

The Ignominy of Evenness: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PAKHTUN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION IN GENDERED OCCUPATIONAL DECISION-MAKING AMONG PAKHTUNS OF MALAKAND, KPK PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Gender disparity is no limited to a specific region, society or culture, but in-fact it is a global and universal matter of concern (Naz and Rehman, 2011). History shows numerous miseries in which the severe one is gender disparity and inequality (Khan, 2011). The current research study persists to explore gender based discrimination in occupational decision making process in a typical traditional society of Pakhtuns⁶ of Malakand KPK Pakistan. The study overtly describes women's deprivation and subjugation with respect to their occupational decision-making. The was undertaken in Bathela (capital of District Malakand 'former Malakand Agency'), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and the data was collected from 200 respondents including both male and female through stratified random sampling technique and pre-determined interview schedule for data collection. The collected information has been analyzed in the form of tables, charts and findings have been verified through applying Chi-Square test. In addition, the study has been framed in the light of Marxist Feminism, which reflects a strong relation between the ethnography of the area and the collected information in respect of occupational role. Resultantly, the study reveals that the process of occupational decision-making is extremely gendered biased that is caused by the practice of patriarchy, male dominance, customary law and rigidity of Pakhtun social organization.

Key words: decision-making, *Pakhtun* social organization, patriarchy, customs and traditions, religious misinterpretation

Background of the Study

Women, on average, earn less than men; that is a well-documented fact and supported by employment data, collected over the past several decades (NWBC, 2005; and CWBR, 2006). Despite the growth in entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for women, there is also evidence of a persistent gender gap in income between self-employed men and women. Surprisingly, this gap is even greater than the gap between employed men and women with self-employed women actually earning less than employed women, and self-employed men earning more than employed men (Devine, 1994; Powell and Graves, 2003). Even more puzzling, given recent advances in professional career opportunities for women, is evidence of gender-related income disparity among male and female professionals. Different researches show unanimous evidences of such disparities that women in private practice earn less than their male counterparts in male and female-owned small accounting practices (Fasci and Valdez, 1998). In addition, Cron et al. (2000), reviewed the results of a national survey of 4,400 veterinarians, found that the average female practice owner earns about 30 percent less than her male counterpart, regardless of years in the veterinary profession.

At the center of this debate are the “*structural or cultural barriers*”, which are the essence of this argument is that women, because they are women, face an array of social barriers that prevent them from attaining positions of power and authority in established organizations (Khan, 2011). Whether due to overt discrimination by men in power or to systemic factors that deprive them of opportunities for advancement, the result is the same (Mueller, 2007). In this regard women earn less because they are prevented from rising to the higher-salaried, managerial positions in the same numbers as men (Valian, 1998; Watkins and Watkins, 1984; Fischer et al., 1993).

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The studies and researches further reveal that the women who have got the desired positions; are still entangled by the prevalent structural barriers. In addition, these barriers are impeding the professions of women and while these have also dismantled women since long while entering law schools, medical schools, and accounting programs in numbers that are in many cases equal to that of men (Epstein et al., 1995; Fasci and Valdez, 1998).

Besides the structural and cultural barriers; motives of both men women also differ in respect of employment that also impede women's employment. Entrepreneurship research has found that men and women differ in their motives and preferences for self-employment (Scherer et al., 1990; Buttner and Moore, 1997; DeMartino and Barbato, 2002), a particular job or occupation (Bigoness, 1988) or a profession (Valian, 1998). Further, in the case of self-employment, most men and women share the desire for independence (Sexton and Bowman, 1986, 1990; Shane et al., 1991). However, on the contrary, their priorities tend to differ significantly where women generally are more focused on balancing work and family, while men are more motivated to gain wealth through business ownership (Buttner and Moore, 1997; DeMartino and Barbato, 2002). In this context, Brush (1992) reports that a higher proportion of women are motivated by dissatisfaction with their current employment and desire to have more opportunity for flexibility in lifestyle and more balance between work and family. In a separate study, Buttner (1993) found that women are influenced and motivated more by family needs than men, and men are more highly motivated by economic motives such as high-earnings potential. Similarly, DeMartino and Barbato (2003) found that men were not particularly motivated by a desire to gain greater balance between work and family whereas women tended to possess a lower preference for such desire that shows the conservatism of men towards women's employment.

Another aspect of gender differences in motivation for self-employment relates to sex roles and differences in the socialization of women and men (Khan, 2011). Men are expected by society to be career-motivated and to focus all their energy on producing income for the family during their work years (Buttner and Moore, 1997). Women are expected to assume the primary responsibility for family and care-giving, as well as make meaningful contributions at domestic sphere. Men, more than women, are socialized to be instrumental, proactive, and possess career goals that are financial and success oriented (Parsons, 1966). The pursuit of a high-paying job or profession is consistent with these instrumental goals. On the other hand, women are generally socialized to be passive and supportive of others, especially family members, and have career goals that are oriented toward fulfillment and satisfaction. As a result, men tend to be attracted to the high paying, high-status professions, largely because they are high paying. Women are less attracted to these professions in part because financial success is less of a priority (Muller, 2007:296).

Differences in these decisions are predominantly dependant over the familial relations and socialization as Chodorow (1978) states that females at an early age are taught relational and empathetic skills and their identities are forged within the family relationship while males are exalted to learn the sense of developing independence and organizational skills. Empirical research on socialization generally supports the proposition that females are more cooperative, more empathetic, and emphasize interpersonal relationships much more than males based on their socialization (Kelly, 1991). In addition, the theories of socialization and sex role stereotyping suggest that men are more likely to adopt a "masculine style," and women are more likely to adopt a "feminine style" of decision-making, which include decisions that comprise of consideration of the effect of the decision on others involved in the situation Gilligan (1982).

