhtunkhwah, a role that is subservient to men. They criticised the state or government policies and the prevailing education system but not their family men, who are making this society and sit as politicians in the Ministry of Education and Curriculum. However, at the end of my data collection process, they explicitly admitted women's own exposure and thinking towards higher education as the first and foremost problem that has to be addressed by the women of the society. They did not criticise individuals within their family who are reproducing the patriarchal nature of the family and

of wider society. This attitude of women came as an addition to the social taboos, which I enlisted in the introduction of this study.

## **5.20. Concluding Comments**

- Economic class, language of instruction, and parental education patterns were the reinforcing elements for the sample women to access higher education. The upper and upper middle class sample women were confident to continue higher education if they wanted to.
- The sample women preferred marriage over higher education. Career was not their priority or was the last option, and in the education and medicine fields only. If a choice between a career and higher education was available for them, then they would choose higher education.
- The sample women were happy to give all the decision making power to their family men, because lack of training makes them hesitant to decide about their future.
- They demanded women only educational institutes throughout Pukhtunkhwah.
- The sample women criticised state educational policy that widened the gender gap but they also put responsibility on women to change their own thinking that evolved around husband and children only.
- A complex and paradoxical role of men in woman's life was observed. Uncles, cousins and brothers appeared more influential than the fathers about women's education and work.
- The priority was given to find a suitable proposal to get married as soon as possible, not to invest or plan for higher education in all economic strata.
- A successful woman, according to my sample women, must have a wealthy, educated husband and sons only offspring.

## **5.21. Summary**

The content and theme analysis of this chapter identified some key theses for further discussion in the next chapter. The areas of research that had been investigated (through the research tools) uncovered surprising and unexpected ideas which are a significant contribution to this study. The next chapter, 'Discussion and Conclusion' will further elaborate the anti-thesis and synthesis of the existing theories and gaps in the available literature to draw some conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

In this final chapter, I combine methodological, contextual, theoretical and empirical features of the dissertation to see the links between them. My discussion is formed by various, personal experiences, political thought and philosophies and societal experiences and views about perceptions of higher education in Pukhtunkhwah. My sample women lived in the patriarchal society of Pukhtunkhwah; most of them experienced inequality and a lack of decision making power about their personal and educational life that stemmed from social, cultural and the misinterpretation of the Islamic religion. As I entitled this thesis ‘Silent voices and untold perceptions of Pukhtun women’ because I wanted to hear and compare the collective life experiences and the knowledge of Pukhtunkhwah and my sample women and use them to reach conclusions about patriarchy, class, language issues and the education system. I do appreciate that without my sample women, this study would be impossible, so they have a special, unique position in this study. In other words, this is their study.

This study shows that the sample women were aware of social injustice, but strong patriarchal and cultural norms kept them silent or it is possible that sometimes they do not realise the injustice, and in turn, silence strengthened the male-domination of the society. There was both a lack of women as role models and an absence of a platform where they could start their own struggle of emancipation and empowerment. But the question was: where would they be trained for their struggle against inequality? Their family men and women trained them for gender stereotyped roles so that they do not think outside the mindset formed during their childhood.

In addition, to a great extent my sample women were unaware of the benefit of higher education that could bring revolution of self-consciousness into their lives. My sample women saw higher education as a status symbol to get a good marriage proposal, or as a way to alleviate economic need. They considerably ignored the great role education can play for inner transformation and personal thinking, which to some extent they realised during the focus interviews. So it was important to understand their perceptions and experiences because no one has heard them before; nobody has given them a chance to speak about what they want. They were quietly following the status quo of the Pukhtunkhwah society.

In this study, I came across so many different perceptions of women towards their higher education opportunities. Sometimes their perceptions exhibited many similarities despite their various different households' experiences. Most of the time they openly expressed their emotions by laughing, crying, joking, showing hidden frustration and shouting, but I enjoyed that most of them trusted me and were confident to share their perceptions and experiences of living in society that trains them for future passive roles. About some of their private perceptions they were both explicit and implicit because of their family honour, yet they all were dreaming of a better society where their perceptions were valued by others and as a result would produce an improved role for those of their gender. The family men have complete authority over the decisions of the women in Pukhtunkhwah society, paradoxically because of their over protective nature—this authority or control is intended to keep the women away from all risk and dangers in the society. Yet economic class, misinterpretation of religion, lack of women role models and social pressures mould their perceptions in a particular way as a Pukhtun of Pukhtunkhwah. The different shades of their moods during Focused Interviews and their careful selection of words and language, in light of their family men and honour, made me realise their vulnerability and secondary position in the household. Indeed, in the words of one of my sample women '*we need Pukhtun feminism now*', to effectively address the inequality within the *Pukhtunwali* code of life.

In this chapter I will further elaborate on key findings in the following conceptual areas:

- Synthesising feminist theories in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah
- The inappropriateness of applying western models to a non-western setting
- Redefining cultural and religious discourses
- Lack of women role models in Pukhtunkhwah society
- Women's lack of training and experience in the decision-making process
- Money, marriage and masters
- The application and relevance of Marxist feminism and of Islamic socialism
- Conclusions and recommendations for future work

## 6.2. Synthesising feminist theories in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah

The theoretical framework of this study has been informed by work on gender inequality in education from different feminist theories (liberal, radical, Marxist and Islamic) with a common characteristic to challenge the male experience of education (Mattu and Hussain 2004; Dean, 2007). My study adopted a radical Islamic feminist approach by challenging the cultural and patriarchal Pukhtunkhwah traditional society to empower women. As I made it clear in the section addressing Marxist Feminism, this study also adopted some aspects of a Marxist Feminist approach, especially the recognition that women's experiences in Pukhtunkhwah (as elsewhere) are influenced by capitalism and its attendant hierarchical set of social class relations as well as by patriarchy.

The empowerment I am seeking for women in Pukhtunkhwah is to make decisions about their lives without confrontation with their religion and with the men of their families. Instead, they should be free to achieve their goals and realise their rights through partnership with men and with an understanding of Islamic theology (Contractor, 2010), which enables them to challenge patriarchal interpretations of their Islamic faith set out by contemporary writers and the concept of *Ijtihad* (See Literature Review Section I). In analysing my research data, my sample women seemed very accepting and passive in terms of their own experiences and situation. This study will open an arena for Pukhtun women to have more confidence in making their voices heard that might contribute to transformation.

Furthermore, my study rejected the liberal feminists' theories that equality should be brought about by state law. Pakistan already has a constitutional law to provide equal opportunities for men and women in education and other fields of life, but this exists only in official documents not in practice. Similarly the country's name is the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan': it is an Islamic country, but Islam is not truly implemented in state affairs and law. As I have argued in this thesis, Islam highly recommends equality of education for both genders. However in real life everyday situations, there is no gender equality in the country (UNESCO, 2010).

