SOCIAL STATUS OF RURAL AND URBAN WORKING WOMEN IN PAKISTAN – A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Dissertation
zur Erlangung des Grades
Doktor der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften (Dr. rer. pol.)
am Fachbereich Sozialwissenschaften
der Universität Osnabrück

vorgelegt im November 2005

von

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Acknowledgement

I feel honour to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. György Széll for his supervision, guidance and encouragement throughout this research. I always found him very much alive, full of zeal, vitality and intellectual curiosity. Without his ideas, remarks and endless interest this work could not have been carried out and completed.

I am very grateful to PD. Dr. Birgit Panke-Kochinke for agreeing to be one of the evaluators of my thesis. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Carol Hagemann-White and PD Dr. Carmen Schmidt for agreeing to be the members of the doctoral examination commission.

I would like to add a very special note of appreciation to my husband, Dr. Zakir Hussain, for his constant support, encouragement, and enduring patience during the course of my research work.

Finally I wish to express my heartiest gratitude and profound regards to my parents for their moral support and encouragement during my research work.

May, 2006

Amber Ferdoos

Mülheim
To my parents and my husband
Abstract

In Pakistan female participation in labour market has increased due to increased employment opportunities. Women are coming out of their homes in order to achieve economic independence as well as their rights and status like men in society and in family. Today one finds females in wide range of occupations other than teachers and doctors. Women have started to work in middle level occupations which were regarded as male professions only few years ago. The entry of women in labour market has fundamentally changed the status of women in the family as well in the society. However women are facing new challenges regarding their social status which varies from rural to urban areas and females of various families in one area.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Focus of the present study

Within the last few years so many changes have occurred in Pakistan. When I completed my master’s degree I had a different viewpoint about the social status of working women in Pakistan. During the last decade a new phenomenon has emerged in rural and urban Pakistan that has started to significantly change the gendered structure of the labour market, women have increasingly entered the office sector and have started to work in middle level occupations that were regarded as exclusively male professions only few years ago. They work as secretaries, receptionist, and telephone operators, as drafts women designers, and computer operators. These women still constitute a very small minority among the male workers as well as among the women working in other professions. Such a move from the “female jobs” i.e. teaching and medicine has also resulted in pronounced effects on the social status of the working women. In Pakistani society working women have initiated willingly or unwillingly a process of desegregation of the lives of men and women, which has started at the work place, but which might also influence the whole social and gender order of society. Furthermore the entry of women into the labour market has fundamentally changed the status of these women, and it has changed existing societal concepts of and expectations towards working women concerning their way of life, planning career choices and their status in family as well as in the society.

In Pakistan, as a strong patriarchal society, this phenomenon of women entering the labour market is particularly interesting against the background of the norms of the purdah - which include female seclusion, and absence of concepts for social interaction between male and female - that pervade the social and gender order of society. The process of Islamization which started during the early 80s too has rather strengthened the segregation process, instead of providing concepts of mixed places. Due to the strong gender segregation in everyday life, the formal labour force participation rate in Pakistan has always been very low and working women have remained heavily concentrated in few female professions, for example, doctors and teachers which are compatible with gender segregation and which are therefore regarded as respectable. But female employment in the office sector requires mingling of the sexes - through contact with male colleagues and through dealing with the public, and office jobs are therefore traditionally perceived as inappropriate and shameful for women.

It is surprising to note that the women who are nowadays entering the so called “male jobs” i.e. office sector, belong mainly to the lower middle classes which constitute the most conservative section of Pakistani society. Klein and Nestvogel (1986:135) describe the lower middle classes in Pakistan as very heterogenous. They can broadly be characterized as a section of the society that have an income above the minimum wage (as fixed by the state), that do not live in the poverty according to national standards, that have adequate living conditions and can afford to educate their children at least up to
tenth class. Hence the lower middle classes include traders, craftsmen as well as employees in industry and in office sector. They constitute about 15 to 20% of the urban population.\(^1\)

It is quite recent that common women are coming out of their homes to seek an income oriented work in order to achieve their economic independence as well as social status and rights like men in society and in the family. However women are now facing new challenges regarding their social status which varies from urban to rural women and women of the various families in one area.

To analyze the social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan, the focus of study will be on negative discrimination against working women of rural areas particularly and urban areas generally and comparison between them. The analysis of the impact of purdah, traditions and religion on the overall social life of working women in the specified areas and the facts about the decision making power of working women at different social levels will also be carried out. Furthermore, the experiences of working women about the attitude of their families, friends, relatives and colleagues at work place according to their status in society and type of job are also the focus of the present study. Finally to analyze the restrictions and limitations which do their family in rural and urban areas impose on the working woman and the changes that occurred in women’s life as well as in the labour market due to women’s entry in labour market, will also be a part of the discussion.

### 1.2 The process of field research

The field research was conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi (Urban areas) and Chakwal and Gujar Khan (Rural areas). I selected these areas for the collection of my empirical data for several reasons. First it would hardly have been possible to do research in Karachi\(^2\) the largest city due to the sectarian violence that has been going on there for years, although the present situation is much better than previous years. Second there are great differences between the four provinces, particularly the urban centres with respect to the social and gender order of society. In cities like Peshawar and Queta female seclusion and gender segregation are observed most rigidly, and women rarely come into sight in public life. In contrast to this, in Karachi the most metropolitan

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\(^1\) With 35 percent of the population living in urban areas, Pakistan is the most urbanized country in the south Asia. For a comparison of urbanization rates in other south Asian countries: India 27%; Bangladesh 19%; Nepal 11%; Sri Lanka 22%; Bhutan 6% (Fischer Weltalmanach 1999).

\(^2\) Pakistan has four provinces: Punjab (district capital Lahore), Sindh (district capital Karachi), Balochistan (district capital Queta) and the North-Western-Province (district capital Peshawar). The great majority of the population live in Punjab (55.6%), followed by Sindh (23.0%), North-Western-Province (13-4%) and Balochistan (5.0%) (Population Census 1998, quoted in Nation, 09.07.1998).
city in Pakistan, many women work and women are much more visible in public life in general. Islamabad and Rawalpindi are situated in between these poles. It therefore, constitutes a good location for my research. Third I have studied and lived there and had valuable contacts that helped me to get into touch with working women. The reason to select the rural areas as mentioned above is that both of the rural areas are not far away from Islamabad and people are not extremely traditional like in NWFP which helped me in approaching the working women for personal interviews.

Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan situated at 14 km north east of Rawalpindi on the north eastern fringe of the Potohar plateau of the province of Punjab. The current population of Islamabad is about 0.9 million (1998 census) and it covers a total area of 906.5 sqr. km. Rawalpindi which is a district headquarters, situated at about 275 km to the north-west of Lahore. The current population of Rawalpindi is about 1.6 million and the district is spread over an area of 5,279 sqr. km. District Chakwal is bordered by the districts of Rawalpindi. The total area of district Chakwal is 6609 sqr. km. and as enumerated in the 1998 census the total population is 1059451, 87.7% of which lives in rural areas and 12.3% in the urban areas, making Chakwal a predominantly rural district pivoted on an agrarian economy with a very small industrial sector (http://www.chakwal.sdnkp.org/). Gujar Khan is the rural Tehsil of Rawalpindi situated at about 100 km. from Rawalpindi, with its current population of about 66600, it comprises of more than 90% of agricultural land.

It was difficult to apply the random sampling for selecting the research sample due to not having the adequate and definite information about the professions of working women. Therefore, I had to take help from persons known to me who know various professional and non-professional working women. I prepared a list of various professions and also feasibility of contacting with the working women in the selected area. My sample regards those women as working women who are participating in any kind of income generating activities (inside or outside the home) in the rural and urban areas. A sample of 100 working women belonged to different professions from the list was selected (convenience sample). As the present study is a comparative study, therefore, 50 working women were selected from each urban and rural area that were categorized as working inside and outside the house.

In order to study the whole life of respondents with a view to understand the social status of working women and various factors influencing it, I took six working women each from the rural and urban areas belonged to various professions to study their life histories. Each of these case studies cover a wide range of issues, namely the type and nature of job, socio-economic conditions of respondents, attitudes of family towards the job of the respondents, views of the respondents about the social status of working women in Pakistan and their aspirations for their daughters to adopt any profession.
1.3 Methods of data collection

For an in-depth study about the social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan, I used the investigatory methods to get the proper information. Data were collected with the help of interviewing schedule. An interviewing schedule is a kind of questionnaire where questions are asked from the respondents and the answers are recorded by the interviewer. I used this method because it is the most appropriate method to get the information as by visiting the respondents it is possible to have the appropriate knowledge about the social conditions of the respondents from the conditions of the surroundings/workplace.

1.3.1 Pre-testing

The pre-testing is a try-out of interviewing schedule to see how it works and whether changes are necessary before the start of the full-scale study. The pre-testing provides the means of catching and solving unforeseen problems in the administration of the interviewing schedule.

Before the actual data collection, pre-testing was done to check the workability of the interviewing schedule. The people interviewed in the pre-test were similar in characteristics to those in the final study. After pre-testing, few modifications in the interviewing schedule were made to improve its workability.

1.3.2 Analysis and interpretation of data

In order to analyse, process and present the collected data and information from the rural and urban working women, I followed the principles of qualitative and quantitative methods. Data have been interpreted in the form of tables which present the major findings of my research. Each table has two parts, one for the rural working women and other for the urban working women. Percentages of each category were calculated and compared with each other. I analysed and identified the required data for establishing the relationship of socio-economic and common characteristics of one to the other in respect to working women.