The issue of gendered decision-making in the course of employment has in-depth roots globally while the matter is on verge of havoc in the rural settlements. Rural communities, where some 70 percent of the world's rural poor are concentrated, generally rely on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock for their livelihoods. Within those communities, the poorest of the poor are often women and young girls (FAO, 2010:78). In this respect data of UNDP (2004) data, six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women) who lack regular and decent employment and income, and who may face hunger and/or malnutrition, poor access to health, education and productive assets, time poverty caused by disproportionate paid and unpaid work burdens and child labor.

Agricultural sector being an empowering tool has been addressed excessively throughout the globe while that is tending towards feminization. The recent trends in the feminization of agriculture mean that women are being increasingly marginalized in lower status, unskilled agricultural work. These trends have been particularly pronounced in Asia and Africa and are exemplified by the cases of China (Song *et al.*, 2009), Vietnam (Thin, 2009) and Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (Paris *et al.*, 2009).

Resultantly, women seem to be trapped in the most vulnerable and unstable segments of the rural labor market, particularly in the agricultural sector. Jutting and Morrisson (2009) demonstrate the feminization of “bad” jobs⁷ in 28 developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. In all but one of these countries, women were overrepresented in the “bad” or vulnerable forms of employment, such as family workers, while the stable jobs which brought with them social protection overwhelmingly went to men.

Aside of women’s human rights, there are variety of reasons that make a sense to address the issue of gendered policies and decision-making in the course of employment. In this regard the overall disproportionate women’s poverty is declared as responsible for women’s subordinated status in employment that is emphasized in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In evidence, the phenomenon is confirmed in cross-sectoral analyses of data from different countries like Cameroon, Laos, Madagascar, Mauritania and Tanzania (Gurkan and Sanogo, 2009), which show that, in these countries, female headed households have a greater probability of being poor than male headed households. Further evidence is provided for Brazil (Figueiredo and Branchi, 2009), where analysis revealed that being female has a positive and significant effect on the probability of being poor, which was also confirmed by Tolstokorova (2009) in the case of Ukraine, where women seem to be one of the groups most vulnerable to poverty.

In-short, social restrictions on women’s movement in conservative societies limit their access to decent employment opportunities. World Bank study revealed that 85 percent of women are required to obtain their husbands or guardians permission before they could leave the house (Jutting and Morrisson, 2009). The account of social restrictions primarily includes patriarchal norms, which restrict women’s role in decision-making at household, community, regional and national levels. This lack of female voice reinforces women’s own sense of self and underpins the continuance of the economic and social realities which make women unable to compete equally in employment markets (Hambly and Sarapura, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Gender disparities in occupational decision-making process are based on numerous aspects. In this regard, employment segmentation between males and females enables men to dominate the more financially rewarding higher skilled positions, while women prevail in unstable, unskilled and unpaid or poorly remunerated work segments. Participation rates in paid employment exhibit gender biases as do earnings, the latter extending beyond the level that can be explained merely by disparities in education and training (FAO, 2010:77). Particularly in rural households, agricultural tasks such as growing commercial and food crops and managing livestock tend to overlap with “domestic” tasks such as husking and grinding grain or processing milk products. The former set of activities, which are often undertaken by men as well as women, are counted in national income statistics while the latter, which are predominantly women’s work, are often invisible in national statistics and swept into the basket of “non-economic” domestic work (Boserup, 1970). Rural women’s work is pervasive throughout rural economies, contributing a multitude of roles which include agricultural production and marketing, food processing and distribution, fuel and water collection, house cleaning and laundry, child rearing and education, caring for the elderly and sick, gathering of wild fruits and vegetables and household shopping, which are mostly unpaid jobs with very low acknowledgment that restricts women’s to participate in income related activities (Muza, 2009).

With reference to the above mentioned facts, Pakistan is nevertheless behind in such a run, where the rural areas are specifically witness of such problems faced by women in the course of their employment or unpaid labor. In the case of Punjab province of Pakistan; most livestock-related activities are undertaken by women who play a major role in barn cleaning, fodder cutting and chopping, stall feeding, watering, washing, milking and processing milk by-products into food items (e.g. cheese, butter, yoghurt), collecting manure and preparing dung cake (Tibbo *et al.* 2009). In addition, the same kind of segmentation is observed in Afghanistan and Pakhtun settled areas, where men are responsible for herding, preparing/purchasing feed and making shelter for livestock, while women focus more on daily animal care and the processing of milk (Ashrafi, 2009). Further, employment rates for rural men in *Pakhtun* society are higher than for rural women, and the discrepancy is much larger in the non-agricultural sectors, meaning that rural women have more employment opportunities in agriculture than in any other sector, which is alarmingly an unpaid labor (Tolstokorova, 2009).

⁷ defined as jobs in which the remuneration does not provide for a basic minimum standard of living and protection against risk

In order to illuminate women's power regarding their employment, the survey of Alimdjanova (2009) is worth-mention that confirms the existence of employment segmentation and found women's domination in health care and education sectors, while their employment comprised less than 15 percent of the workforce in public administration, transport and communication and construction. Women bear a typical lower-status and lower-paying care-giving profession through societal expectations that are mostly taught in traditional way in the shape of socially constructed norms that keep women away from participation in decisions.

Apart from the agricultural activities where women mostly bear secondary position, also have a pathetic condition in non-agricultural sectors. Women in a traditional set-up are largely denied off-farm income-generating activities because of the socio-cultural norms, which restrict them from moving outside of their homestead. Moreover, limited access by girls to education has largely hampered their employability and competitiveness (Tibbo *et al.*, 2009 and Ashrafi, 2009).

In this regard, Salazar and Quisumbing (2009) argue that such a degraded status of women in employment will ultimately affect the children's nutrition and health status, educational achievements and access to future income generating schemes that will eventually lead to augment the poverty ratio of rural areas. In addition, the study of Kimhi (2009) shows that female non-farm labor income is the only income source that significantly reduces per capita income inequality. Thus, increasing the opportunities for women to engage in self employment activities is likely to have a larger impact on disadvantaged households and therefore reduces inequality.