One of the theoretical issues that have arisen from this study is the application of feminist theories to the inequality in the higher education of Pukhtunkhwah. The feminist studies that I referred to in this dissertation (Thomas, 1990; Francis, 2000b; Francis and Skelton, 2001; Francis and Skelton, 2005) did not suitably explore the theories of gender and feminism in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah. I hope this dissertation will provide some insight on this

important discussion and make a contribution to this field of study. On the one hand, there are many UN and NGO reports on gender and education in Pakistan (for example World Bank, 2002 and 2005; UNDP, 2005; UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2010; UNIFEM, 2005) that I referenced in my literature review, but most of these focused on primary and secondary education facts and figures and paid little attention to gender issues in higher education. On the other hand, there are very few academic studies (Naz et al., 2011; Malik and Courtney, 2011, Shahzad et al., 2009; Hussain, 1995) that theorise higher education as a source of women's empowerment. They did not discuss or apply any feminist theory in their studies. While issues of basic survival often continue to be a priority, there is a need of further engagement to understand other aspects of life, and in this case, reference to feminist theories can be helpful. Therefore, there is an urgent need to extend feminist theories to the study of gender in higher education. So far, the few academic studies of the country (Pakistan) that do this have dealt mostly with other parts of Pakistan, such as the provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

I hope that my study will contribute to understanding gender marginalisation in higher education in Pukhtunkhwah, as well as provide further insight to enhance theorisation on this important issue. This study found that precious few feminist researchers in the west have chosen to explore higher education, possibly due to the deficiency of the feminist theories related to the role of higher education in the reproduction of inequalities (Francis, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Thomas, 1990). The blend of feminist theorisation that I have attempted to develop in this thesis (radical Islamic and Marxist/socialist feminism) can, I hope, help to improve, update and challenge the conditions and perceptions of some of the most deprived women of Pukhtunkhwah. Neither western nor Islamic feminists have contributed much to the theorisation of the effects of religion on higher education. In addition, such a theorisation process has the potential for making feminist theories more radical in terms of addressing some of the most unacceptable and unfortunate levels of women's suffering highlighted by this study's findings, as well as the silence and the injustices they suffer.

### **6.3 The inappropriateness of applying western models or theories to a non-western setting**

The literature review highlighted how we can better understand the processes of perceptions and experiences Pukhtunkhwah women by referring to the western literature on gender and education. However, Pourzand (2003) revealed to me that there were gaps in the

western literature regarding issues pertaining to changing gendered involvement in education and in Muslim communities. She believes;

this dichotomy is linked in various ways to unequal power relations between the West and the rest of the world. Consequently the South Asian gets 'studied' in different ways from those in the 'North'. For example, the ways our sample women mentioned their lives were affected by being in the 'east', the gendered experiences and the challenges to continue their education (Pourzand, 2003: 361).

She further argues that we live in a society of risks and threats as well as within their own families and the choices we made for our education and work are all specific to their location and would have been quite different had they been born in the west. She writes that

western or western-based theories are often directly or indirectly affected by non-western history and individuals. Also these theories are not homogenous and a growing number of activists are questioning western hegemony and providing alternatives understandings and voices. The contextualized interaction between different theories, histories and the power relation they reflect is important to understand rather than maintaining a binary perspective and having to choose one or the other (Pourzand, 2003: 362-3).

Pourzand gave me a good understanding of the fact that it creates problems when we use Western theories to study gender and education in a non-Western setting. However, on the other hand, western feminism and gender theory have enhanced my understanding of the complexities of gender, education and society. That is criticised by Pourzand (2003) that it is necessary to study the South Asian countries differently because the massive gender gap and severe unequal power relations in South Asian society that is far worse than in the West. We, the in-between researchers, need to explore a middle way for empowering South Asian women without pitting them against their family men. In addition, we need to recruit the support of male members of the society to reduce this gender gap. I agreed with Pourzand's point of view, that western theories are not homogenous and are gradually making space for other theoretical voices; similarly, South Asian societies are going through transitional stages. Women and men's roles are being redefined by changing cultural and religious discourses. However we should be careful with the new emerging non-homogenous theoretical paradigms while addressing them in our studies, because many of them still have the same stereotyped ideas about South Asia, despite the drastic changes seen in the last few decades. The western models should work towards avoiding generalisation in their theoretical framework and should refuse to see all Asian women through the same lens.

In addition to this, recent years have seen a new rise of theoretical stereotyping: that of members of the Islamic faith. Pourzand (2003) pointed to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 which she believes resulted in a stereotyping of Muslims of both sexes but particularly males, labelling them as terrorists with little regard to individual beliefs or actions. As a Pukhtun Muslim of Pakistani heritage I have myself suffered from this labelling, but far less than many other Muslims, especially those of Arab descent. Unravelling the individual from this stereotyping of all Muslims is very complicated. We need to reframe Muslims as individuals rather than as stereotypical images of their religion or country of origin.

#### **6.4. Redefining cultural and religious discourses for Pukhtun**

This study encouraged a discussion on redefining gender roles under Islamic jurisprudence and the practical implementation of Islam in the country. In fact, the people of Pukhtunkhwah are blind followers of religion, ignoring its place in people's lives. However, my sample women appeared to lack understanding as to what acts and practices of society are centuries-old cultural traditions and where these are overlapping with religious norms. Like other Muslim societies, Pukhtunkhwah society emphasises the reading of the Quran, but very few understand the original divine text. It was a general observation from the research findings that under strong cultural pressure, people's decisions about women's education and work, the Islamic right of inheritance and bride money, studying in co-education settings, and *pardah* are influenced by Pukhtun culture rather than by Islam.

Therefore, this study recommends redefining culture and religious discourses for Pukhtunkhwah women to make them aware about their status and rights in society that Islam granted 1400 years ago for them. Islam empowered women and has given them the right to education and work (Chaudhry, 2001), as well as a choice to attend co-education settings in situations where single-sex institutes are not available in society (Ahmad, 2006). However, women who gain access to those institutions are constrained to follow the Islamic code of attire strictly. My sample women were practicing Muslim women; they showed an extreme love and respect for their religion and family. However, their definition of culture and religious norms were overlapping, and a strong hold of the patriarchal culture compelled them towards religious violations such as getting a huge dowry in exchange for giving up their inheritance from their father's property. Islam encourages both genders to educate themselves, while society encourages only men's education and only men to be bread earners for their families. However, the sample women loved their Pukhtun culture and traditional

way of life, which they were used to. They did not challenge it or accept a modern interpretation of faith. For them, faith was a source of personal, spiritual and intellectual inspiration. A redefinition of culture and religious discourses could be possible by merging a more accurate understanding of the religion Islam with contemporary higher education. We do not need a masculine or feminine interpretation of Quran, but an understanding—such as I have advanced in this thesis—about what exactly Allah (God) said about both genders.

The Pakistan Ministry of Curriculum should revise the existing curriculum with the help of religious and contemporary educational experts. Islamic study is a core subject up to the BA/BSc level, but it is just a transfer of masculine knowledge (Isani and Virk, 2007). Reading the Quran is emphasised everywhere, but this does not encompass reading it to understand it, because very few people know the purpose of understanding the Quran in our life. My recommendation is to improve understanding of the Quran for the people of Pukhtunkhwah and what it says and implies about contemporary higher education.