1.3.3 Secondary sources of data

In order to collect the up-to-date information about the social status of working women in Pakistan, I collected the secondary sources of data by reviewing the available litera-
ture on women’s status, working women in Pakistan and related issues on women in Pakistan. In order to get the general information about the working women and their status in Pakistani society, I analyzed the NGO directory and the literature from the national and various university libraries in Pakistan. Besides, I reviewed online sources in order to collect the recent data on women’s status in Pakistan.

1.3.4 Field experiences

Social scientists generally face a situation in which responses are difficult to get. Human behavior is so complex and can’t be treated under controlled conditions as the happenings of physical sciences. It also depends upon the researcher’s efforts and experience to get reliable and correct information by observing and creating an atmosphere of harmony, technically called ‘rapport’. During my empirical research, I also faced certain difficulties to get correct information from the respondents.

I had to consume a lot of time in explaining to my respondents, motives and purpose of present study especially to those respondents who were uneducated and were unaware of the significance of research in social science. For example, when they were asked about their monthly income, mostly they were not agreeing to give the exact figure. Moreover, it was very difficult to get explanatory responses in the presence of family members (especially males).

The respondents belonged to doctors category were always busy, attending their patients and their behavior was not at all cooperative; even some doctors directly refused to give certain answers as they thought it their personal information. Some doctors did not want to stay in the hospital after their duty time; therefore, I encountered discouraging moments several times during my research while visiting such doctors for many days to get some time for the answers of my questions.

Some of the respondents agreed to give answers only if their personal problems would be solved and when they were told that your answers would reflect the over all status of the working women which would have some role in solving some of their problems but they were insisting to get some immediate benefit which resulted in looking for some other suitable respondent. Again, it was very difficult to extract information from some respondents as respondents were of the opinion that they would not disclose their information to a stranger; therefore, in such cases I was always accompanied by some of my relatives or friend while visiting some respondents.

It was very difficult to get appointment from the responsible authority to enter some factory and to approach its female workers and later some respondents refused to appear for interview on the plea that their names would be given to their bosses and if they will tell about their problems and behavior of their colleagues, their job will be terminated. Therefore, it was very difficult to agree such respondents while visiting them several times and establishing a kind of friendship with them in order to get the correct information.
In short, although due to some problems the present study took some more time and patience but I got positive responses and encouragement from most of the respondents especially lawyers, teachers, beauticians and nurses. They spared time for me from their busy schedule and their responses were also very explanatory. Therefore, I think the collected data can well be analyzed in order to help the researchers and development planning-makers to get a clearer picture of the social status of rural and urban working women in the family and in the society.
2 Women in Pakistan-Social and Gender Order

Pakistani society is a male dominated society where women are the centre of attention and life but this society also considers women as no more than secondary citizens which is perhaps due to the traditional norms prevailing in the whole society. The role and status of Pakistani women in all walks of life has been highly undermined. However, over the years this scenario has changed and the awareness of woman’s abilities, her rights and her status has reached almost all parts of Pakistan which is an underdeveloped third world country. The majority of Pakistani women belong to the rural areas who work in the fields and in the industrial centres. It is a poor and virtually illiterate majority, which leads a life of physical hardship involving long hours at tedious chores for which there is neither compensation nor recognition. Most of these women bear the double burden of housework and outside work. Not only do these women have longer days than the rest of the family, but also being the last to eat, they eat less well and suffer from anaemia and malnutrition. (Mumtaz / Shaheed: 1987)

In this chapter I shall analyze everyday life of women in Pakistani society. I shall show that the Islamic concept of purdah constitutes an important feature of social and gender order of the various classes, in particularly the lower middle classes in Pakistani society. This is noticeable in a far-reaching segregation of the lives of women and men. The facts that women do not have the same rights to use the unrestricted or public sphere as men have greatly influenced their rooms for movement in society. Furthermore, I shall analyze how purdah and religious norms and values affect the social status of working women in Pakistani society.

2.1 Purdah and gender order in Pakistani culture

In Pakistan women have traditionally been expected to live under the constraints of purdah. Therefore, the analysis of women’s life and status in the society cannot be adequately carried out without taking into account the crucial importance of purdah as constant element in everyday life in Pakistani Muslim culture. I shall focus a little more on

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3 Pakistan was created (14th August 1947) on the basis of the Two-Nation theory, which emphasizes Islamic teachings and values, giving the best and the most balanced code of life but pseudo-fundamentalists converted the teachings of Islam to read in the best interests of men and highly unjust towards women. Despite this the woman of Pakistan has come a long way in proving herself from home to economic spheres.

4 I shall restrict my study to the Muslim majority of Pakistani society. Among non-Muslim minorities e.g. the Christians and Hindus, who according to their own esti-
*purdah* as to me, directly or indirectly, in one way or the other, it is one of major causes of current social status of working women in Pakistani society.

> .....in Pakistan purdah is such a critical factor in women’s life and one that is normally ignored, particularly in development-related research (Shaheed 1989:18).

In Pakistani society women are absent from public life particularly in the NWFP and Balochistan provinces, men on the other hand are present everywhere; in front of their houses, in streets and bazaars, public parks, at work places, in the markets, the office and shops. Women particularly younger ones are rarely seen at these places, if present, clad into a *burqa*, a *chaddor*, or a *dupatta* and their heads bowed and eyes cast down to the ground they walk quickly through the streets while everybody’s eyes follow them.

Definition of *purdah* (literally meaning ‘curtain’ in Urdu) commonly refers to the practice of gender segregation and the seclusion of women and girls, as well as their veiling in public (e.g. Balchin 1996: 178; Shaheed/Mumtaz: 75). Terms like ‘segregation’ and ‘seclusion’, which are usually associated with *purdah*, make clear that the “crucial characteristics of *purdah* observance is the limitation of interaction between the women and men outside certain well-defined categories” (H. Papanek 1971:519), and that therefore *purdah* certainly aims at the “creation of separate worlds of man and women” (H. Papanek 1971:528):

> .....one of the most defining features of Muslim Purdah is that social intercourse between man and women is delimited by the criterion of kinship. In this respect, social access and interaction between men and women is possible only if they are related..... (Ibraz 1993:105).

It is therefore clear that only men and women between whom social interaction is permitted are those between whom marriage is prohibited: they are said to be *mahram*\(^5\) to each other and similar behaviour however, is unacceptable towards *na-mahram* persons. This restriction of interaction between *na-mahram* men and women is often attributed in...

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\(^5\) *Mahram* is the legal term denoting a relationship by blood, milk, marriage or sexual union which makes marriage between persons so related forbidden. The term is also used in sense that *mahram* persons are those with whom one can mix freely and be on informal terms. *Na-mahram* literally denotes any person of the opposite sex whose kinship does not represent an impediment for marriage (Khatib-Chahidi 1993: 114). *Na-mahram* also includes cousins and other distant relatives between whom marriage is permitted according to the Islamic law.
the literature to what Vagt names the “Islamic Theory of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior of Men and Women” (H. Vagt 1992:35). The Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi (1987) is probably the best known social scientist with regard to the analysis of the Muslim understanding of sexuality, and many studies which follow her line of argumentation have been published during the last few years (e.g. Sabbah 1998:25-43; Heller/Mosbahi 1993:66-82; Gerani 1998; Dhal 1997). All these publications are not necessarily coherent- they are marked by different, even contradictory statements and interpretations – the central points the analyses are based on are nevertheless quite similar. In short, the main idea is that, according to the Muslim concept of sexuality, women’s sexuality is regarded as the desires of the women which are so strong that they can hardly be kept under control; and since they have to be satisfied by the men, a situation arises in which the women becomes the hunter and the men the prey.6

It is therefore, clear that in this concept of sexuality men and women are primarily seen as sexual agents (D. Pahnke 1992:11; Mernissi 1985:220). The constant derive of women tempting men is not regarded as an individual deviation, but as a dangerous collective phenomenon (Heller 1993:69) that has to be tackled on a global level, i.e., through gender segregation. In this context the veiling of women in the public7, where segregation between na-mahram men and women cannot be maintained, serves two purposes: on the one hand, it shields women from men so that they do not come into contact with each other; on the other hand it covers the women’s sexual attractions which the men could otherwise not resist and would become an all too easily victim of. In the Islamic literature it is emphasized that the main purpose of veiling is the protection of the family, because veiling is assumed to prevent extramarital sexual encounters (Darwisch / Liebl 1991:7; See also Sherif 1987:51).

Furthermore, in Muslim societies the social order is pervaded by notions concerning (female) sexuality and by concepts of how sexuality can best be organized and controlled. This worldview is simply there, operating between people more or less unconsciously as a part of everyday life (Dhal 1997: 104/134; Mernissi 1987.45): The end result is a gender order whose main characteristic is gender segregation.

6 Heller/Mosbahi (1993:76) point out a significant inconsistency that underlines the Muslim sexual morals: on one hand the institutions of polygamy and concubinage that grant men the right to have several sexual partners at the same time are justified by his allegedly stronger sexual drive. On the other hand, it is particularly the supposedly insatiable sexual desires of women, her uncontrollable libido, which builds the foundation of Islamic understanding of female sexuality and which is believed to be controllable only through the institution of purdah.

7 However the practice of veiling in everyday life does not necessarily mean subordination as it is often interpreted in Western discourse (Vagt 1992:63f). For the individual women veiling can also be used strategically as a means for broadening her space of action, for example, for gaining access to the public sphere that would otherwise be denied to her.
2.2 Gender relations outside and inside the family

The close link between purdah and the sexualization of gender relations is very visible in Pakistani society. Pakistan’s lower middle class’s everyday life is dominated by purdah restrictions, which lead to an extensive segregation between the men and women’s live without many interfaces for social interaction. The whole organization of social life is geared towards shielding women from men, protecting women from men gazing at them. In the mohalla, the residential areas, the houses are constructed in a way that they shield the female inhabitants from strangers. The small lanes and pathways of the mohalla are marked by high walls on both sides which is very visible in the NWFP and to a lesser extent in the big cities like Karachi and Lahore. Male visitors who are na-mahram or do not belong to the inner family circle are not allowed beyond the visitor’s room. Therefore, as far as private area of the houses is concerned, the purdah rules for men are much stricter.