Discrepancies in the decisions of employment as well as low wages or unpaid labor are mostly based on gender bias in society (Hertz *et al.*, 2009). Social institutions being the basic pillars of society mainly refer to evolved practices with stable rules of behavior that are outside the formal system (Jutting and Morrison, 2009). They include the traditions, customs and social norms that govern the intricate workings of (especially) rural societies. These typically and overwhelmingly act as a constraint on women's activities and restrict their ability to compete on an even footing with men in the employment market. Patriarchal ideologies, steeped in traditional customs and culture, underlie the workings of most rural societies that frequently dictate the type of work which is available to women and the conditions in which this work takes place, leading to unequal employment opportunities and gender differentiated welfare. Such patriarchal ideologies commonly held views that it is a woman's obligation to work in the home, undertaking reproductive and unpaid tasks, which ultimately restrict female participation in paid employment. In addition, the traditional beliefs; that women are less able to manage assets, which are engrained and erroneous (Vigneri and Holmes, 2009), effectively diminish women's opportunities to take part in skilled and non-farm employment.

The current study mainly focuses on the gendered occupational decision-making in a traditional Pakhtun society that is mostly governed under the defined rules of Pakhtun social organization. In this regard, the presence of rigid, socially sanctioned gender roles in rural societies severely constrains women's choices regarding how they allocate their time among different paid and unpaid productive and household activities, giving rise to the incidence of time poverty (Khan, 2011). Culture, religious beliefs and social norms are all factors which dictate that unpaid domestic and reproductive activities (such as water collection, child care, cooking and washing clothes) are the domain of female members of the household (Serra, 2009). Such discrepancy is usually based on three dimensional approaches that mostly hinder women's participation in the process of decision-making including time burden of rural women's domestic unpaid work and the lack of substitutability of female labor in household, which limits women's choice to access paid employment.

Second, time poverty is a significant factor in men's dominance of riskier but also more lucrative types of work where the relative scarcity of time for women naturally leads to their having fewer opportunities than men to pursue such ventures. Thirdly, such time poverty contributes to unequal education outcomes which, in turn, hinder women from competing with men for more skilled, better paid jobs. In addition female children are often called on to share this burden while boys are generally sent to the fields, but they have fewer working hours (Serra, 2009). The combination of all these factors instigate gender discrimination and results in lower school enrolments, reinforcement of girls' weaker position in labor market as well as in familial and other decisions that take place in the life of women among Pakhtuns of the research area.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know about the role of *Pakhtun* social organization as an impediment in women's occupational (employment) decision-making

2. To highlight patriarchy and male dominance (the core *Pakhtun* customs and traditions) responsible for women's restriction in decision-making pertaining occupation (employment)
3. To investigate the perception of *Pakhtun* males towards involvement of women in occupational decision-making process

Hypotheses of the Study

1. Male dominancy, patriarchic structure, conception of social stigma and misinterpretation of religion play an influential role in gendered occupational decision-making process
2. *Pakhtun* cultural values, misinterpretation of religion and negative/conservative communal response lead to gendered decision-making in occupational decision-making process

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the present research study, the Marxist Feminism has been utilized as the corroborative material to find out the cross cultural study regarding women's subordination, particularly in the field of decision-making process in different societies. The fact of women's oppression and subjugation is blatant throughout the world in the history that there is no such society where women (as a group) have dominance over men (as a group) (Henslin, 1996). In this context, Marxist feminism gets a high status of prestige regarding women's rights advocacy and their subordination as it mostly emphasizes over the private property and its ownership that has a deeply rooted status in the area under study.

Evolving from the philosophy of Karl Marx (1818-1883), conflict analysis has a large output to gender issues. Marxist feminism is based on the philosophy of dismantle capitalist structure and women's liberation. Marxist feminism believes that private property leads to economic inequality, women dependency and political confusion with imbalance in social relations between men and women. These are major causes of women's suppression almost in all social structures including *Pakhtun* society where such factors have an active role while depriving women from participating in decision-making process in general while particularly in their occupational course. In this connection, Engels (1820-1895) placed Marx's general approach in a feminist context as he claimed that, root cause of patriarchy is private property and ownership. Furthermore, he explained that, although capitalism did not create patriarchy, but it intensified this through concentrating on wealth and power in the hands of a small number of men, which is the ultimate source of power, authority and prestige, usually exercised by men in every society. Such is the case in research area, where the overall structure is patriarchic and male dominated and has caused nuisance among women to be suppressed and subordinated.

In Marxism, subordination and subjugation of women lies in means of production and more specifically in introduction of private property and family structure. The classical work of Engels (1884) rightly describes the origin of human society in detail. He argues that at the time of simple communism or hunting and gathering level of evolution, there was no such discrimination between male and female while the gender roles confronted the drastic changes in the agricultural mode of production that required more strength and specialization. *Pakhtun* society in general represents such scenario where the overall means of production are embezzled by men while women are restricted to domestic errands. Such restriction further leads to women's subordination and deprivation while participating in the decision-making process both at domestic (internal) and public (external) levels.

According to Engels, at this stage, few men got control over all the productive resources and laid down the foundation of private property that empowered them in social relations of production and women became the vulnerable segment. In this regard, *Pakhtun* social organization or *Pakhtunwali* has also empowered men on the basis of private property and has disempowered women due to restrictions applied on them in the field of making the decisions pertaining to their employment or paid occupation. Marxism further reveals that such private property is then transferred to the male-biological-offspring and the cycle of class structure remains continuous. Speculations of Engels apparently show the situation in present research study where property is owned by men and is then transferred to the biological offspring i.e. male. In addition, these are centuries old traditions that are practiced throughout the *Pakhtun* settled areas as well as tribal settlements, which ultimately lead to the male dominated and patriarchic social structure.

To conclude Marxist feminism, where women's oppression and subordination is linked to property and family structure and masculine hold over property resulted in historical defeat of female sex on the basis of false consciousness.