This was important, since Muslim feminists and women activists are criticising women's reduced right of inheritance, their ability to give testimony and their socio-legal status in the country (Khan, 2007; Hussain, 1995). However the insecure socio-economic and political situation of the country (threats by the Taliban, terrorist attacks and suicide bombings) refocuses women's interests on their economic needs rather than challenging or supporting feminist activities and the like. This is how social reproduction works: women are socialised into accepting their roles as 'neutral' and 'showing common sense' (Bourdieu, 1999). The fact that women do not receive their proper inheritance has an impact on their decision-making power within the family, because they are economically dependent on their family men. This situation, where women are deprived of their father's property, is a product of the culture in Pukhtunkhwah society and not the teachings of Islam. Similarly, the payment of bride money is always forgiven by the wife because if a husband cannot pay it on the wedding night they will not be allowed to start their marital relationship. Therefore a bride surrenders her right under strong cultural pressure.

It is not the religion of Islam which creates gender issues in Pukhtunkhwah but society which follows the established strongly held cultural values. The study explored the phenomenon of Islam being culturalised by the people instead of Islamising their culture. These findings not only contribute to the new knowledge of gender and Islam by strengthening the theory of Chaudhry (2001), who states that Islam advocates the liberty of

women and gives women the right to own and inherit property, to marry of their own free will, to divorce if they so desire, to obtain formal education or to learn wherever they want but also rejects the theories of Sabah (2000), Ahmad (2002), Silvie (2004) and Ahmad (2006) that Islam discriminates against the rights of women such as inheritance, education and work by not giving them their proper share in property and in decision-making.

Another contemporary issue of higher educational enrolment among women is that it has fallen over the last few years due to the threats of the Taliban (Khan, 2007). The sample women had a fear of terrorist attacks and suicide bombings; they had the feeling of social insecurity, so parents preferred to keep their daughters at home instead of sending them to educational institutes. This possibly further strengthens Brock and Cammish's (1999) theory of higher education in South Asian countries, where women are lagging behind due to the political stability in their sample countries. Although Talibanisation in the area (none of their rule and law is according to Islam) is not the direct focus of this study, the need to investigate this in the future exists. The present decline in women's enrolment in higher education has been an area of particular concern among higher education authorities in Pakistan. Thus, inadequate security emerged as one of the current major factors blocking the progress of women's higher educational opportunities throughout the country. Additionally, the masses are deprived of their fundamental rights in the country; hours and hours of load shedding<sup>19</sup> in summer and the non-availability of gas supply in winter paralyzes human lives. With such limited economic resources, people can hardly feed their women; they cannot think about their education.

Full seclusionary practices at education and work environments is strongly demanded the people of Pukhtunkhwah (Naz et al., 2011), but a lack of infrastructure and the low education budget in the country affects the provision of segregated education. Islam recommends segregation of the sexes in all fields of life, but these are not hard and fast rules. In special circumstances, Islam looks at the practicality implementing these rules in society; it therefore opens the doors of *ijtihad* to find out a solution within existing resources. My sample women recommended a possible solution: to upgrade the girls' colleges' status to postgraduate, where MA courses could be offered. However, the segregated work environment is only found in the teaching profession, as all the state run schools are single-sex whilst some lady doctors run their practices for female patients only (because most of the

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<sup>19</sup>Cutting off the electric current on certain lines when the demand becomes greater than the supply

lady doctors are gynaecologists). Therefore, these are respectable professions in Pukhtunkhwah. Other than that, there is no segregation of work environments in the area as majority of the industrial business are privately run and are looking for profit, not segregation of genders.

### **6.5. Lack of women role models in Pukhtunkhwah society**

This study problematised the general lack of role models for women and work in the society of Pukhtunkhwah. The majority of the mothers of the sample women were engaged in their care-giving household responsibilities. Pukhtun society does not encourage them to adopt any other role in the social milieu. Their mothers' education was perceived as a status symbol too, because upper and upper middle class educated fathers get married to educated mothers. However, the culture does not encourage education for mothers as household chores do not require compulsory education. Thus, sample women across all economic classes did not see a women's role model who has a successful career as well as who is a successful mother to her children.

Most of the sample women without class variation preferred marriage over career, because the Pukhtun men do not like to marry career-oriented 'middle-aged' women. They want someone young to bear more children for them and their house. However, when given the option of higher education and work, sample women preferred higher education whilst waiting for a good marriage proposal. Furthermore, they were completely indifferent toward career or work.

This attitude of my sample to work could be due to the fact that Islam implores men to be the providers for women, thereby ensuring the consumer/provider and obedience/dependence configuration within the family (Sabah, 2008). Indeed, a woman's first responsibility is to look after her husband and children, but this does not mean that she is not allowed to work and study. A husband and wife both have the responsibility of children and household, therefore they have to manage with mutual understanding and compromise. However, the misinterpretation of the husband's role in Pukhtunkhwah exempts him from his care-giving role.

The sample women did not have the courage to take initiatives to become Pukhtun women role models; however, during the Focused Interviews, they explicitly expressed the views that without the support of men, a woman cannot be a good role model in Pukhtun

society, 'as a famous proverb in our country, behind every successful man, there is a woman backing him, similarly behind every successful woman there is a man (father, brother, husband or a son)' (a sample woman).

#### **6.6. Women's lack of training and experience in decision-making power**

This study has brought to light new evidence of family encouragement and discouragement by the paradoxical and complex role of the male in the family. A woman's failure to gain access to higher education or to complete that education successfully can be due to the support or non supportive role of her family men. She is not allowed to make decisions about their own lives (Naz et al., 2011). The study challenges these arguments by demonstrating another, in this case positive aspect of male control—when male family members give women full financial and moral support for their education and work aspirations, whilst also encouraging them to take risks in their lives.

Women are at the mercy of the men in their family; there is inevitably a man behind a woman's success or failure in society. Men are the supporters and protectors of the family and strive to give peaceful and prosperous lives to their daughters and sisters, but sometimes, in imposing their decisions, they neglect the opinion of their women. Islam gives women the right of decision at the age of adolescence (Chaudhry, 2001). This cultural of over-protection paralyses women from making nearly all important decisions about their own lives.

Women's education and work was affected by the need for seclusion; women were subject to seclusionary practice in all spheres of life which affects their decisions about their education and career. The institution of *purdah* provides, what Papanek (1973) terms "symbolic shelter" for women, seeking to protect them from the hardships and dangers that dealing with society at large involves. Papanek (1973:76) further professes

that underlying the entire system of seclusion are certain assumptions about human interaction and about the nature of men and women. Symbolic shelter is provided against real dangers of an un-segregated world but also, and not less significantly, against strong impulses such as sexual desire and aggression which are clearly recognised as being part of the human condition. Women's proper behaviour as sheltered persons becomes an important source of the status of their protectors and their behaviour becomes important in terms of honour and family pride for the entire kin group.

In the culture of Pukhtunkhwah male fragile pride is very significant and linked with the women chastity and seclusion practices to control all aspects of her life. Therefore complete seclusion is a part of Pukhtunkhwah society.

*Purdah* was not an obstacle to higher education opportunities for my sample women. In light of this, my sample women were veiling but had the feelings of being distinguished from other people. All the Pukhtun tribes were following different kinds of veiling, from the loose *chaddar* to the shuttlecock-style *burqah*, but my sample women were only wearing loose three-quarter shawls or Arabian style *Jilababs*, which were indeed stylish designer-looking forms of dress. They did not have the feeling of being oppressed or and depressed. Ironically, the sample women were confident in public places with their veiling.