It is usual practice in Pakistan that when girls reach the age of seven or eight, they are not allowed to go outside any longer without the company of a mahram from the family. This is again observed very strictly in the areas of NWFP and Balochistan and to a lesser extent in the cities like Karachi and Lahore. Once I had a chance to visit one of my friends in Bannu, a remote town of NWFP, where I was surprised to see that hardly a woman even with a full burqa could be seen in the whole town. My friend told me that this is usual practice not only in this town but in the whole of NWFP that women stay all the time at home and men of the family make the daily purchases, or a boy from the neighbourhood is sent to the next shop or bazaar to buy urgently needed items. Celebrations, like weddings or engagements, but also funerals, take place separately in different rooms. The girls are shielded from men even within one mohalla so that they remain unknown to the male inhabitants.

It is therefore, evident that women spend the greatest part of their time inside the house and due to purdah do not have much exposure to male strangers. A confrontation with the ‘male world’ is therefore a traumatic experience they find difficult to face (Shaheed 1990:26). Most women have never been alone in a bank, a government office, or even to a bookshop or hospital. The inability to interact with male strangers is closely intertwined with the purdah-system, which again is based on the absence of concepts for mixed social interaction, and the perception of relationships between na-mahram men and women as predominantly sexual ones.

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8 Islamic law, in fact, does not have any concepts for social intercourse between na-mahram men and women. It lays down regulations for the interaction within the family and community, but not for the interaction between men and women who are not related to each other. Any uncontrolled contact between na-mahram men and women is simply forbidden because it could lead to a sexual encounter, which is prohibited according to Islamic law. Or, as Mernissi puts it, “…..there are no accepted patterns for interaction between unrelated men and women. Such interactions violate the space rules which are the pillars of the Muslim sexual order” (Mernissi 1987:137).
Family constitutes the centre of social life for both men and women and therefore, plays an essential role throughout their lives (Weiss 1994:132; also Vagt 1992:131; Laudowicz 1992:32; Minai 1991:209). Men and women commonly live with their parents until they get married, and even after marriage they continue to live in the joint family system, i.e., with the husband’s family (Minai 1991:209).\(^9\) Yet, the institution of the family plays a much more crucial role for women. Even in the urban areas women cannot live independently, without any male protection (H. Alavi 1991:125).

A clear division of labor in which all reproductive tasks that are performed inside the house are attributed to women and all outside tasks are done by men,\(^10\) as well as a hierarchical family structure in which age and particularly gender play an important role for the position each member occupies within the family hierarchy, does not leave much for social interaction among the individual family members, especially among men and women. Parental authority is not called into questions. Social interactions within the family often takes forms of either request and pleads or orders, permissions, and prohibitions, depending on the lower or higher position the respective person occupies in the family hierarchy (Laudowics 1992:33). Even disputes between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law that are known from the literature are conflicts that do not really threaten the equilibrium of the family (Minces 1992:23). Weiss describes the family life of working women in the informal sector in the Walled City of Lahore as follows:

> Of course women would interact with closely related men often throughout the day. Their relationship, however, was one of servitude: women were to ensure clean home, tasty cooked food, obedient children, and maintain social relations. Maintenance of social relations included attending the many [gender segregated] functions associated with marriage, birth, death and performing certain rites identified with Islam expected from a woman in that particular family (Weiss 1994a:132).

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\(^9\) Most of the married women I interviewed (in rural areas) lived in the joint family: With the husband, the husband’s parents, his brothers if married, their families, and husbands unmarried sisters. Only two women had – after living in the husband’s family for many years set up their own nuclear family, and one separated women lived with her children in her parent’s home. Even in joint families a woman (especially a young, unmarried woman or girl) is usually not left alone in her home, a fact that runs counter to the general ascription of the private realm to women. The practice of not leaving a woman alone at home is also partly in recognition that the home is not a safe place for women. Therefore, even a small boy or another woman may act as a chaperon while the other household members are out (Balchin 1996:180).

\(^10\) Outside tasks do not only cover employment, but also reproductive work like purchasing daily goods from the market, shopping etc.
Behavior of women is closely guarded by the male family members. A sister is the joint responsibility of all her brothers and personifies the *izzat* (honor) of their household (Tirmizi 1989:40f). Behavior of men and women therefore, is judged differently, because “if a man should violate a social norm, it may rise some concern, but if a woman violates virtually any social norm, it becomes calamitous event for her family with disastrous results for the woman’s future” (Weiss 1994a:132; Pastner 1990:250). In other words, while men can literally do whatever they wish to, it is the women’s *izzat* that is very easily put at risk. For this reason from an early age the socialization of a boy is geared towards protecting his sisters against any kind of exposure to, or relationship with, an unrelated male (Tirmizi 1989:40f).

One’s own and family’s *izzat* is important than every thing for women. When I asked the question to my respondents that, what are your family’s restrictions about your job? I was told that the *izzat* of women is very sensitive. We should always be careful where we are going? To whom we are going and how the environment of our work place is?

*Shabana, one of my respondents, working in a marble factory, told me “when I first came out of my house for job my mother was very much worried about the family’s honour, because I had to work with males and my uncle clearly threaten me not to work with males. Because in our society males have view point that if their daughters or sisters will work with males they will spoil their family’s honour. However, I don’t agree with this opinion and I think if a female is confident and determent no one can spoil her.”*

### 2.3 Women’s status and religious norms and values

There is a wide disparity between the status of women in Islam as determined by doctrine of the Holy Qur’an and the traditions on the one hand and the actual conditions in Pakistan on the other. Furthermore, in Pakistan politics has always revolved around religion and every ruler has employed and interpreted Islam arbitrarily in accordance

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11 Several negative images about the role and status of women were preserved in the Hindu religion. These images had traditionally been supported by the local inhabitants prior to conversion. After conversion to Islam, many of these images and beliefs continued to define the role and status of Muslim women and their influence can still be perceived in present day Pakistan. It would be erroneous to say that the present day status of the Pakistani women is determined purely by historical circumstances, but at the same time the force of tradition and custom must not be neglected in such an analysis (N. M. Shah, 1986).

12 Pakistan is the only modern country created on the basis of religion. The very idea of Pakistan emerged from the theocratic commitment of the Muslim community of the
with individual political objectives (Kaushik 1993:IIX). In Pakistan, women are not only subjected to financial discrimination but they are also victims of inhuman customs and laws such as *Karo Kari*, *Qasas* and marriage on the Qur’an. In the following part I would like to discuss, in brief, about the position and status of women under the Islamic law as interpreted by the politicians (and *ulema*) in Pakistani society.

The major setback for women in Pakistan started in the 1970s, when Zia ul-Haq, in search of a basis for the legitimacy of his military rule, launched an Islamization campaign unparalleled in the modern history of Islam in South Asia (Weiss 1994:417). It is common phenomenon that gender policies are at the centre of Islamist movements, where women assure the onerous burden of a largely male-defined tradition and are cast as the embodiment of cultural identity and the custodians of cultural values (Moghadam 1994:9). Similarly, women were the target of Zia’s decade of Islamization (1977-1988). Not only were women’s legal rights reduced through the laws that were passed during this period, like the *Hudood Ordinance* in 1979, or the Law of Evidence in 1984. Zia also tried to impose new standards for morality on society, particularly on women. The government launched a general campaign in the media, extolling people to be more Islamic in their lives and to ensure that their neighbours were also (Shaheed/Mumtaz 1987:71). In the name of a fight against ‘obscenity’ and ‘pornography’ several directives targeting women and women’s conduct were issued.

Indian sub-continent. Pakistan thus cannot dissociate its character and identity from religion (Fuller 1991:1; also Kaushik 1993:IIX).

13 In her analysis of the relationship between Islam, the state and the position of women in modern nation states of the Middle East and South Asia, Deniz Kandiyoti (1991) points out that the ‘‘women’s question’’ has been, and still is, a hotly contested ideological terrain for both secular and Islamic movements; it is instrumentalized to legitimize and support new forms of state power. In Turkey, for example, the secularization of the family code and the enfranchising of women were part of a broader struggle toward secularization to liquidate the theocratic institutions of the Ottoman state and to create a new legitimizing state ideology.

14 The *Hudood Ordinance* makes, among other, rape, fornication and adultery punishment. In order to prove a rape either the rapist’s confession is needed, or at least four Muslim adult male witnesses of good moral character who must confirm to have seen the actual act. Women and non-Muslims are not accepted as witnesses, neither the victim’s own evidence, medical evidence or expert opinion. In addition to these strict standards of proof which provide very little possibility that punishment is inflicted on a rapist, by making fornication/adultery a crime too, the ordinance has created further hardship for women because the law confuses the issue of rape with fornication/adultery. The demarcation line between the two offenses is so thin in practice that when a woman comes into court with a case of rape, there is a possibility that she might herself be convicted of fornication/adultery, because of lack of evidence to prove the case of rape while the accused man is released (Alavi 1991:137; Mehdi 1990; Jahangir/Jilani 1990).
male television announcers had to appear on the air with their heads covered and in full-sleeved dress. This order was extended to women teachers and government employees who had to wear the chaddor over their clothes and to cover their heads. Women were not allowed to compete in various athletic events, ostensibly so as to risk immodest exposure (Goodwin 1995:55; Human Rights Watch 1992:35, Weiss 1994:424). Female models were not to appear in commercials for more than 25% of the allotted time, and newspapers had to reduce the number of photographs of women (Shaheed/Mumtaz 1987:82).