Marxist feminists locate the origin of patriarchy in the emergence of property relations, personal possessions, ownership on resources, which ultimately leads to women’s oppression in society. The Marxists sort out discrimination at the level of occupational segregation, low pay, poverty, and discrimination against women that are also practiced in *Pakhtun* settled areas. They feel that fighting for such policies will expose a fact that it is not possible to have remedy for these problems under capitalism. For Marxist, capitalism extends privileges to a few women and it ignores mass of women population. It does not provide equality to women in economic and social sector of society including decision-making rights. On another level, ideological system and power structure is in the hands of few men who control rest of the population including women.

The above mentioned factual information regarding Marxism or Marxist Feminism apparently expresses that that women are deprived in each and every sector of their lives including their participation in economic activities, making a decision concerning their future in shape of education, political participation, mate selection, inheritance rights, employment and other familial decisions. In this regard ideological position and power relations are male oriented and patriarchal, which is best suited to Marxist philosophy and justifies the position of researchers while utilizing such a theory as an evidence material to the current study.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The major emphasis of this research study is to find out the role of *Pakhtun* social organization in gendered decision-making concerning women’s employment among *Pakhtuns* of *Batkhela*, District *Malakand*, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* province of Pakistan. Furthermore, the research study ventures the subjugated status of women among *Pakhtuns* after the diagnosis of the core factors in their subordination and oppression in the course of their occupational and employed well-being.

In this research study, stratified random sampling method has been used for the selection of samples from the target area. Stratified random sampling is a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness by decreasing the probable sampling error (Babbie, 2005). The overall population was divided in two strata that included age and education. In addition, the age limits were confirmed for the samples as above the age of twenty (20) years and below forty (40) years. Furthermore, a defined criterion was also framed in the course of education where it was obligatory for both the educated males and females having at least graduation. In this context, the actual population of the target community i.e. *Batkhela* consists of 38222 (Census Report 1998) both males and females. Besides, the ratio of males (according to the census) is 52 percent that makes a total of 19875 members while females constitute 48 percent (18346) of the whole population. In addition, literacy rate of *Batkhela* is 26 percent while out of the total literacy rate; the ratio of graduate male members is 4 percent while that of female members is 2 percent. In accordance to the calculation of the total population and then the target population on the basis of education and the required level of qualification; 4 percent graduate males constitute a population of 1146 while that of 2 percent graduate females make 764 members out of the total population. In this connection, the target population of male members was 1146 while that of females was 764. On the basis of such calculation, the total sample size i.e. 200 has been drawn that can be understood in the table given as below:

TABLE: SAMPLE FRAME AND SAMPLE SIZE

| Gender | Total Population | Target Population (Graduate 20 years and above) | Sample Size | Sampling Technique |
|---------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Male | 19875 | 1146 | 120 | Stratified Random Sampling |
| Female | 18346 | 764 | 80 | |
| Total | 38222 | 1910 | 200 | |

Newman Formula: $Population\ of\ the\ strata / Total\ Population\ of\ strata * Sample\ Size$

Besides, interview schedule has been used as a tool of data collection where the researchers have conducted 200 interviews (120 from males and 80 females) in a face to face conversation in order to collect the in-depth information. All the respondents were thoroughly interviewed in face to face, well managed and organized atmosphere and suitable environment.

Results and Discussion

The empirical information collected during the current research has been discussed under five headings concerning the role of *Pakhtun* social organization in gendered decision-making in the process of women’s occupation and employment.

The tables describe major chunks of respondents in frequency, percentage, and cumulative percentage (denoted as C.P). In addition, the values of mean, median and mode have also been drawn through the statistical tools. Furthermore, the discussion includes percentages of the most frequent values elaborated in tables while supported by the frequencies. In addition, the additional and secondary impacts are also been discussed qualitatively in relation to majority of the impacts. With regard to the attainment of authenticity and accurate results; Chi-square test has been used to validate the relationship among the different variables while a link has been drawn with the reflection of pictographic presentation of the collected information in the shape of histograms at the end of each discussion. The main details of the empirical data are as under:

PAKHTUN CULTURE AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Women's employment and the policies facilitating it, constraining it or ignoring it are central to contemporary social politics across the developed countries. Social policies and other political interventions, such as equal-opportunity legislation, are hardly the only influences on women's employment (Orloff, 2002:3). However, analysts caution against focusing exclusively on participation rates, which do not reveal the intensity of men's and women's employment and their relative contribution to paid and unpaid work or the gender-differentiated patterns of participation over the life course (Daly, 2000; Blossfeld and Hakim, 1997). Women throughout the world do not enjoy the employed status such as men, which is a matter of concern.

The table below also explores women employment, its status and the hurdles that are impeding women to pursue and acquire jobs in a *Pakhtun* settled area. The data indicates the cultural hurdles regarding women's employment where the collected information has been analyzed in five categories i.e. C1-C5. The empirical information denotes that among *Pakhtuns* women are comparatively considered as less rational than the male members. Such an ideology and perception of *Pakhtuns* towards women intellectual weakness restricts their power attain a job and get the employed status (mentioned by 25 (12.5%) respondents in C1). In addition, the fact is quite blatant that among *Pakhtuns*; men are culturally and traditionally given more powers in almost all fields of the social life including the power of decision-making regarding women's employment. In this regard, 49 (24.5%) respondents favor the traditional and cultural empowerment of men for making decisions in such matters (C2).