The upper class chauffer driven cars did not exempted them from veiling: they have to be accompanied by someone. Similarly, for the middle and working class, veiling was more about fitting into their environment. Public transport is not a safe means of transportation in Pukhtunkhwah. Most of the middle class rely on private taxis that are not expensive, like UK black cab or mini cab services.

This study found no difference of opinion across the classes on the concept of *purdah* and seclusion. My sample women were uncomfortable in mixed environments. Although the upper class English-educated sample women had more financial resources, this did not broaden and liberalize their perspectives of life. Thus, seclusion was a big issue for all economic strata. The socio-cultural constraints enforced them to follow that prevailing status quo for a dignified family status. Decisions are always made by the male members of the family and extended family. None of the family women were allowed to take part in this traditional decision-making process. A daughter was allowed to express her feelings to her mother or aunts or grandmother rather than directly to the family men, as it is considered disrespectful. Surprisingly, none of the sample women challenged this or showed frustration with this decision making process. They had only deep love and blind trust in their family men, who they believed would never let them down.

However, their negligence in their decision making power was manifested in another way: that they did not want daughters-only offspring. One of my sample women said: '*we suffer throughout our lives, [and hope] that someone would listen to us, or that we would speak up one day, but that day never comes in our lives*'. Extra care, extreme love of parents and other family member were silencing them forcefully.

In all stages of the research, sample women stated that they had difficulty with reaching decisions on their own or having their decisions accepted because the social structures and socio-religious views of their communities prevented them from making decisions. A possible explanation of this dependency is social reproduction related to the theory expounded by Bourdieu (1999)—that cultural capital creates changes in societies which occur due to social reproduction. This dependency on family in any decision-making in Pukhtunkhwah society means that women can only be supported by their family men (Shahzad, 2009). The state does not undertake any responsibility to support any individual in the country, whereas in Britain, the state can provide financial support, housing, free school education (including meals, books, stationary etc.) where necessary. However, in Pakistan, women always seek the support of the male members of the family. They are helpless without men's support and might not be able to cope with the challenges in the wider society of Pakistan due to lack of experience in the world outside of the home.

### **6.7. Money, Marriage and Masters**

These three 'Ms' triangulated the life of Pukhtun women throughout. The first one is the economic status of her parents, where money matters for her future prosperity to have a stable life to fulfil her basic needs, including early education. The second one is her training for marriage. There is always social pressure on women to marry as soon they get a suitable marriage proposal. The last one is a Masters, by which I mean a husband and an MA degree, because if she gets married she would be forced to follow her master (husband) throughout her life, and in the absence of such a master (husband), she would be encouraged to go for her MA degree. These Ms have a strong effect on women's continuation and completion of higher education. My sample women of the upper class had the first 'M' (money) but were unsure which next 'M' they would pursue. They need to decide, but hypothetically they were ready for marriage and wishing for a handsome rich master (husband).

Islam recommends marriage, which is the most pious relationship between a man and woman. The first men and woman, Adam and Eve (peace be upon them), were husband and wife, but the cultural practices has made it the most unreliable tie. The Pukhtun tribal settings further marginalised women's rights by getting her married before adolescence. Therefore in a largely Islamic ethos, the importance of a dowry in the Pakistani social order cannot be overlooked (Klein and Nestvogel, 2006; Patel, 2001, cited in Hussain, 1995). Furthermore I

recommend future research on marriage in the tribal setting of Pukhtunkhwah because un-Islamic laws and practices are prevailing in the tribal belt to date.

Marriage and investment in a woman's dowry were important in the cultural milieu and could discourage investment of family resources on education for women (Hussain, 1995). As the literature review found, women were always conflicted about choosing between marriage and higher education (Komulainen, 2000; Cole and Zuckerman, 2004; Coffield and Williamson, 2007; Hussain, 1995; Courtney and Malik, 2011). The present uncertain political situation and the social pressure of marriage further discouraged parents from investing in their higher education instead of their dowry to lessen their financial burden and pass on the responsibility of caring for and providing for their daughters onto another man.

Women are often viewed as a burden on the family in Pukhtunkhwah society. Family honour must be maintained by safeguarding their virginity and providing a dowry for them at an early age. There was anecdotal evidence of men having greater access to family resources because they do better in the labour market (Aslam, 2007; Aslam and Kingdon, 2010). Women not only have fewer family resources invested in them, but greater value is also accorded to the men who attend college. A woman's chances of accessing higher education are reduced if there are a large number of male family members to accommodate first (Aslam, 2007; Aslam and Kingdon, 2010; Brock and Cammish, 1999; Powell and Steelman, 2008, Hussain, 1995).

However, despite being from an upper class, strong economic background, where their fathers do not rely on their sons for financial and practical support; they showed their willingness for early marriage rather than their daughters' higher education. Thus, economic class did not complicate gender preferences. Middle and working class women preferred to work and some of them continue their study as distance learner that enable them to save some money for dowry and wedding day expenses. Thus, the middle and working class families make a choice and they typically support their sons' education over their daughters' (ADB, 2000).

## **6.8. The application and relevance of Marxist Feminism and Islamic Socialism**

Marxist feminist analysis is useful for my study in that it explains the differences of social and economic class and the oppression of Pukhtunkhwah capitalist society, for example in effectively supporting a class-divided education. It does this partly by introducing

English and Urdu medium schools despite the fact that the medium of instruction plays a vital role in access to higher education. In addition, the economic status of the people in the area has a pivotal role in accessing higher education (Courtney and Malik, 2011). Because of their economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1999) rich people with prominent economic capital are more likely to educate their children in elite institutions to accumulate cultural capital, tend to establish social circles as a strategy to reap benefits (social capital), and are regarded and respectable by others who value their capital (symbolic capital) (Bourdieu, 1999:56). Cultural capital and cultural reproduction theories (Giroux, 1983b; Bourdieu, 1999) are clearly applicable in Pukhtunkhwah society where social reproduction—and social class reproduction—are so clear. This is the process of transferring aspects of society (such as class advantage/ disadvantage) from generation to generation (Bourdieu, 1999:56).

Marxist feminists give us a better understanding of capitalist Pukhtunkhwah society. Marxism calls for the replacement of capitalist social relations by socialist or communist social relations that are not based on exploitation of labour by capitalists (or capitalist landowners). However, a socialist or communist society cannot be the only solution to women's participation in education (and the wider society) because religion—that is, the particular culturally specific forms that religion takes in Pukhtunkhwah society—has such a strong hold. It could be argued that the fourth pillar of Islam (*Zakah* (charity), a fixed amount of money the wealthy have to pay to the poor once a year) might contradict the Marxist feminist theory in the sense that if people were to pay the right amount, there would not be such a big class gap in the society. However the class gap, the division of society and the economy into owners/exploiters (of land, of industry, of workers' labour) on the one hand, and those who sell their labour and, in the Marxist sense, have their labour power exploited, would still remain, regardless of whether or not the traditions of charitable and philanthropic work and donations were more widely observed. Widespread accordance with *Zakah* will only occur as a result of a good understanding of the Quran and *Hadith*. It is a religious obligation and cannot be collected by enforcing law (as the country observes western democracy). Although there are problems with tax collection, a similar result—emanating from civil law rather than from religious law—could be attained by a system of 'progressive taxation', enabling a government (whether religious or secular) to 'improve the lot of the poor' (Hill, 2006). But, to repeat, neither more taxes nor more charity giving would alter fundamentally the capitalist nature of exploitation of workers and their oppression.