The Zia government idealized the image of women as remaining veiled and within the confines of the four walls of home (Weiss 1994:417) and blamed particularly working women for the moral ills of society and the disintegration of values in the family (Shaheed 1995:87). But during the same decade women became more integrated into the public domain than ever.

There is no doubt that this decade was the most retrogressive for Pakistan’s women, marked by state-sponsored legislation, directives, and campaign seeking to reduce women’s rights, to curtail their access to economic resources, and to restrict both their mobility and visibility. Yet, ironically enough, in this same decade the largest number of women were recruited into the formal labor market and the number of women in the informal sector also grew; female applicants for higher education increased, as did the number of technical training institutes for women; and, in urban areas, even as dress codes became more uniform, an unprecedented number and new class of women started appearing in public places of leisure such as parks and restaurants (Shaheed 1995:89).

The process of Islamization did not come to an end in 1988, when, Benazir Bhutto, for the first time in history a women became prime minister of a Muslim state, became the prime minister of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto did not modify the existing policies toward women; neither did her successor, Mian Nawaz Sharif. On the contrary, with the declaration of Sharia, the Islamic law, as the legal code of Pakistan in 1991, he continued to promote the process of Islamization in country.16

Pakistan came under military rule again in October 1999 after the ousting of a civilian government of Mian Nawaz Sharif which had lost a great deal of public support. The coup leader, General Parvez Musharraf, has pledged to revive the country’s fortunes. One of the most important projects of the Musharraf’s government is the establishment

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15 According to this law, in certain cases two male witnesses, and in the absence of two male witnesses, one male and two females are required to prove a crime like rape (Shaheed/Mumtaz 1987:109).

16 A more complex elaboration of the process of Islamization in Pakistan is provided by Shaheed/Mumtaz (1987:71-122), Rashid (1996). For a historical analysis of the impact of state policies on women since the creation of Pakistan see Jalal (1991).
Social Status of Rural and Urban Working Women in Pakistan - A Comparative Study

of National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW). Keeping in view its role, the Commission in its meeting held in April, 2002, took up the review of the Hudood Ordinances 1979 on priority basis. To take up an in depth study of these Ordinances the Commission set up a special committee comprising prominent (retired) judges, eminent lawyers, scholars, representative of minorities and members of the Commission, having legal background. This committee held five meetings and discussed all the four ordinances, clause by clause referring to Qur’an and Ahadith and the prevalent law. The concluding session of the committee finalized the draft report, based on the deliberations of the committee and unanimously approved the recommendations that the Hudood Ordinances should be repealed. It was found that instead of remedying social ills, these Ordinances led to an increase in injustice against women and, in fact, became an instrument of oppression against women. There were hundreds of incidents where a woman subjected to rape, or even gang rape, was eventually accused of adul-

17 The NCSW was set up in September 2000 by virtue of Ordinance XXVI of 2000 to examine and review policy, laws and programmes of the Government of Pakistan for women development and gender equality. NCSW’s interesting features include the recommendations made for women’s rights in the light of the Constitution. This includes political participation; citizenship; family laws; labour and service laws; criminal laws; Qanun-e-Shahadat (Law of Evidence), 1984; violence against women; developmental rights and institutionalization. However, despite of all such efforts to improve the situation of women in Pakistan, women still have a long way of struggle against the hierarchy of male in order to achieve their status equal to men.

18 In June 2002, 30-year-old Mukhtar was publicly gang-raped in Meerpala, Pakistan. She was punished because her young brother was rumored to have been seen in the company of a girl from a rival tribe. When Mukhtar rushed to the tribal court to plead for her brother, he was let off but she was handed out this punishment to set an example to others. Four "volunteers" raped her, she was beaten and paraded naked before her father covered her with a shawl and took her home. The story could have ended there. But it did not. Mukhtar's family and a close group of her friends decided to take up the matter. Mukhtar is an educated woman and taught Islam to children in her village. The local cleric from the mosque came to her aid and spoke up against the crime. He joined her friends who demanded that the rapists be punished. The case became known in Pakistan and many groups supported her. As a result, her case was brought to trial in a special court and in July 2002, six of the accused were handed the death sentence. Mukhtar was awarded a compensation that she used to start a school for girls. The convicted men appealed the ruling of the special court and earlier this month, on March 3, the Lahore High Court overturned the earlier ruling. It appeared as if all was lost. Even though women's groups rallied around Mukhtar Mai and on March 8, International Women's Day, they demonstrated their support for her, Mukhtar feared the future now that the perpetrators of the crime were to be freed. Once again, she was lucky. On March 12, the Federal Shariat Court overruled the Lahore High Court and has ordered a re-trial. This has given Mukhtar some reason for hope and a greater sense of security as the men remain in jail. However, the Shariat Court will re-examine the case according to the Hudood Ordinance, which holds out very little hope for rape victims. In Pakistan, Mukhtar's story is not unique. According to women's activists, just in the first half of 2004, over 150 women were
tery (Zina) and thereby subjected to wrong and unjust persecution and great ordeal. In
this connection the lacunae in the law were greatly exploited by unscrupulous elements
to perpetrate great cruelty on women and children, particularly minor females. Various
women’s NGOs and human rights organizations repeatedly protested against the injustice
and ill effects of the enforcement of these Ordinances but the protests were in vain.
More and more women were subjected to torment because of these laws and the inci-
dents of rape increased as time went by and the jails began to be filled with women on
trial under the adultery (Zina) Ordinance. Even though the Qazf (enforcement of Hadd)
Ordinance was meant to eliminate incidents of false accusation against women, it
brought no relief to the women, because often their tormentors were powerful individu-
als and any attempt by the victim to seek redress under this law resulted in further mis-
ery for them. It was thus obvious that these Ordinances had failed in fulfilling their
stated objectives. Islam essentially is a religion that promotes justice, but when in the
name of Islam, injustice is perpetrated then it becomes necessary to examine the laws
introduced in the name of Islam to determine what went wrong. The repeal of Hudood
Ordinance is a great success towards the improvement of social status of women in Pa-
kistani society.

Islamic politics as a whole had a growing appeal for the emerging middle and lower
middle classes, particularly in urban areas (Kaushik 1993:183 Rashid 1996:65). The
lower middle class greatly benefited economically from Zia’s Islamization program.
This class got lucrative job opportunities in the oil-rich gulf countries (Kaushik
1993:183) and could – through the money from the migrant labourers – increase their
economic standing considerably and easily keep their women within the four walls of
the home. 19

It is also this section of society that has been most susceptible religiously oriented po-
litical parties, for example, the Jamaat-e-Islami, which, because of its highly organized
and highly knit structure and influence of the writings of its founder-ideologue, Mau-
lana Abu Al’Ala Maududi (1903-1979), is perhaps the most significant of all religiously
defined political parties in the country (Mumtaz 1994:23). The Jamaat-e-Islami is the
strongest Islamic movement in Pakistan (Davis 1997:282). Maulana Maududi is one of

raped on orders from tribal courts, a detestable custom called "karo kari". They have
been demanding a law to ban this, but have had little luck so far. But Mukhtar Mai’s
struggle certainly holds out an inspiring example to other women who might feel that
life was not worth living after such a horrendous experience. Mukhtar Mai’s story has
not yet ended. But the way she has fought up to now is an uplifting example for all
women, not just those who are victims of sexual crimes.

19 Starting with 1974, a constant stream of migrants flowed into the Middle East, and by
the early 1980s, nearly three million migrant workers lived in the Gulf States. In ef-
fect, at some point during the 1970s and 1980s at least one in ten Pakistani house-
holds had a (male) wage earner in the Middle East. These migrant could save up
more money in a few years than families would ordinarily have been able to accumu-
the central figures of the modern Islamist thinking in the entire Muslim world whose ideas have had profound influence on Islamic thinkers everywhere, and he has unquestionably been the primary Islamic figure in Pakistan over the last several decades (Fuller 1991:7; Davis 1997:282f; Hassan 1991a:50). His book about *Purdah* and Status of Women in Islam (1987) that has appeared in numerous reprints to date, intends to help people to “understand clearly the nature of correct relationship between man and woman in social life”. Maulana Maududi’s perception of gender relations as predominantly sexual ones and his primary concern with female sexuality and its control is typical for the Muslim understandings of sexuality. Being a supporter of strict gender segregation, Maulana Maududi strongly opposes “that the sexes should freely mix in schools and colleges, offices and factories, parks and places of entertainment, theatres and cinemas, and cafes and ballrooms as and when they please” (209).