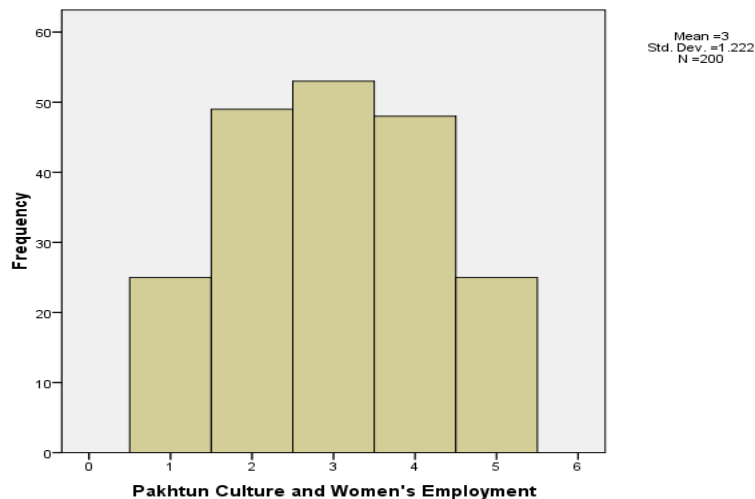
As an ancient culture, the *Pakhtun* social organization still firmly believes in its oldest and centuries old customs and traditions. 53 (26.5%) respondents reveal that the trend of decision-making by male members is one of the ancient and centuries old custom among *Pakhtuns* that does not tend to alter and restricts women's employment (C3). Besides, 48 (24.0%) respondents are of the opinion that men's hold over the informal power structure disempowers women in respect of their decision-making as the informal power structure of the *Pakhtun* social organization is among the most powerful rule to govern (C4). While 25 (12.5%) respondents explore that the power of decision-making males in women's employment is assigned by the patriarchic and male dominant structure of *Pakhtun* social organization (C5).

The empirically analyzed data mentioned as above has a clear denotation concerning the employment of women and the process of decision-making in this context. In addition, the information collected primarily in this research study signifies that women are facing numerous hurdles in the attainment and continuity of their employment. Response of respondents predominantly supports the notion that decision-making by men is a customary law among *Pakhtuns*, which is a centuries old custom and is prevalent since very long (see Table-1).

Table-1

| Categories | Statements | F | % | C.P | Mean | Median | Mode |
|------------|---|------------|--------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| C1 | Men's rationality in decision-making | 25 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3 |
| C2 | Men's cultural and traditional decisional empowerment | 49 | 24.5 | 37.0 | | | |
| C3 | Men's decision-making is an old customary trend | 53 | 26.5 | 63.5 | | | |
| C4 | Men's hold over the informal power structure, | 48 | 24.0 | 87.5 | | | |
| C5 | Patriarchic and male dominant structure | 25 | 12.5 | 100.0 | | | |
| CT | Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | | |

Figure-1: Histogram



Pakhtun culture in the above data has been statistically analyzed with the mean of 3 and standard deviation of 1.222.

CUSTOMARY LAWS AND WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONAL (EMPLOYMENT) DECISION-MAKING

The *Pakhtun* social organization strictly governs under the defined customary law of *Pakhtunwali*. Customary law is a set of rules that regulates almost all the activities in a particular society under a particular code of life (Merryman, 1985). In addition, customary law has a constitutional foundation in some societies due to which it has increasing influence (Slattery, 2008:574). The mentioned statements are evidently approving each other as the customary has a status of constitutional foundation while in *Pakhtun* social organization; it governs almost all the way. In such a connection, the customary law has prime importance in this study as it has an influential status in the area under study.

The following table best exemplifies that role of customary law as a hindrance in women's decision-making regarding their employment. The role of customary law has been analyzed in five categories that are mentioned as C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5 in the table. Among the total respondents, 49 (24.5%) respondents are of the view that the customs of *Pakhtun* social organization are mostly male oriented (C1). Such a male orientation and male inclination of the customs are responsible for women's subordination in decisions pertaining to employment. In addition, a majority of 51 (25.5%) respondents reflect the information regarding C2. The information reveals that patriarchy and male dominance that are prevalent in *Pakhtun* social organization (Naz, 2011) are hindering women's decision-making.

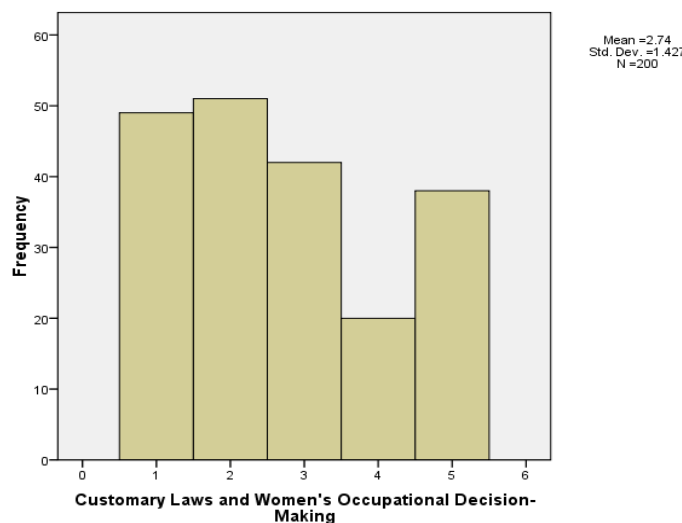
Moreover, analysis of the collected information elucidate that women's restricted mobility is responsible for women's deprivation in employment. Women's movement outside the four-walls on her own wills and wishes in the traditional *Pakhtun* society is strictly banned, which impedes their employment goals. In this context, 42 (21.0%) respondents favor the restricted mobility of women as a responsible factor in women's decisional deprivation (C3). In addition, women's tightly scheduled engagements in household and domestic activities like child caring, house cleaning, cooking, washing and serving etc. kept them extremely busy, where they do not find any spare time to get employment (shared by 20 respondents in C4). Besides, the local maxims of *Pakhtuns'* customary law also play the role of mercenary while blocking the way of their employment opportunities. 38 (19.0%) respondents express that *Pakhtuns* regard that women do not need earning, as men are the ultimate earners in *Pakhtun* society (C5).

The discussion so far (cited above) in the light of tabulated information (collected from the respondents) presents a transparent picture the hurdles that are caused by triumph customary laws in the target community. The analyzed information reveals that the patriarchy and male dominance are the core values of *Pakhtun* customary laws that are mainly responsible for women's deprivation from the occupational opportunities, which perfectly match the objectives and hypothesis of this study (see Table-2).