While I agree with the some aspects of Marxist feminism and Islamic socialism, as this dissertation also shows, there is a need to look at the societal and cultural situations before making any analytical judgment about gender and education.

After completing this dissertation, the questions of unequal power relations and inequality in education in Pukhtunkhwah and Pakistan remain unanswered. This is a beginning of a struggle towards initiative with just educational opportunities for women in the society. I am surprised that the education system of Pukhtunkhwah is not challenging the various societal inequalities, particularly gender. I am not adopting the liberal-feminist perspective here and placing my hope in the state to rectify and improve women's situations and lives within the education system and society, though I do call for various curricular changes. What I am seeking is critical education: education to criticise and challenge the prevailing system, particularly in terms of women's rights, and in particular recognising that some aspects of the oppression of women is class-related. I am recognising that the state cannot do it alone; that the state cannot unilaterally change people's minds. Hence, my position is not liberal-feminist.

Good education in Pakistan means to have a degree. The standard of education is very low, rote memorisation being the favoured method of instruction in school. Texts books are rarely revised for 10 to 15 or more years. Sometimes parents and their children study the same syllabus in their schools. According to Freire (1992), narrators (teachers) help students in rote memorisation and reproduce the content verbatim in students mind like a machine. Freire (1992:35) called it the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only to receiving, filing and storing the information given, rather like a banking deposit.

Freire (1992:47) further argues that education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradictions: by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so educators and learners become both teachers and students simultaneously. However, very few systems of education have adopted this learning style. Education in Pukhtunkhwah society is a status symbol for the upper class and an economic need for the middle and working classes. Most jobs require a degree; therefore the purpose of education is limited to gaining a degree level qualification.

However the purpose of this study is to raise awareness in the people of Pukhtunkhwah about the broad meaning and transformative potential of education. This study suggested

earlier a meeting and merging of Islamic and contemporary education. The current division of education in Pakistan divides the people into two main groups: an extreme (and extremely conservative and patriarchal) religious group (the Taliban) and a western-educated (secular) group. Most of the Islamic education *madaris* (mosque based schools) preach the extreme and conservative form of Islam, while the mainstream (English and Urdu) schools students are confused about what the original teaching of Islam actually is. What is not much in evidence, and what this thesis is calling for, is recognition within the education system and within society that the Quran does not prohibit, but actually encourages exploring any knowledge around the universe or contemporary education.

## **6.9. Conclusion**

This dissertation has focused on the perceptions and experiences of women in Pukhtunkhwah. It has demonstrated how their perceptions as women in their families, colleges, universities and work place have been shaped by culture of patriarchy and religion in the society as well as issues such as family background, class and the dual education system. Most of my sample women's everyday lives have been affected by inequality within the Pukhtunkhwah society through cultural norms. In addition, they have been influenced by their own gender and silence, as they can play an active role in society. The socio-economic and political changes over the past two decades (war against terror, military operations, counter terrorism and the Taliban interpretation of Islamic Law) have further intensified their perceptions and experiences. The sample women were not aware of the social and security changes that affected their lives. They perceived religion as an essential element of their lives. Their views reflected the views of traditionalist, blind followers of the religion Islam, although the Quran encourages thinking and pondering upon every command of Allah as well as your surroundings to understand the logic behind it. Interestingly, at the end of data collection process, my sample women called for Pukhtun feminism: feminism with the support of Pukhtun men that suits their religion, culture and traditions.

Complete seclusion of Pukhtunkhwah society also affected women's educational and career opportunities. There are seen to be masculine and feminine spheres of activities which affected women's access to the public sphere. Women were hesitant and reluctant about moving openly and independently in the society; they have to be accompanied by a *mehram* or an elderly woman. However, veiling and shrouding were considered to be a family honour that did not deprive the sample women of their mobility, but did restrict their access within

society. All the economic classes were observing some kinds of '*purdah*' (veiling), yet this seclusion forced on them by social and cultural reproduction made them avoid colleges and universities where teaching took place in a co-educational setting. The upper class sample women attended English medium schools but with separate sections for girls and boys.

All the sample women agreed upon the needs of men's support for their education, marriage and career, because their agreement means guaranteed moral and financial support. Furthermore, men's support gives them full satisfaction and security for their future life. They felt honoured by the backing of their family men.

Preference for marriage, co-education and the low family income of lower middle and working class were the main factors determining access to higher education. The sample women indicated they were uncomfortable in the presence of men; therefore, they strongly demanded women's only educational institutes, regardless of their different economic class. Their hope was that these women's institutes would play a vital role for women's development and emancipation in the tribal setting of Pukhtunkhwah.

The sample women recommended that husbands should accommodate the family unit with effective sharing care-giving. Their example came from the liberal Islamic teachings and *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He encouraged his wives and helped them in their household chores. Similarly, he had no son, only daughters that could be a good example for all Pukhtun son-loving people. Offspring are a gift of Allah; there is nothing in the hands of human beings. The sample women's redefinition of culture and religious discourse was based on the assumption of equal education and career rights.

Between marriage, career/work and higher education, the second preference of the sample women was higher education that challenges their thinking and increases their creativity. They favoured a revised teaching methodology and syllabus.

It might seem that many of the conclusions derived from the research coincide with the existing data on women in Pakistan. However, it is important to remember that the small sample being researched for the study was not typical of the women who constitute the masses of Pakistan. This group of women had unique opportunities to access higher education in a social order where even basic literacy is low amongst the population in the country. The results of this study therefore cannot be completely generalised to the other parts of Pakistan. Moreover, the sample represented a section of women whose perceptions of

higher education have not been studied to date. There were no previous indicators of their views on socio-cultural and religious educational issues. This study will help to provide data on the issue of women and higher education.

As I reach the end of my PhD journey, I want to keep up my struggle for women's emancipation and empowerment. The article and reports and books on the situation of gender and education in Pukhtunkhwah, Pakistan and the West I read deeply inspired me. My sample women had a very simple desire to be fairly treated by their household and society and increased opportunities for higher education. They do not have the courage to challenge the existing norms, but this does not mean that they do not have a right to live as equal humans and citizens. This study at least gave them an opportunity to share their thoughts and emotions and helped to break their silence. There was a hope for change and positive role models. The support for women-only educational institutes was a practical measure to make a platform for women to commence their struggle for equal rights. These women know the patriarchal culture in the society that compels them into their traditional role.