The role of the *Jamat-e-Islami* (JI), as well as other religious political parties in politics and society should not be underestimated. The JI (and other religious political parties) have often been in a position to help tilt the balance between the two major political parties and therefore have been able to exert great pressure on the government for what they consider to be an Islamic state (Rashid 1996:75; Saeed 1994:98). Furthermore, the JI constitutes a powerful social force in Pakistan (Davis 1997:280) that has been very successful in acquiring a following among the conservative class (Rashid 1996:60; Fuller 1991:6). Through its well-organized members, it tries to impose its own moral standards on society as a whole, for example, through the harassment of what the members of JI considers as *na-mahram* “lovers” in public or through publicly forbidding and violently disturbing celebrations and parties they consider un-Islamic. But even the general public religious discourse is limited to a very conservative one in which the society that existed at the dawn of Islam in the Middle East 1400 years ago is held up as an example to model the present society on. Saeed writes about everyday religious life in Pakistan:

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20 In his writings he furthers the need of a society based on gender segregation and female seclusion. In a chapter titled *Laws of Nature*, Maulana Maududi writes:

“……man has been endowed with this (sexual) urge in a liberal, unparalleled measure, knowing no discipline whatever. Man knows no restriction of time and clime and there is no discipline that may control him sexually. Man and woman have a perpetual appeal for each other. They have been endowed with a powerful urge for sexual love, with an unlimited capacity to attract and be attracted sexually. Their physical constitution, its proportions and shape, its complexion, even its contiguity and touch, have a strange spell for the opposite sex. Their voice, their gait, their manner and appearance, each has a magnetic power. On the top of that, the world around them abounds in factors that perpetually arouse their sexual impulse and make one inclined to each other. The soft murmuring breeze, the running water, the natural hues of vegetation, the sweet smell of flowers, the chirping of birds, the dark clouds, the charms of the moon-lit night, in short, all the beauties and all the graces of nature, stimulate directly or indirectly the sexual urge between the male and female” (Maududi 1987:84)
In almost every mosque of the country there is paid imam (prayer leaders). Imams of the main mosque everywhere also acts as preachers and delivers sermons on Friday and lecture on special occasions. Those prayer leaders usually belong to lower working class with a rural background, though some come from the urban lower-middle class. They graduate from the religious studies institutions which are generally private and financially endowed and supported by religious institutions... Courses of instruction at these institutions are antiquated and are based on the syllabus created in the 18th century, which in turn is based on the literature belonging to the medieval period. .....Modern subjects and literature are completely shunned, with the result that the graduates of these institutions are out of touch with reality and modern world (Saeed 1994:98).

Therefore, it is clear that due to limited knowledge of the modern education, such religious scholars are not able to provide some definite behaviour rules not only based on actual Islamic principles but also in accordance to the modern day needs. Following lines taken from the daily press further explain the behaviour rules but give no explanation of the needs of modern social life.

Islam forbids free intermixing of men and women and commands purdah for women. A number of Ayaaat and Ahadith advise women not to exhibit their adornment and grab themselves in such a manner that the counters of their body do not provoke the sexual passions of the opposite sex and ultimately society does not treat the path of immorality. The Islamic injunction confers a dignity on fair sex and endows her with a noble place in society. Modesty is the most precious ornament of a woman and purdah gives it protection. It shields her against the lustful looks of the lewd profligate (Concept of Pardah in Islam, Nation 26.05.1995).

Such behaviour rules based on Islamic principles can be found in the daily press over and over again. They mirror the failure of the public religious discourse to provide women (and men) with behaviour codes for mixed social interaction. The public religious discourse, therefore, turns a blind eye on the reality of social life, which is determined by the increasing participation of women in the public life, particularly the labor market, into which women have been pushed out of dire economic need and where they started to work in professions in which gender segregation can no longer be maintained. It ignores this trend, which is linked to a growing interaction between na-mahram men and women, and fails to provide women (and men) with guidance for the development of behaviour patterns for this new phenomenon of mixed interaction that, especially for working women, is becoming an ever greater part of everyday life, and that both, men and women, find difficult to cope with.
Furthermore, given the various interpretations of Islam in the individual Muslim countries and communities - whether traditional or modern, liberal or conservative - it is misleading to assume a priori that the teachings of Islam and equality for women are incompatible. There are interpretations that are in tune with women’s rights. Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize (2003), Shirin Ebadi emphasized:

“The discriminatory plight of women in Islamic States has its roots in the patriarchal and male-dominated culture prevailing in these societies, not in Islam”.

Many Islamic states have signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Nevertheless, almost all Arab Islamic states have attached fundamental reservations to their signatures: the provisions of the CEDAW must not run contrary to Sharia norms (Islamic law). It is particularly interesting to note here that some Muslim women are using the scope for interpretation they see in the Sharia to reduce legal and real discrimination against women. Practicing Muslim women are thus embracing the universal issue of women’s rights as their own cause, something unique that is inextricably linked to their culture and religion. Now that this issue has been absorbed as one of their own, women’s rights, feminism and social status can no longer be defamed as something imposed from the outside, rather these issues are gradually taking hold in Islamic identities and in fact are even based on religious norms.

In Pakistan, cultural deviations are not uniform across the whole country. They vary by such factors as the socio-economic status of the family in which a woman is born and lives, the rural/urban setting, cast group, regional group, and so forth. Islam provides many more rights to women than are actually available to an average woman in Pakistan. If the country were to adopt a truly Islamic way of life, women would regain many more rights. The current situation is, however, not so simple and straightforward. Thus present-day Pakistan represents a way of life that is Islamic in some respects but not in many others. Some aspects such as prayer, fasting and purdah observance are given considerable emphasis. Religious instruction is now compulsory in school, although only a small fraction of the population is literate and less than half of all school-age children are in school. With regard to women, however, their actual status is quite different from what is ordained by religious teaching or prescribed by law.

2.3.1 Women’s status in Islamic World-a short note

According to a UN Report, the lack of involvement of women in political and economic life constitutes an essential impediment to the development of Arab states. The Arab Human Development Report first published in 2002 criticizes the fact that women are
discriminated against both as far as political participation is concerned and in the workplace. I think awareness is spreading in the Islamic world, too, that modernization is crucial if we are to master the challenges of globalization. Technical developments, improved communications and economic globalization mean that no state can wall itself in anymore. There is strong criticism of those who work for rights and status of women by conservative Islamists and they are accused of imitating Western feminism. However, those struggling for women’s rights and status in third world countries in general and, in the Islamic countries in particular have to struggle against much greater odds. These odds remain insurmountable even if these women work within the framework of Islam. Many Muslim countries like Kuwait even refuse to give its women right to vote. The Saudi Government does not allow its women to drive even when accompanied by their husbands.

Male domination is not at all Islamic, though it is justified in its name. Men use some selective verses from the Qur’an, ignore their social context and use them to perpetuate their domination. They conveniently ignore the verses empowering women or laying down equality of both the sexes. In fact in verses like 2:219 and 2:228 there is clear statement about equality of both the sexes and yet they are totally ignored and instead they quote verses like 4:34 to establish their domination. Saudi law not allowing women to venture out alone is not Qur’anic but based on a hadith which prohibits women going out alone. Even if the hadith is authentic, as there are thousands of ahadith which are not authentic due to the lack of proper reference, one totally ignores the social conditions then and now. It is interesting to note that while the Saudi Government does not allow women to drive cars the Iranian Government has started exclusive taxi service to be run by women. 21

Thus Iranian women can not only drive private cars but can also be a taxi driver. Similarly while the Kuwait Government refuses its women to vote other Muslim countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and other countries allow them to vote even some Muslim countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh had women prime ministers. How does one explain these contradictory practices? Are their different Islams or there are differing attitudes towards women? Such gross contradictions are really difficult to gloss over in the name of Islam. It all depend either on social conditions of that country or on political exigencies as explained in the earlier part.

It is a fact that Muslim women enjoy differing degree of rights in different Islamic countries. While in Turkey Mustafa Kemal Pasha (1881-1938) introduced secular Swiss code thus according equal rights to both men and women on one hand, and, the total restrictions in Saudi Arabia on the other hand. In other Muslim countries like Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan etc. there is comparatively greater latitude of freedom for women. It is because the rulers in these countries are more liberal towards women.

21 The idea of seclusion also has increased the percentage of women in other jobs, such as taxi driver. Recently twelve taxi agencies have been set up in the holy city of Mashhad; staffed and managed entirely by women, they employ 200 female taxi drivers who own their cars and are provided with cell phones (Zaneh Rouz 2001).
Thus it is not Islam, which comes in the way but man’s attitude which determine the laws of Muslim countries regarding women. But these men in various Muslim countries invoke name of Islam to stem the tide of women’s movement for better rights. For example, in Pakistan when Fatima Jinnah tried to contest for the office of President (in early sixties against Ayub Khan), the latter wangled a fatwa from the conservative ulama that a woman cannot become head of the state. All these political games are unfortunately played in the name of Islam rather than giving women rights due to them in a modern democratic society and which are not contrary to the teachings of the Qur’an. Most of the Muslim women in Islamic countries are agitating for their Islamic rights and status. The Taliban regime was the worst offenders in this respect. They not only followed the rigid Saudi laws but put more restriction than the Saudis do. The Taliban who were essentially following tribal norms justified all that in the name of Islam. They did not even allow women to go out for schools and madrasas totally ignoring the famous hadith of the Prophet of Islam that seeking knowledge is obligatory both for Muslim men and Muslim women. The Prophet used the word ilm which includes both religious as well as secular knowledge and as pointed out by some learned ulama that right to education is a religious duty spelled out in the Qur’an for men and women alike (Wadud 1999).

There is hardly any Muslim country, which has democratic governance. Either there is monarchy or military dictatorship or controlled democracy. However, modernization is also going on rapidly and it is difficult for the rulers in Muslim countries to resist spread of modern education among women. More modern education among women and society becomes increasingly democratized, awareness for rights grows among them and they demand their rights and actual status either on Islamic or secular grounds.

### 2.4 Women’s public life and problems

Pakistan lags far behind with regard to existing special spaces for women in the public as compared to other countries of the Islamic world. The women’s sections in the mosques are public spaces for women that are not only meeting places; they also form the central, and herewith socially accepted, part of public life. However, in Pakistan women

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22 The ulama at that time quoted a hadith from the Holy Prophet that if a woman becomes head of a nation that nation will face disaster. However, the supporters of Fatima Jinnah which included head of Jamaat-e-Islami, Maulana Maududi (see previous pages for the role of JI in Pakistani politics) approved of her contesting the President’s election. They also managed to obtain a fatwa to this effect from a prominent alim who justified on grounds that in democracy the head of a state does not have absolute powers but depends on votes of members of parliament whose majority is of men.

stan women do not have access (or very limited access in big cities like Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad) to mosques.