Table-2

| Categories | Statements | F | % | C.P | Mean | Median | Mode |
|------------|---|------------|--------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| C1 | Male orientation of <i>Pakhtun</i> customs | 49 | 24.5 | 24.5 | 2.74 | 2.50 | 2 |
| C2 | Patriarchy and male dominance and gender biased customs | 51 | 25.5 | 50.0 | | | |
| C3 | Women’s restricted occupational mobility | 42 | 21.0 | 71.0 | | | |
| C4 | Women’s extensive domestic involvement | 20 | 10.0 | 81.0 | | | |
| C5 | Women need no earning as men are the ultimate earners among <i>Pakhtuns</i> | 38 | 19.0 | 100.0 | | | |
| CT | Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | | |

Figure-2: Histogram



Customary laws in occupational decision-making express the statistical value with mean of 2.74 and standard deviation of 1.427 in the mentioned histogram.

PATRIARCHIC STRUCTURE AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Patriarchy and male dominance refer to the beliefs, values, and cultural meanings that give higher value and prestige to masculinity than to femininity, which value males over females, men over women. Many researchers and anthropologists consider all known societies to be male dominant to some degree (Stockard and Johnson, 1980:4). In addition, the researchers are of the view that the prevalence and practice of male dominance and patriarchy is stricter than that of the untraditional.

The table below reflects the information regarding the discouraging role patriarchic structure of *Pakhtun* social organization with respect to women’s employment. The information collected regarding the said notion has been analyzed in five categories that are mentioned as C1-C5 in the table. Response of the respondents reveals the information that patriarchy is among the strong supporters of male members in *Pakhtun* social organization and is among the weaker supporters of women’s empowerment. In this context, 59 (29.5) respondents share their view in favor of C1, which expresses that ‘patriarchy acknowledges men’s employment’. In addition, women’s irrationality again comes to the forefront in the ideas of 42 (21.0%) respondents, who support that women are considered intellectually at the bottom, which discourages their involvement in decisions regarding employment (C2). Every society follows its own structure of power that regulates the behavior and activities of its members. *Pakhtun* society also bears its own power structure that tends to decide almost all the matters occurred in the life of a *Pakhtun* individual. The empirical data explores that such power structure has been controlled by male members, which deprive women from participation in the process of decision-making (expressed by 22 ‘11.0%’ respondents as C3).

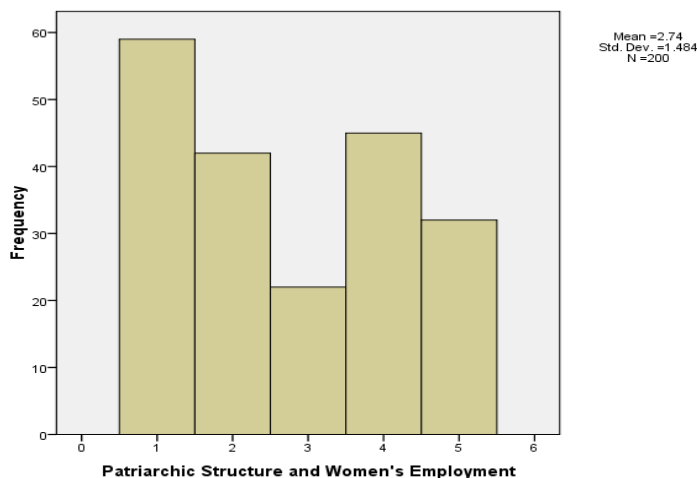
Furthermore, women’s lower status among *Pakhtuns* compels them to be tightly engaged in the household and domestic activities, which keeps them busy to such an extent where they become unable to participate in the process of decision-making regarding their employment (revealed by 45 ‘22.5%’ respondents as C4). On the basis of such tight schedule of women in the household activities, they are unable to spare time for jobs outside the home. Even if they are allowed and have the employment opportunities, they remain unable to avail them, as they have to accomplish their domestic activities which are considered as primary tasks for females (expressed by 32 ‘16.0%’ respondents marked as C5).

The information mentioned as above validates the purpose of this study accurately because of the collected data that reveals the reasons responsible for restrictions over women’s employment. The empirical data reflects the ethnographic characteristics of the *Pakhtun* community under study that the in-depth and severe pervasiveness of patriarchy is hindering women’s employment and the decisions related to it (see Table-3).

Table-3

| Categories | Statement | F | % | C.P | Mean | Median | Mode |
|------------|--|------------|--------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| C1 | Patriarchy acknowledges men's employment | 59 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 2.74 | 2.00 | 1 |
| C2 | Women’s irrationality | 42 | 21.0 | 50.5 | | | |
| C3 | Males’ control over the power structure | 22 | 11.0 | 61.5 | | | |
| C4 | Women’s strict engagement in domestic works | 45 | 22.5 | 84.0 | | | |
| C5 | Lack of spare time for external works to women | 32 | 16.0 | 100.0 | | | |
| CT | Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | | |

Figure-3: Histogram



The above mentioned histogram reveals the statistical analysis of patriarchy with the mean of 2.74 and standard deviation of 1.484.

PAKHTUN FAMILY AND WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

Family, in the earlier period of capitalism was regarded as both the basic affectional unit and basic work unit (Stockard and Johnson, 1980). This early family was likely to contain nonfamily members, such as servants and apprentices while the preindustrial family was not only the workplace; it was also a church, reformatory, school and asylum (Hareven, 1976). With the increasing industrialization and urbanization, these functions were given over to other agencies and the family became a specialized structure whose main functions were the early socializing of children and managing tension or stabilizing adult personalities. In this regard, Talcott Parsons (1966) calls this process of assigning function to increasingly specific structures ‘structural differentiation’.