Six years of intensive study enabled me to collect substantial resources of books in English, Urdu and Pukhtu, as well as newspaper, magazines and journals, UN/UNDP/NGOs reports (in soft and hard copies). I have launched a website on the subject entitled 'Re-Claiming Feminism for Eve's Daughters' The Google search engine will follow the URL: <http://www.reclaimingfeminismforevesdaughters.wordpress.com>, where I am aiming to publish all the material related to Pakistan and studies on gender and education, where all the researchers can have free access to the data. Also, I put a page on Facebook and LinkedIn (entitled: Re-Claiming Feminism for Eve's Daughters) and Twitter (ReClaimingF) respectively to find like-minded people and their studies, views and suggestions. In addition, on the professional website LinkedIn, it is now an open group discussion forum. I struggled hard in searching for women's academic studies in Pakistan and found very few, therefore I do not want future researchers to suffer like me. It needs to be emphasised how hard it is to find a relevant study in Pakistan but recently I found an important study at Arid Agriculture University (this university has a Department of Education for self-financed students only) it means there are and will be some more studies, but this is an isolated example of such studies. This website was inspired by the book 'Reclaiming the F Word' (Redfern and Aune, 2010). So I have started my mission by contacting those women who worked or are working on South Asian, Middle Eastern gender or women's empowerment and emancipation as well as Islamic feminism around the world. I have received a very positive response from the

Gender Study Centre University of Peshawar and Quaid-e-Azam University of Islamabad in Pakistan. Most of their projects are available in their library; therefore, I am compiling a bibliography with their place of availability; soon it will be available on my website.

#### **6.10. Future Work and Recommendations**

Further research is urgently needed on gender issues in education in all Provinces of Pakistan. Hussain (1995) is a good example of research on the Punjab, Pakistan. I based my study on Pukhtunkhwah province. But there is a drastic need to explore the perceptions and experiences of Sindhi and Balochi women towards higher education opportunities now. We need our own Pakistani feminist theories to look at our gender analysis in our native perspectives.

Many of the issues raised in this dissertation need further research, including the role of women in determining and shifting the overall societal norms or environment in Pakistan (and particular in Pukhtunkhwah), because women are more than half of the country's population. Further research on the gender empowerment dynamics between educated Pukhtun women and the majority of illiterate and much poorer women would also be essential in helping us to understand their barriers to higher education, with a view towards providing greater support/voice to other Pukhtun and non-Pukhtun women of the area.

Further research on the changing geo-political environment, religious, class, marital and other aspects of power relations affecting women in view of the transformations in Pukhtun society is similarly very relevant and important to undertake. Furthermore a study on the terrorism/Talibanisation period and its impact on Pukhtunkhwah higher education should be conducted to investigate the theories of the fall in women's enrolment ratios during this period (2001-2010). Such research can also contribute to peace building (war against terror) and peace keeping efforts and counter terrorism.

Small sample size is one of the limitations of this study; therefore I am suggesting two comprehensive gender studies in higher education for Pukhtunkhwah, including the tribal territories. The sample should be both men and women of rural and urban divisions and postgraduate students as well.

Education is a political tool in Pakistan. A study should be conducted to analyse the extent to which political parties' manifestoes enjoin women's participation in the politics and leadership of Pakistan. The country witnessed two tenures of their first woman prime

minister, but no improvement of educational policies for women. Such studies will give women representations and opportunity in the parliament and Ministry of Women Development to have their voices heard in policy making.

Ethnographic life stories or case studies should be conducted on women in co-educational settings of the province for further investigation of prevailing higher education opportunities.

A qualitative study should be conducted about successful career women of Pukhtunkhwah to explore their motivations for higher education and work. These studies should not be limited to academic writing and reading only. They should be available online for the general public to follow their women role models.

Cultural and religious discourses should be revisited by the researchers and academicians for their suitability within the existing transitional Pukhtun society. Electronic and social media should be used affectively by the universities. Special measures should be taken in account to increased women staff and students in the higher education institutions of Pukhtunkhwah.