The participation of women in public life in Saudi Arabia clearly shows that a strict enforcement of gender segregation should not be confused with the exclusion of women from public life. Heine and Heine (1993:206f) point out the existence of so-called women’s markets in KSA and some other Gulf countries, in which the customers as well as the traders are all women. The opening of banks, libraries, shopping centres, fitness centres and hospitals only for women, and setting up of separate office hours at some local government offices and the governor for female visitors during the last years have led to the development of a dual structure of public institutions (Vagt 1992:43). Since men and women are not allowed to work together in one office and mixing up of men and women are strictly prohibited, all these segregated spaces for women necessarily have female staff only.\(^{23}\) In Pakistan such spaces for women in the market and for the use of public institutions do not exist. During recent years, however, and concomitant with the increasing presence of women in public life, lots of new spaces for women in public spheres have been created. The provision of spaces for women in the public for economic profit has definitely opened new avenues for women during recent years. It is of course even more problematic to establish women’s spaces in fields where no economic, or other, benefit can be obtained or where even a financial loss might be involved. Women face such problems, for example, in the public transportation system. The busses in the local and long distance traffic are run privately and only the different routes and fares are laid down by the government. Merely two seats in the whole bus, the ones next to the driver, are reserved for women. Even this space for women is not always acknowledged, neither by the male passengers nor by the drivers and conductors. It is a common phenomenon that during the rush hours men just occupy the front seats in order to cut short their waiting period. Women suffer most from the inadequate transport system. No attempts have been made by the department or the transporters, to make any extra provision for women to accommodate their needs. No attention has been paid to the physical and mental harassment of women who ride these means of transport. The same old system prevails where women have to run for a seat in the bus or van, as do the men and in the rush often get pushed and bumped and more often they do not get a seat and are left standing at the bus stop waiting for the next bus or van. The transporters are not sympathetic to women waiting for the bus or van. For them a passenger is a passenger and in the attempt to earn more, they would much rather have three men than two women sit in the front seat of a van, which is primarily designated for women. Women’s spaces are not respected as an intrinsic part of public life – be it for economic or other reasons – and that therefore women’s spaces in the public always have to be defended against male monopolization.

\(^{23}\) On the gendered nature of the labor market in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world see also Minai (1991:221-240).
In Pakistan, despite the gendered allocation of space in everyday life, men’s and women’s spaces do not exist side by side as clearly defined units that are fenced off from each other. There are many interfaces between men’s and women’s spaces, and it is a normal occurrence that women enter male space and vice versa. Furthermore, where the sharing of space between na-mahram men and women is unavoidable the strong internalization of the concept of purdah is noticeable, for example, in the avoidance of eye contact with men through looking towards the ground or behind them or in lowering the voice when women talk to men or when there are men nearby in order to maintain social distance (Shaheed 1990:25). A woman in the public sphere moves quickly and with determination, looking neither right nor left. She makes sure that there is always enough space between her and men, not only when men pass by in the streets but also when she stands at crowded places like bus stops, or in shops. When she has to wait or take a seat at places with no segregated areas for women, like in public institutions, she will try to find a free corner of the room or a bench that is not yet occupied by men. Behaviour patterns like standing or strolling around in public, looking a man straight in the eyes, or talking to him, have to be avoided at all costs because they are interpreted as slatternly and inviting behaviour and might result in teasing or harassment.

With the advancement of science and technology and industrial revolution, women explored new ways of employment and involved themselves in non-traditional jobs which on one hand resulted in their economic independence and improved social status but on the other hand their exploitation increased and such working women have to face a number of problems in the family, in society and at work place. Women who live in urban areas are significantly less likely to participate in the informal and contract sectors than women who live in rural areas. Furthermore, women who live far from main roads are less likely to participate in the formal sector than in the other two sectors. Therefore, transportation cost in formal-sector employment affect rural women significantly. It is again important to note that if household head runs a farm or business, the probability of participation of the women in the informal and contract sectors than women who live in rural areas. Furthermore, women who live far from main roads are less likely to participate in the formal sector than in the other two sectors. Therefore, transportation cost in formal-sector employment affect rural women significantly. It is again important to note that if household head runs a farm or business, the probability of participation of the women in the formal and contract sectors but not in the informal sector. So, women’s labour-participation behaviour varies across formal, informal and with other relevant sectors.

Women have specific problems which must be catered for. Not just the question of discrimination in the workplace, lower rates of pay on grounds of sex, lack of rights, etc., but also questions related to maternity, pregnancy, etc. The role of women as childbearers raises the need for special rights to protect pregnant women and mothers. The introduction of only formal equality does not solve the fundamental problem of women. Pulling women into the workforce without protection or regulation had dire consequences for family life and the health of women, who also retained responsibility for bearing children and the performance of the majority of domestic tasks within the home.

Education is the key to acceptable and respectable jobs and careers. Lower middle class families in Pakistan would find it degrading to let their women take up jobs as domestic servants or to work on the factory floor i.e. jobs for which education is not a prerequisite. But families who expect their women to take up jobs as teachers or office
clerks (or better) tend therefore to put a higher value on women’s education than was the case before - though financing the education of sons’ still takes precedence.

The life of lower middle class women in salaried employment is subject to rather different kinds of pressures. Her working day starts early, for she must feed her husband and children and send them off to school before she herself rushes off to work. In the case of a woman who is the first to be picked up or the last to be dropped home this can add an hour, or even two, to the long day spent at work. She has to finish many chores like preparing dinner for the family, taking care of children, washing etc. after a long day of work. Very few women happen to have particularly enlightened and helpful relatives (e.g. a mother-in-law) or a co-operative husband who is willing to take over some of the chores.

Ennis (1975) talking about “Women’s Fight Back” remarked that a working woman gets only half the average man’s wage. The married women at a hard day at work return home only to start another job, housework. She further commented that the sheer physical labor involved in a woman’s life was immense. She always has a hard time but if a woman is unlucky enough to be divorced or widow, our society makes her life absolutely a hell. Apart from this, the social stigma attached to a wife without a husband doing some struggle to make both ends meet, is constantly embarrassed and humiliated by the employers.

Rizwan and Sabir (1976) in an article “Attitude towards Employment of Women in Urban Perspective” concluded that females through their service could help their country’s progress. Illiterate male and female respondents (69 and 51 percent) respectively, maintained that the relationship at home was affected by the women employment. It was also observed that employed women neglect their children. The study pointed out that socio-psychological bias of male dominance was reflected in the type of attitude they had for the education and employment of women.

Praveen (1984) after investigating the “Problems of Working Women in Faisalabad City” affirmed that the working women were generally dissatisfied with their professions and their conditions of work. They were unhappy because of the lack of working facilities and unfavorable attitude of the society members. Major problems faced by working women were observed i.e. conveyance, family, official, accommodation, social and health problems.

Khalid (1990) researched about “The Problems of Working Women” and observed that the status of women as second-class citizens was reinforced by the narrow vocational opportunities available to them. They were discouraged from competing with men by their upbringing and almost overt discrimination they had to contend within the job market. More over different problems such as attitude of society members, prejudices and unrecognization, which the working women encountered with regard to their status and role in the economic life adversely, affected the utilization of their talent and work capabilities.

On the basis of reviews given above it can be concluded that social prejudices with the prevalent value system are against the woman’s participation in job sector. As the coun-
try develops and people become more enlightened positive change in the attitude of society is expected. Women workers are generally dissatisfied with their professions and their conditions of work. They are unhappy because of the lack of facilities and lack of cooperation. As a matter of fact a contented worker produces more. For full satisfaction it is necessary that the person should be synchronized with his job, society, standard of living and also with social requirements of the society.

2.5 Social status of working women

Although certain advances have been won in the struggle for the improvement of women’s status in the world, the fundamental discrimination and oppression of women remains deeply ingrained in societies. In the advanced capitalist countries over the past half century, the position of women has noticeably improved. At least in a formal sense, they have the same legal rights as men. They have the same access to education and, to some extent, have improved their access to work. However, in the ex-colonial world which contains two-thirds of the human race, this is not true. All over Asia, the birth of a girl is regarded as a misfortune in agrarian communities.

Regarding the status and rights of women, government policies play a tiny role or none at all in the informal and rural sectors. Thus, traditional gender discrimination can affect both gender-occupational-attainment and wage-determination patterns. This cultural influence normally affects employers and employees, including females. Economic theory suggests that competition will eventually drive from the market employers who discriminate against female employees because they will have to pay higher labour costs than their non-discriminating counterparts. Hence, in a competitive market, gender discrimination is unsustainable (Krueger, 1963; Madden, 1975; Gordon and Morton, 1974; and Cardwell and Rosenzweig, 1980). However, when both employers and employees share the same discriminatory attitude toward female employees, employers who do not discriminate will be unable to benefit from cheaper female labour.

Pakistan is an Islamic state where people of different sects are living together. Therefore, the culture of the whole country is not similar. Almost 70% of Pakistan’s population lives in the rural areas. Still there exist rural areas where there is lack of basic facilities like water supply, electricity, proper schools and colleges for basic education. The only purpose of people living in these areas is to earn basic livelihood for which men and women work together. People there still don’t realize the importance of education for women. Religious education considered being enough for them. That’s why most of the women in these areas are illiterate and they work with the males in fields. Social status of these women compared to men is negligible. In very remote areas of NWFP and Balochistan, still women are treated as slaves. They have no decision making power. Even they cannot say a single word against the social setup in which they live. All the family matters are decided and settled by men, while women are considered to be ignorant and their suggestions have no worth. The women with some basic education have relatively higher social status compared with other women. These women mostly
earn their livelihood by teaching in local schools and they play a bit role in decision making.