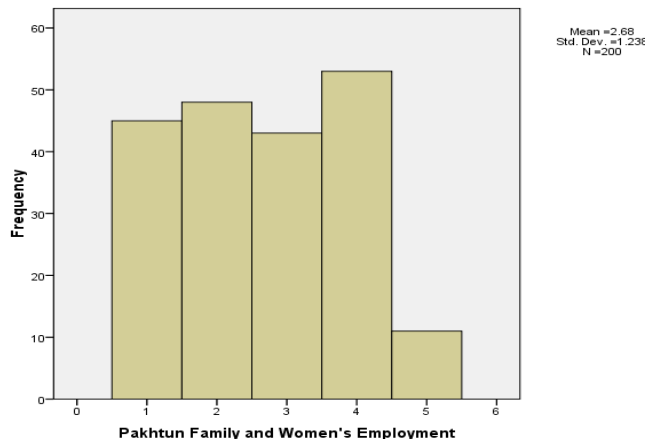
Such a privatization of the family led to the division of labor where the occupational course for both the genders was defined. The following table is also linked with such a privatized role of family where the employment chances for the both the genders are varying in nature. The role of family has been evaluated in four categories i.e. C1-C4. The empirical data supports the above mentioned analysis of the researchers that in a *Pakhtun* family, women bear scarce chances for employment due to its privatized and signified structure, rules and regulations. In this context, 45 (22.5%) are of the opinion that in a *Pakhtun* family, women’s mobility outside the house for employment is considered as insecure, due to which women have scarce chances to decide regarding their occupational status (see C1). In addition, the *Pakhtun* social organization is almost male dominated in all formats. In this regard, 48 (24.0%) respondents favor the statement i.e. ‘women’s earning and employment are threats to male dominancy in family’ (see C2).

Pakhtun social organization mainly believes in honor and pride, which are the basic pillars of *Pakhtunwali* (*Pakhtun* code of life). Furthermore, honor of the family is mainly associated with the female members (discussed in Table-11 as Tor ‘the social stigma). 43 (21.5%) respondents overview that women’s employment is a threat to the honor of the family (see C3). Besides, in a traditional *Pakhtun* family, women are considered as queens of houses and household activities. They are assigned almost the thorough powers of managing the indoor activities where they are found full time busy while offering services like cleaning, washing, cooking, child bearing, caring and rearing etc. In this connection, a high number of 53 (26.5%) respondents express women’s involvement in income related activities will suffer their domestic engagements, which hinder their power in decisions regarding their employment (see C4). In accordance to the response of the respondents, the data mentioned in the table below also expresses that women’s external mobility pertaining to employment or job will suffer the smooth functioning of the family and will affect the expected social functions adversely (added by 11 (5.5%) (see C5). The tabular data and discussion so far in this context thus concludes that a traditional *Pakhtun* family is a source of segregation between its male and female members. The information shown in the table expresses that women are heavily engaged in domestic activities, which affects their chances as well as choices of employment. Besides, the common notion predominantly regards that women’s employment will ultimately affect their domestic activities, which plays a key role in deprivation from the decisional process of employment (see Table-4).

Table-4

| Categories | Statements | F | % | C.P | Mean | Median | Mode |
|------------|--|------------|--------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| C1 | Women’s mobility outside the family is insecure | 45 | 22.5 | 22.5 | 2.68 | 3.00 | 4 |
| C2 | Women’s earning and employment are threats to male dominancy | 48 | 24.0 | 46.5 | | | |
| C3 | It is a threat to honor of a <i>Pakhtun</i> family | 43 | 21.5 | 68.0 | | | |
| C4 | The domestic activities tend to suffer | 53 | 26.5 | 94.5 | | | |
| C5 | The social functions and smooth functioning of familial affairs are affected | 11 | 5.5 | 100.0 | | | |
| CT | Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | | |

Figure-4: Histogram



Pakhtun family with respect to women’s employment has been statistically evaluated in the above histogram showing the mean as 2.68 while standard deviation as 1.238.

RELIGIOUS MISINTERPRETATION AND WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

Religions generally do recognize and include both masculine and feminine principles. For instance, the discovered writings of early Christian sects also show a strong feminine element in their conception of God (Pagels, 1976). Besides, Islam as a religion provides comparatively more chances and opportunities containing almost all the basic rights to both males and females (Naz and Rehman, 2011). On the contrary, the misinterpretation of religious teachings by the religious dogmas exploits the original structure of religion that creates misconception and tension among the followers.

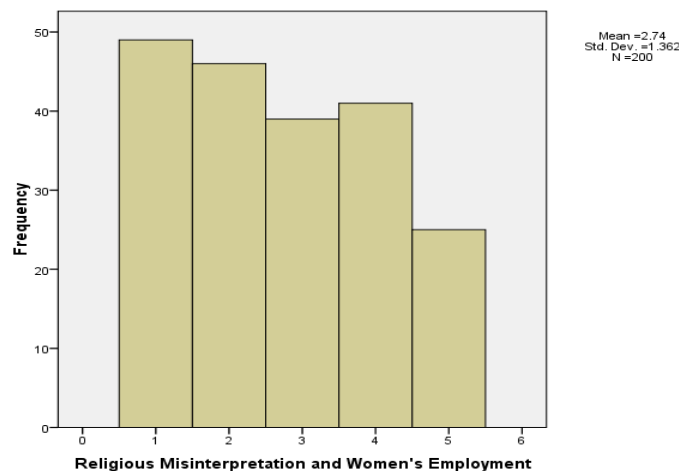
The following table is also concerned with such type of misinterpretation of the religious (Islamic) teaching in a strong connection to *Pakhtun* social organization that restricts women’s employment chances and constrains their participation in decisions made regarding their employment. The religious misinterpretation has been assessed in five categories that clarify the philosophy behind such delusion. The traditional *Mullahs* or *Imaams* (clergy-men) are considered as responsible for such kind of misinterpretation by 49 (24.5%) respondents. Besides, 46 (23.0%) the respondents are of the view that the literacy rate of the area under study is alarmingly low while that of women’s literacy ratio is distressingly below the standardized requirement. Such an illiterate status of women lead them to ignorance in all matters of social life while particularly they remain ignorant form their Islamic rights assigned to them in the holy scriptures (see C2).