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# Appendices

## APPENDIX I

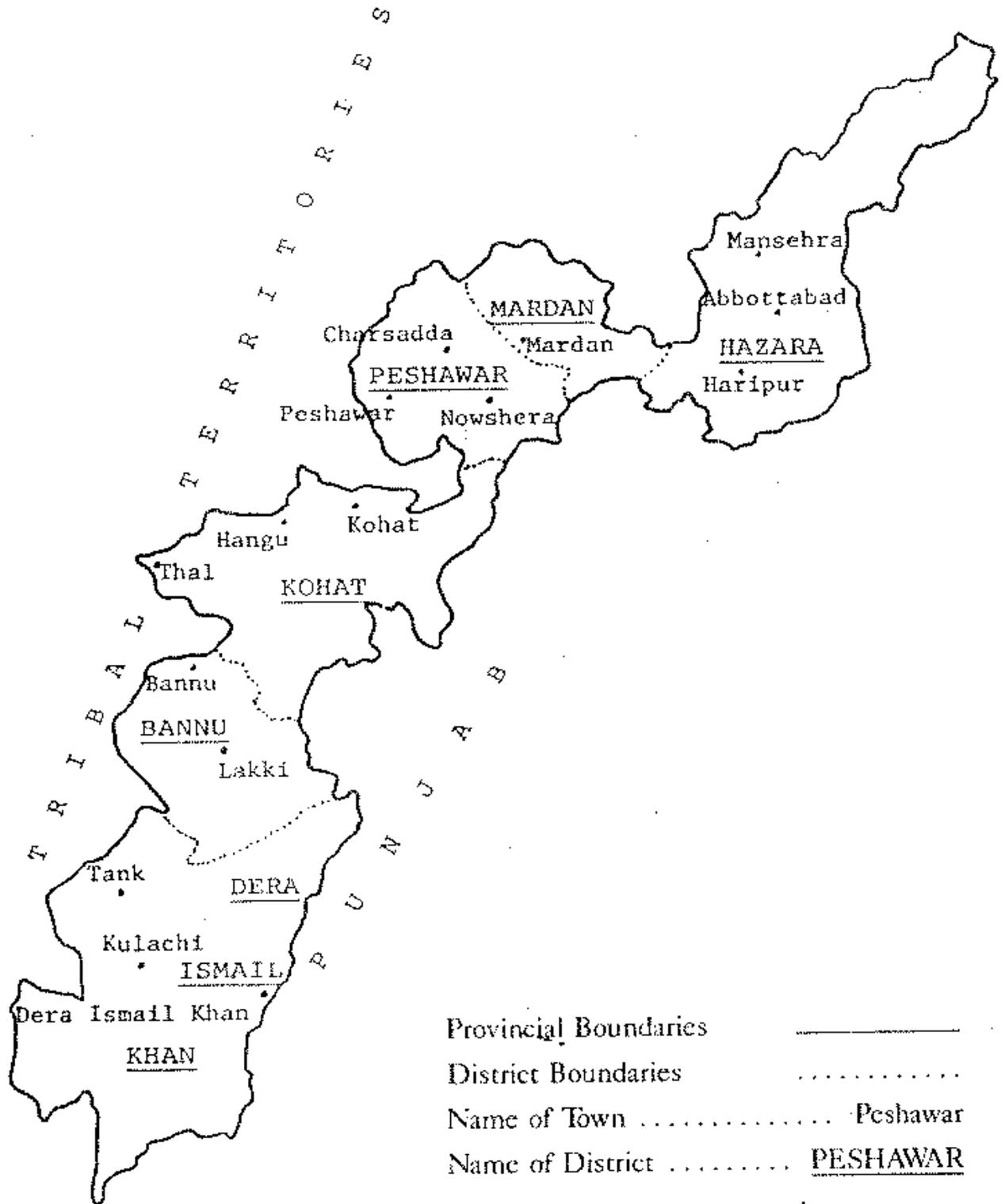
### MAP OF PAKISTAN<sup>20</sup>



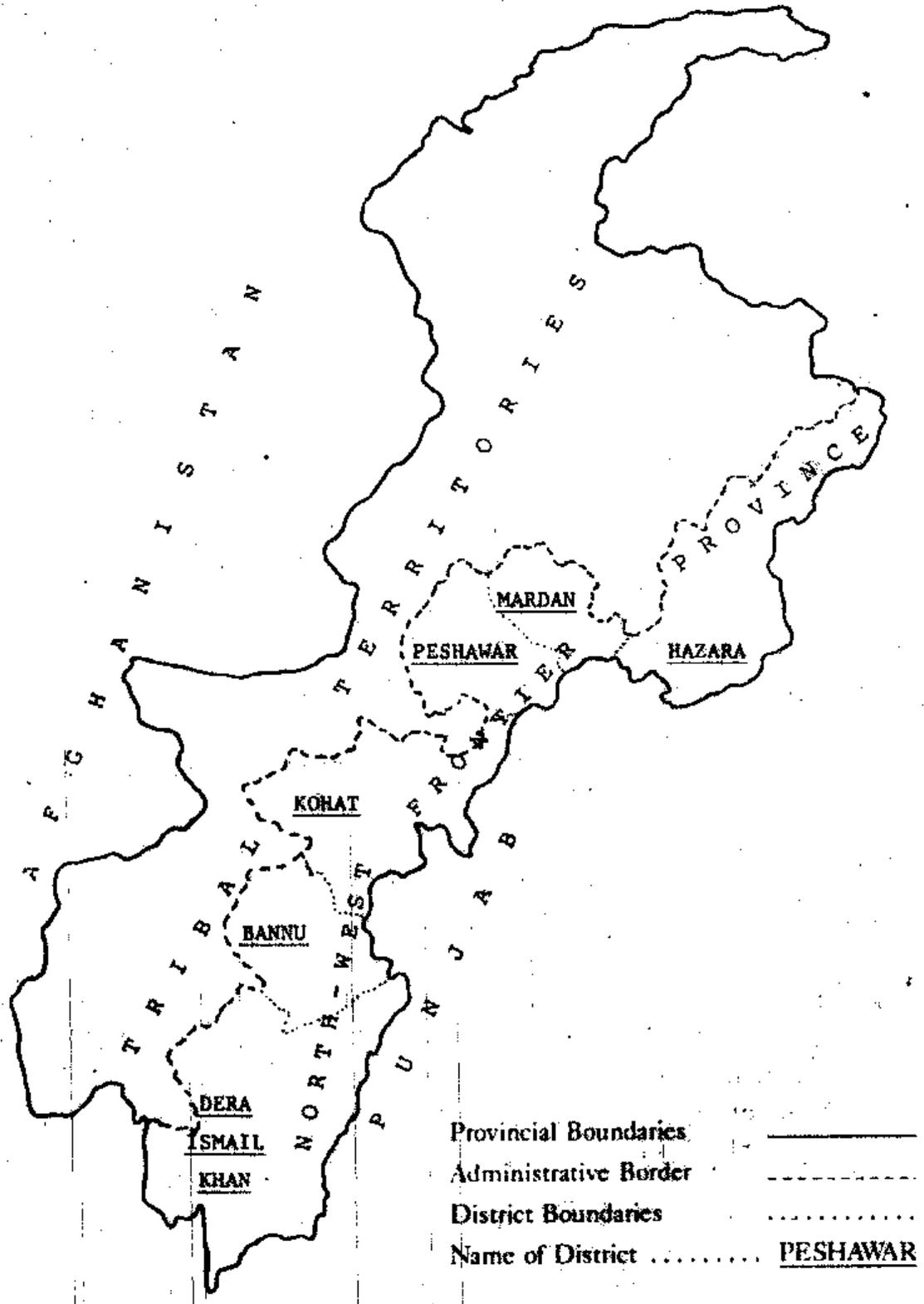
<sup>20</sup>Downloaded from: <http://www.mapsopensource.com/pakistan-provinces-map-black-and-white.html> (accessed 16/11/2009)

APPENDIX II

THE PROVINCE OF KHYBER PUKHTUNKHWAH SETTLED DISTRICTS



**THE PROVINCE OF KHYBER PUKHTUNKHWAH TRIBAL  
TERRITORIES**



## APPENDIX III

### THE SAMPLE COLLEGES PROFILE

#### 1. Jinnah College for Women

The Jinnah College for Women<sup>21</sup> was founded in June 1964. The college provides educational opportunities to the University employee's children and young women of the Pukhtunkhwah on merit. It has vast buildings in beautiful premises of the University of Peshawar. The college is consists of classrooms, lecture-theatres, laboratories, and a library with three reading rooms, and a hall. The college has a number of lawns, a botanical garden and a large playground. The class-rooms, lecture theatres and laboratories are well maintained, with heating arrangements for winters. The laboratories are properly equipped and the library has a good collection of up-to-date reference books, text books and books in specialized fields. The college hall, the Safia Hassan Hall, has a seating capacity of 400 students and is the venue for different functions. The playground attached to the college is used for inter-class and inter college tournaments and college sports. The college provides education at the Bachelor level.

#### 2. Home Economics College for Women

The college is also called 'College of Home Economics'<sup>22</sup>. Its study is a distinct discipline that was introduced 1947 after independence of British Imperialism. Initially, a separate department, devoted to the subject, was setup in 1954 by the University of Peshawar, in collaboration with Colorado State University, USA. The department was later upgraded to college status in 1963. It is one of the four colleges in Pakistan devoted to the study of Home Economics, for developing a complete education programme for female students to meet the challenges of a free society. The institution equips young women with the specialized knowledge in the field of interior design, textile design, small business management, teaching, and research. This field of study extends opportunities for pursuing careers in any of the above professions. Therefore, it has acquired a special significance in moulding the female generation, providing them with an opportunity to study a unique blend of both

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<sup>21</sup>All information quoted from: <http://www.uop.edu.pk/departments/?q=Jinnah-College-for-Women>

<sup>22</sup> All information quoted from: <http://www.uop.edu.pk/departments/?q=College-of-Home-Economics>

science and art related subjects up to Bachelor level. It also opens up future avenues for personal, professional and social enhancement.

### **3. Frontier College for Women<sup>23</sup>**

The College was started in a School building in 1949 and since then extensive accommodation has been added to it including a Hostel and a Science Block. The college is situated in the central part of the city, and is the biggest female institution in the region. It provides instructions in Arts and Science subject both and Intermediate and Degree level. It is affiliated to the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar and to the University of Peshawar. The college offers FA/FSc and BA/BSc degrees. In 2010 the University was upgraded to Women University.

### **City College for Women**

City College for Women<sup>24</sup> Peshawar was started as an Inter College in 1986 in a rented building in Faqir Abad Peshawar later on this college was shifted (1991) to building situated in the main Grand Trunk (GT) Road next to the Municipal Corporation of Peshawar where it is easily approachable for the students and staff. The college has a playground but has not enough space for lawns. It is situated in a congested noisy city area. The college has some small science laboratories and sports facilities. It is also affiliated to Board of Intermediate Secondary Education Peshawar and to the University of Peshawar The College offers FA/FSc and BA/BSc degrees.