The status of women in Pakistan is not homogenous because of the interconnection of gender with other forms of exclusion in the society. There is considerable diversity in the status of women across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide due to uneven socio-economic development and the impact of tribal, feudal, and capitalist social formations on women’s lives. Pakistani women lack social value and status because of negation of their roles as producers and providers in all social aspects. The preference for sons due to their productive role dictates the allocation of household resources in their favor. Male members of the family are given better education and are equipped with skills to compete for resources in the public arena, while female members are imparted domestic skills to be good mothers and wives. Lack of skills, limited opportunities in the job market and social and cultural restrictions limit women’s chance to compete for resources in the public arena. This situation has led to the social and economic dependence of women that becomes the basis for male power over women in all social relationships. In Pakistan, unequal social status and power of men and women are the main enabling factors of men to control their labour which defines women’s status as subordinate, dependent and inferior in the labour market.

Sultana (1965) talking about the “Role, Status and Financial Independence of Women in the Family” claimed that women status increased with educational status and financial independence. Zaidi (1971) while looking into the “Changing Role and Status of Working Women in Pakistan” observed that there were deep-rooted prejudices against women taking up paid jobs in most of the traditional or conventional families. A woman taking a job was not only disapproved but also strongly discouraged. Thus it was held that the socially prevalent attitude was that a father or a husband felt undignified to live on the earnings of his daughter or wife. This attitude has been responsible for discouraging many otherwise qualified women from joining various vocations.

The situation in those rural areas that are quite near to big cities is changing, as there are many schools, colleges, health centers and vocational centers for women. In general education of women as well as their employment is not considered as taboo. These women have some weightage of their suggestions. People in such areas are now realizing the importance of education as well as work of women. However, women of urban areas have relatively higher social status compared with the women of rural areas. While the presence of schools, colleges, universities, separate banks and post office for women made the difference. Because of high literacy rate in urban areas people have well understood about the education and job of women. Women are encouraged to study and to look for their future perspectives. Such women have their own choice to work after having a certain qualification or to stay at home and to look after their children.

As discussed earlier (part 2.3), one of the objectives of the NCSW is the emancipation of women, equalization of opportunities and socio economic conditions amongst women and men, and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The functions include review of laws, policies and other measures taken by the Government
for women’s development, monitoring institutional mechanisms for the implementation of these, undertaking research, an interaction with civil society and general public. If such objectives of the NCSW would be achieved, the status of Pakistani women would certainly improve further.


Furthermore, the government of Pakistan in 2001 ratified ILO convention 100 aimed at equal remuneration for men and women. It requires the ratifying member’s states like Pakistan to ensure wages for men and women for work of equal value through the introduction of job evaluation or job appraisal scheme.

According to Mr. Omar Khan, Minister of Labour and Manpower and overseas Pakistanis:

...“ratification of these conventions was a commitment of government made to improve the workplace environment and to improve their living standards by providing maximum facilities to them.” (The News: 2001).

He claimed that the government was taking concrete steps for the equal remuneration of men and women in the country and hoped that the ratification would go a long way in promoting gender equality in the country.

Increasing numbers of women are entering the labour force in Pakistan, yet the quality of their jobs is often below the “threshold of decency”. This often entails long hours of work in addition to women’s unpaid household duties, low pay, job insecurity, unhealthy and dangerous conditions, sexual harassment and a lack of social protection, representation and a say in decision-making. Additionally, women are disproportionately concentrated in the informal economy and outside International Labour Standards and social protection systems. Much of women’s work in global production chains and forms of labour such as domestic work, migrant labour and home work where women predominate is excluded from the scope of social protection and fair compensation.

Despite the ratification of the ILO Convention on equal remuneration for work of equal value (No. 100), there is little progress in closing the gender pay gap. Such poor conditions for women also threaten those of men affecting the livelihoods of families.

The ILO Decent Work Agenda is an important vehicle for the practical implementation of Section F on “Women and the Economy” of the Beijing Platform for Action. Achieving decent work means creating jobs with rights and social protection through meaning-
ful social dialogue between governments and actors in the business and labour communities and in civil society. The Beijing Platform for Action provides a comprehensive set of measures across all sectors to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. Its full implementation is therefore a prerequisite for reaching the targets set out under the Millennium Development Goals. Promoting women’s access to income and decent work is a central strategy for working out of the grinding poverty faced today by millions of families in Pakistan. Advancing gender equality at work can only be achieved through non-discrimination in employment and occupation, equal remuneration for work of equal value, maternity protection and equal sharing by men and women of family responsibilities.

2.6 Status of Pakistani women and the role of media

Although the media in Pakistan is becoming supportive towards women in their struggle against discrimination and cases of violence against women are reported more frequently, the existing and at times growing shades of bias and insensitivity need to be examined. The role of media in Pakistan has been lethargic in terms of improving the status of women. Pakistan television (PTV) plays have a crosscutting viewership, especially among women. However, plays mostly revolve around formula-based story lines, which cast women in either submissive roles or at the other extreme as westernized glamour girls.

In examining gender patterns in the Pakistani media, one needs to analyse the participation and position of women in the media, and the impact of those positions, on women’s development. In the 57-year history of Pakistan, no woman has ever been editor of an Urdu newspaper and only one woman (Dr. Maleeha Lodhi - The Muslim) has been editor of any English daily. The official wire service APP has never had a woman Director General. The Herald was the only English political monthly that had a woman editor as well as a predominantly female staff. In Urdu and regional language press (that captures more than 80% of the newspaper market), there are very few women workers. The state-controlled Pakistan Television Corporation has had one woman reaching the top position of Managing Director and another woman that of Director Programmes. But state-owned Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation has never had a woman as Director General. The many, new private television and radio channels have no doubt employed many young women as reporters and DJs, but this is where it all stops (T. Ahmar: 2004).

It is felt that reporting on violence against women that includes domestic and institutional atrocities needs much improvement. The women in the cases of rape are the worst victims. A lot of newspapers report with a bias against these women and reinforce the existing non-supportive attitude of the society towards women. No wonder then that the official reaction to rape continues to be that of accusation towards women. As for television coverage of rape and other forms of violence against women, it is noted with much resentment that many a times these victims of violent acts are put through double humiliation with extensive and most of the times unnecessary coverage. This is most
evident in cases where high government officials are shown visiting the place of crime and sympathizing with the victims and the families.

There is a marked increase in women’s magazines focusing heavily on the domestic side of women and the intellectual qualities of women are mentioned nowhere. Their abilities as equal partners in developments are lost between cooking oils and fairness creams. The lower to middle and upper class women are being brainwashed to either perform their reproductive duties rather than productive ones or put their physical beauty on top priority. Some of these magazines and digests are also supporting the reactionary views that if women remain within the confines of their homes and stay out of public life, so many of our social ills would be overcome. The same trend can be witnessed in the ever increasing numbers of teleplays that focus on women being the focal point of domestic peace and harmony.

The media in Pakistan has no problems while exposing physical and sexual features of women but is reluctant to bring forward issues of HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment, sex and flesh trade, trafficking on the pretext of obscenity. This is regardless the fact that each one of these issues is directly linked with poverty, women’s inferior position in the society and denial of basic human rights.

Pakistani media, specially the Urdu and regional language press, indulges in a particular kind of gender-insensitive behavior whereby the language used is not only abusive and sexist, but also extremely judgmental, lacking any investigative or analytical value. While the print media accuses the woman of all sins: ‘Kanwari Maan ne Gunahoon ka bojh kooray key dher par phaink diya’ (virgin mother throws her burden of sins on a garbage dump), saath bachoon ki ma aashna key sath bagh gayi (mother of seven elopes with lover), many teleplays are using biased language like: ‘aurat to hoti hi Naqasul Aqal hey, (a woman is intellectually inferior), baiti ka bojh jatni jaldi uttar jayey uttna hi acha hey (the burden of a daughter needs to be taken off as quickly as possible) etc. These remarks and statements continue to victimize women and reinforce already existing negative images.

In all these years, Pakistan has not been able to come up with a consistent media policy. It varies from mild liberalism to rigid orthodoxy. Ironically, each change has had an impact on women and their development. We have witnessed women getting a greater exposure in some regimes than others. Although the state-policies are only applicable on the electronic media, the print media has also been greatly impacted by the shifts and changes in the way women are projected. The increasing shades of violence and glamour on the electronic media can be seen spilling over into the print media.

The status of women in Pakistan can only improve through proper commitment of home media (TV, Radio Newspapers and Films) that has the power to mould public opinion where the government’s support has to be unconditional as well as by an evolutionary process through which the mothers by being independent of religion, caste or creed can educate their children from the very beginning that both the genders are important and ‘honorable’ and have a key role to play in the society. However, it is only possible when women are educated and supported by the government as equal.
3 Political Cleavages in Pakistani Society

Since an understanding of the women’s life and gender relations in Pakistan is a pre-condition for analyzing the women’s employment and their status in the society, a detailed overview in this connection is given in the previous chapter (chapter two). However, as already discussed, Pakistani society is a traditional feudal society and since its creation in 1947, it never had a stable political set up and cleavages in political system directly or indirectly effect the work as well as the status of Pakistani women. Therefore, present chapter (chapter three) concentrates on the political cleavages which effect the society at large and reasons of these cleavages.

It has been very difficult for Pakistan’s political system to become adapted to the requirements of ethnic bias. Since the beginning, Pakistan has been an Islamic state (Ahmed 1993), but its political system is not sufficiently well adapted to linguistic, regional, and other cleavages within the Muslim majority. All major ethnic groups are politically mobilized in Pakistan, which has increased the frequency of conflicts. Many ethnic conflicts since independence reflect the failure of the country’s political system to satisfy the aspirations of ethnic groups.