Besides, religion has always been found in a conflict with the prevalent culture where in most of the cases, the cultural values overrule the religious norms. 39 (19.5%) respondents are of the view that the cultural interpretation of the religion leads to ignorance, which creates hurdles in the process of decision-making regarding women’s employment (see C3). Additionally, the traditional *Pakhtun* societies like the area under study have always been found under the strict hold of feudal lords, who tend to alter the religious values on their own wills and monopolize the religion with respect to their own benefit. 41 (20.5%) respondents share that the hold of feudalism over religion is responsible for women’s deprivation in the process of their occupational decision-making (see C4). While the centuries old biased conception regarding religion has been considered as a mercenary in matters related to women such decision-making process and women’s employment (expressed by 25 ‘12.5%’ respondents; C5).

The ethnographic details of the research community express that the religious values are wholeheartedly followed by its members. In addition, the collected information also copes with the mentioned role of religious leaders i.e. the *Imaams/Mullahs* is dominant. Besides, the analyzed information also reveals that such traditional religious leaders are responsible for women’s subjugation in almost all matters of the life while particularly that of their employment. Thus the information in the discussion and table reflect that these traditional religious leaders misinterpret the basic essence of religion and exploit women (see Table-5).

Table-5

| Categories | Statements | F | % | C.P | Mean | Median | Mode |
|------------|---|------------|--------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| C1 | Traditional <i>Imaams/Mullahs</i> or clergy-men are responsible | 49 | 24.5 | 24.5 | 2.74 | 3.00 | 1 |
| C2 | Women’s ignorance from their Islamic rights | 46 | 23.0 | 47.5 | | | |
| C3 | Cultural interpretation of religion | 39 | 19.5 | 67.0 | | | |
| C4 | Hold of feudalism over religion | 41 | 20.5 | 87.5 | | | |
| C5 | Centuries old biased conception of religion | 25 | 12.5 | 100.0 | | | |
| CT | Total | 200 | 100.0 | | | | |

Figure-5: Histogram

Religious misinterpretation has been statistically monitored with the mean value of 2.74 and standard deviation as 1.362 in the mentioned histogram.

Application and Results of Chi-Square Test

With respect to the mentioned observations and analyses of different variables in the above tables along-with the strong support of respondents and the application of Chi Square test for the given hypotheses has been proved as valid and authentic. The results of the applied test palpably show that the independent variables are in a strong connection and association with dependant variables that are persevering to influence each other in the mentioned settings of *Pakhtun* social organization in accordance to the decisional process of occupation and employment. The value of Chi-Square test is $P = .000^{**} < .05$, with the Chi-square value $\chi^2 = 38.083$ and the degree of freedom value D.f. = 4, shows highly significant association among the independent and dependant variables.

Conclusion

Occupational or professional well-being of the individual flourishes his/her personality organization. Earning the daily life needs and utility of such earning for the sake of spending an embellished and comfortable life is the dream of every individual. The current research study emphasizes over the distinction between the occupational status of men and women in the research community. The collected information reflects that almost all the employment opportunities and facilities are male oriented. Men are excessively privileged in this regard and are predominantly savoring the professionalism through occupation of the key posts and enjoyment of the authority. The cultural formation of the area under study (as mentioned by the empirical data) shows that men's work and employment is acknowledged. Males receive the huge appreciation and exaltation while working and earning.

On the contrary, women's employment is regarded as the social stigma (*Tor or Paghore*) and cowardice (*Beghairty*) among *Pakhtuns*. *Pakhtun* social organization primarily believes in family honor as well as honor of the individual. In this context, women's movement for the sake of earning is a bigoted act in *Pakhtunwali*. Men in this regard possess almost all the rights to decide in the course of women's employment and income of the family. The empirical data explicitly reflects that the patriarchic structure of *Pakhtun* social organization assigns hold to males on the power structure, which defines their hold in the process of decision-making pertaining to employment. Furthermore, the male orientation of *Pakhtun* culture creates the gender biased customs, while these customs create gendered decision-making by recognizing that women need no earning as men are the ultimate earners. In addition, the *Pakhtun* social organization regards women as the queens of houses, which keeps their schedule tightly engaged in domestic works that doesn't spare any time for external work. In the nutshell, the overall discussion concludes that culture plays a pivotal role in regulating the activities of its members in the research community. Culture has a dominant role in almost all aspects of life. Besides, the code of life of *Pakhtuns* and the social organization of *Pakhtunwali* reflects the rules that are considered as gender biased in the process of decision-making, which predominantly includes the patriarchic structure, the socially constructed customs, traditions norms and values, the misinterpretation of religion and the negative-conservative response and perception of males in *Pakhtun* social organization towards women's participation in decision-making.

Recommendations

This research study tends to analyze the *Pakhtun* social structure and social organization with reference to its role in gendered decision-making process and particularly in the course of employment and occupation. The study has in-depth analyses in the course of evaluating the cultural hurdles that are persevering to hinder women's participation in the process of occupational decision-making in a *Pakhtun* family. In this context, the study extends few recommendations on the basis of its conduction and findings for alleviation and reduction of the gendered setup and disparity between males and females in the process of occupational decision-making.

Empirical data of the research expresses that the research community is dominated by patriarchy and male dominance where males are savoring the overall authority and privileges. In addition, the centuries old customs, traditions and code of life intensify and instigate the other constraints as well. The study suggests that gender equal socialization, equal facilitation and access to mass media are to be encouraged to reduce the hold of males and give opportunities to women concerning their decisional empowerment in employment. The experiential data in connection with the ethnography of the area reflect that religious dogmas and its misinterpretation in terms of women's rights increase gender gap and provide maximum hold to males over socio-economic and political resources. Therefore, the religious sermons, speeches, lectures and seminars concerning gender issues in decision-making can play a pivotal role in order to change the mental horizon of male towards women's participation in the process of occupational decision-making.

Media is among the lucrative and effective tools of awareness that is one of the empowering tools while bringing the social issues to the forefront. Access to media is one of the paralyzed segments in the research area. Although the facilities of both electronic and print media are available in the area, yet they are unable to bring equality between both the sexes. In this regard, media should be made worthwhile to bring gender equal setup and strive to remove the biasness.

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