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<sup>23</sup>All information quoted from: <http://www.gov.pk/government-frontier-college-for-women-peshawar.html>.

<sup>24</sup>All information quoted from: [http://ese.kp.gov.pk/page/city\\_district\\_degree\\_college\\_for\\_women\\_gt\\_road\\_peshawar.html](http://ese.kp.gov.pk/page/city_district_degree_college_for_women_gt_road_peshawar.html).

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **PILOTING**

The aim of this piloting study was to test the questionnaire and semi-structured-interviews tools and their validity. The political unrest in the province delayed my data collection process therefore my supervisors strongly recommended pilot study experiments to be carried out before my original large scale research to avoid time and money being wasted.

Therefore ten sample women from a different, fifth college were randomly selected because I did not want the piloting to affect the research variables and my original sample at a later stage. Therefore I did not involve my four sample colleges' women for pre-testing.

After piloting, I realised the socio-cultural and political constraints of my sample women that might affect their answers, therefore I included more open ended questions in my questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Similarly, I found my sample women were more confident in writing in Urdu and speaking in Pukhtu languages. Therefore all questionnaires were translated into national and regional languages to understand them fully.

## APPENDIX V

### QUESTIONNAIRES

#### INITIAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (September 2008)

##### 1. PERSONAL PROFILE:

a) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Parental Education: Father  Mother

1	None	5	Intermediate (XI-XII)
2	Primary (I – V)	6	Graduate (BA/BSc.)
3	Middle (VI – VIII)	7	Post-Graduate
4	Matriculation (IX – X)	8	Professional education

3. Father's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Father's monthly income: 100000 +

50,000-100000

20,000-50,000

5. Mother's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name your degree: BA  BSc.  Other

##### 7. Personal education History:

Name of Exam.	Name of the Institution	Medium of Instructions		Year / Session
		English	Urdu	
BA/ BSc.				
FA/ FSc. (GCSE)				
Matric(Arts/Sc) (Below GCSE)				
Primary				

8. You're medium of instructions in school and college? English  Urdu

9. Are you planning for higher education (MA/MSc.)? Yes No

10. What you would prefer after your degree?      Marriage      Higher Education

11. Would you like to work after higher education? Yes  No   
If yes what kind of work will you prefer? explain:

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12. What is your 'ideal job' and why?

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13. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about women and career?

a. A successful family (husband and children) is more important than a successful career.

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

b. Can women get satisfaction with her daughter/s only offspring?

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

c. A woman can be successful mother and professional worker.

Strongly agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (September 2008)**

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Q1. Have you chosen your college and subjects' combination for BA/BSc?

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Q2. What would be your family response if you want to go for higher education?

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Q3. What would be the response of your family men regarding your paid work after higher education?

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Q4. What are your plans/views about future (career, education, marriage etc)?

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Q5. Is religion an important aspect of life?

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Q6. Do you recommend women's only institutions for women in Pukhtunkhwah?

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Q7. Are you satisfied with the Prevailing education system in Pukhtunkhwah?

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**POST-QUESTIONNAIRE (September 2009)**

1. College Name:

2. Were you Eligible to sit in the BA/BSc Examination? Yes  No

3. What is the result of your BA/BSc. final examination?

Pass  Fail  Compartment

4. If compartment? Write the name of compartment subject/s.

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5. Can you enlist some reasons of your family's encouragement or discouragement for before or during your degree examination?

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6. If you passed? Have you applied for admission in MA/MSc? or other professional degree yet?

Yes  No

a) If yes, write name of the course please?

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b) If No, why? Write down the reason please?

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e) Are you enrolled in your favourite subject? If no, What were the reasons?

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7. If you have not applied for your MA/MSc, enlist the reason/s please?

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8. What are your family's perceptions and attitudes towards higher education?

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9. What would your family prefer a son or a daughter's higher education? And why?

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11. Preferred place of family investment;

- Daughters' Post-graduation
- Dowry
- Marriage

12. Is there any family enforcement on early marriage in case of a suitable proposal of marriage for you?

- Very strong
- Strong
- Don't know
- Slightly
- Flexible

**13. My Sample Women's Perceptions and Experiences about Coursework, Work and Working-environment**

a) What is your family perception about your university course work?

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b) Do you think your course work will help you to get a good respectable job in the society?

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c) Does working environment affect your choice of job? How?

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## **APPENDIX VI**

### **BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE FOCUSED INTERVIEWS INTERVIEWEES**

#### **Nawal (Jinnah College)**

Nawal was 18 years old. She was studying her BSc (2 years) at Jinnah College for Women. Her father was a doctor (General Practitioner) while her mother was housewife. She was living with her parents and grandparents. She has three brothers and two sisters. They resided in a luxurious bungalow in the University Town, one of the posh areas of the Peshawar City. It is located opposite side of the University of Peshawar. Her family was *Pukhtun*, therefore Pukhtu was her mother tongue but she was very fluent in English and Urdu languages as well. Apparently they were liberal Pukhtun Muslims. She wore a loose shawl (three quarters) like her mum to go out from house. Most of her uncles and aunties were living in the same street of her house.

#### **Gulalai (Home Economics College)**

The word Gulalai means pretty like flower. She was 19 years old and beautiful like her name. She was studying her BSc (2 years) Home Economics in Home Management. Her father was a professor in the University of Peshawar. As mentioned earlier the College of Home Economics is located within the premises of the University of Peshawar campus. They were living in the Professor Colony, a private residential area which was reserved only for the University of Peshawar professors. Gulalai was the only sister of three brothers. She belonged to a Pukhtu speaking Pukhtun family, but her fluency was not limited to her mother tongue only, she was fluent in her second languages; Urdu and English too. She was a good practicing cultured Islam. Her family women were mostly educated but have limited Islamic knowledge.

#### **Aiman (Frontier College)**

Aiman was a slim and smart 18 years old girl. She was a student of BA at Frontier College for Women. Her father was a shopkeeper and mother was a housewife. Her mother was a famous tailor of her area. Therefore lots of women were gathered in her house to collect and drop their cloths for stitching. It is also an extra source of income for her family. Her father was *Pukhtun* and mother was Peshawari (people who migrated from Central Asia to Peshawar City in olden times) therefore Pukhtu and Hindko (another regional dialect of the province) were spoken in her home. Her Urdu was good while struggling in English

speaking. They were five sisters and two brothers. They were living in 2 bedrooms small house of the congested over crowded city area of Peshawar. Her family followed strict *pardah* (veiling) observance; therefore she wore full *Jilbab* to go outside her house.

### **Kiran (City College)**

Kiran, a very sweet 18 years old girl, she was studying her BSc (double Maths) in the City College for Women. Her father was a care-taker of the same college (City College), where she was studying. She was living with her four sisters and a brother in a small attached servant quarter of the City College premises. This small house is specially built for the care-taker where they can look after the college premises most of the time. Her mother was an unskilled housewife that limited her activities to households' chores. Both her father and mother were Pukhtu speaking Pukhtun but fluent in Urdu too. She hardly understood English. However, my interaction with her was only in Pukhtu language. Similar to Aiman's family, Kiran's family were stricter in *pardah* (veiling) observance. Kiran and her family were good practicing Muslims in term of their religious obligations such as: praying five times a day.