Although attempts were made to regulate ethnic relations through democratic institutions (ethnic provinces and political parties), but democratic institutions failed several times, and ethnic relations have degenerated into violent clashes and separatist movements. Rule of law is more of a slogan than a reality. Political inclusion is undermined by ethno-linguistic cleavages which are reinforced by differential access to power, but the most marked inclusion problem is due to widespread poverty, which marginalizes the bulk of the population from active participation in national politics. This is augmented by severe patterns of discrimination against women that marginalize their participation in the political process.

A closer look into the electoral processes and political systems prevalent in South Asia would reveal some major cleavages affecting the character of political formations, participations of the people, inclusion of women, minorities, rural and urban poor, the peripheral regions and sub-national groups into the mainstream. Genuine women representation and the participation of under-privileged, religious and ethnic minorities remain

24 The Pashtuns have occasionally rebelled and demanded Pashtunistan, which would include Pashtun areas of Afghanistan, too. Ethnic conflicts in Baluchistan have been more violent than in the NWFP. The Balouch tribes have rebelled against the Pakistani government since 1947. They have demanded greater regional autonomy, or independence. The most serious ethnic conflict has occured in Sindh, where the two major ethnic groups (Sindhis and Muhajirs) struggle for hegemony and territories. The Sindhis do not want to lose the control of their own region to Muhajirs and oppose them (Singh 1986; Ahmed 1993; Europe 2003: 3194-3206; Freedom House 2003: 423-428).
awfully low in the electoral and representative systems. The constitution of Pakistan placed no restriction on women’s participation in politics; nevertheless, their presence in the political parties as well as in the political structure at the local, provisional and national levels remains insignificant due to cultural and structural barriers.

Pakistan’s history shows that periods of representative rule have strengthened democratic forces against their religious counterparts while military-dominated governments have time and again entered into alliances of appropriateness with Islamic extremists (S. Ahmed and J. Norris). Sectarian killings in Pakistan are the most unfortunate part of the country’s 57 years of history.\(^{25}\)

Furthermore, one could notice two trends in the establishment’s dealings with religious parties; religious parties were used for personal political goals and political parties of all kinds brokered deals with religious parties as part of their electoral politics.\(^ {26}\) Such manipulation is explained by Paul Brass as the ‘instrumentalist’ approach. According to his theory, political elite tends to use traditional culture and religious sentiments for political gains (Brass 1979).

In addition, one of the painful realities of life in Pakistan is that since its creation, the state could not get rid of the predominant feudal system. Not only that the feudal class was a significant stakeholder in politics, it had also helped proliferating feudal attitudes into the greater social fabric of the society. The political instability, armed forces’ manipulation of the political system, and feudal character of politics caused endless crises. The growing political cleavages have led to further fragmentation of the political system and society increasing frustration of the masses. Resultantly, the common man started to consider options that were not regarded as before in respect to political stability.

However, there is also an economic dimension to sectarian violence in Pakistan because the unemployed and under-privileged segments of society became an easy community of those elements whose agenda required creating instability in the country. Had eco-

\(^{25}\) Carnage in a mosque or a religious school, whether belonging to Sunni or Shias, is not a recent phenomenon in Pakistan. In the last ten years, thousands of people have been killed in Karachi, Quetta, Jhang and other cities of Sindh and Punjab showing the outside world the critical nature of sectarian divide and violence. The most unfortunate aspect of sectarian killings in Pakistan is the marked degree of success achieved by those elements that tend to prove their ability in carrying out such attacks despite the much claimed tight security measures. If mosques and various religious places are not safe from such violent acts, it means an ordinary citizen of Pakistan is highly vulnerable to periodic acts of violence.

\(^{26}\) The coalition between Zia and the religious parties was of greater benefit for the dictator who had manipulated them to get maximum political and strategic mileage for himself. Despite Zia’s religious inclinations he could not fulfill the expectations of these parties in return because he was unwilling to transfer power to them or implement their agenda (S. Mehmood 1995).
nomic and social contradictions in Pakistani society not been so serious, the sectarian violence wouldn’t have taken a serious turn. Although one cannot debate a rise in religious intolerance and xenophobia, it is vital to understand the basic dynamics of the negative developments in the country. It can not be excluded that extremism was caused by state policies and interference of the establishment in the political system. Though poverty is a major underlying element for violence, extremism and political cleavages in the society, alleviating poverty alone might not be the only recipe for solving the issue.
4 Theoretical Constructs of Women’s Status and Work

Theoretical and empirical literature supports the view that women’s status is multidimensional in nature because a woman’s status comprises multiple characteristics of the woman, and her relationship with others. It is impossible to capture the influence and understand women’s status through a single measure. Dimensions including but not limited to freedom of movement access to financial and non-financial resources, decision-making autonomy and gender attitude, freedom from fear and coercion and equality in her relationship with her partner are arguably important. (Federici; Mason; Sogner: 1993) Empirical studies of women’s status in South Asia support the multidimensionality and little correlation with each other (Blak: 1994; Jejeebhoy: Kazi; Sathar: 1996). Moreover, concurrently examining multi-dimensions of women’s status informs us about the pathways through which women’s status operates on demographic outcomes (Mason: 1993/1998).

Is male dominance universal? Have men exercised disproportionate power over women in all known societies to date? The thesis of universal male dominance, whether upheld by feminists or by anti-feminists, is supported by a substantial body of scholarship, much of which is anthropological. Whatever term is used-male dominance, male supremacy or patriarchy - it stands for a far-reaching social subordination of women. There are three main theses in explaining women’s oppression: those that attribute it to biology, to culture and to the economic system. However, the oldest and most obvious explanation for women’s oppression is the biological differences between men and women. Women have been made dependent upon their men-folk through their biological vulnerability associated with menstruation, the menopause and other female ills such as constant painful childbirth, wet-nursing and the care of the infants.

Simone de Beauvoir is one of the feminist writers, expresses her thoughts in her book “The Second Sex” (1989), that physiological, psychological, or economic forces inevitably determine a woman’s destiny and she feels that in all spheres of the patriarchy, women are subordinate to men. Hence she discusses first of all the light in which woman is viewed by biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism. She argues that patriarchy considers men as a complete human being and women as an incomplete and dependent being. She analyses women’s subordination in society and draws detailed account of women’s past and contemporary situation upon French life and customs.

De Beauvoir looks at the way basic concepts are created, the norm in human culture to date is for one category to dominate another and as human cultures remain stuck in the false rhythm of primacy, supremacy, it is the man who would like to dominate woman. Describing the fundamental dishonesty of history, she says that in every encounter between man and woman, the claims of the ‘other’ have been present - and they have had to be denied almost moment by moment down the centuries, the ‘reciprocity’ is always already there - but only as a shadow, a threat and a loss.
She says that biology has been the great excuse for ignoring the sexual freedom of women and the oppression of women follows from this ‘bad faith’; there is clear distinction between ‘reproduction’ and ‘sexual ‘differentiation’ (De Beauvoir: 1989:39). She argues that gender distinctions are not made by babies, but by society-hitherto, under the control of men. According her viewpoint, both men and women were born as human beings but due to her ‘reproductive’ ability, woman required to bear the burdens of childbirth and other female ills which reduced her capacity for hard work and made her fully dependent upon men for protection and food (Ibid. 62).

De Beauvoir says that man’s case was radically different. He supported society through creative projects. He did not limit himself to bringing home the fish he caught in the sea but he set up goals and opened up his future by his challenging activities. Man was able to prove his superiority through his risky activities not by sex (Ibid. 63). In case of women, De Beauvoir says that a woman is defined by the fact of giving birth which is not a creative experience from the inside, not in the prevailing forms of society. Caring of children cannot be confused with self-expression or creative fulfilment. Giving birth is all about being weighed down while masculine work is all about rising above. The female predicament is to be dragged back into the animal realm by the biology of birth while male experience is of leaving that realm behind on the way to a new and self-fashioned future, supported by the complexity of woman herself.

De Beauvoir says that it is man who opens up the future to which woman also reaches out (Ibid. 65). Women have never set up female values in opposition to male values and do not want to define their exploitation as human species. Furthermore, women carry and give birth to the child because men gift the fertility power to them; therefore, men are donor and women are the receiver. De Beauvoir says that for women creativity is the only struggle to make a new reality, one that will last until the next surge forwards into another future (Ibid. 473).

According to De Beauvoir woman herself recognizes that the world is masculine on the whole, fashioned, ruled and still dominated by men and women have no history of their own, no unity between their activities and interests (Ibid. 598). Though, men are the ‘origin’ and women are the ‘other’, the bond that a unit woman is their oppression which is not comparable to the other. In order to achieve their equal rights with men, women have to break their defeat in the society and believe that they are also similar with and complete like men.

Women and girls in Pakistan confront astounding levels of violence and gender inequality in their life cycle. Their exploitation starts from the family as second sex and goes till labour market as less paid labour force. A comparison of the Pakistani society and the status of women, working and non-working, with some of the arguments by De Beauvoir, as discussed above would reveal the relevancy of the patriarchal society like in Pakistan to these arguments. Women in Pakistani society play the role of reproductive and productive being.
In Pakistan male play a major role in productive sphere while female role is confined mostly within the reproductive sphere. Such a division of labour results in overall control of women’s destiny by their males which leads to an asymmetric evaluation of male and female work. The economic value of women’s activities in the reproductive sphere and unpaid domestic work is not recognized as productive. Since men are responsible for the economic needs of their women and children, women are pushed to remain in reproductive sphere depending absolutely upon the whim of their men which in turn results in their dependent status.

Pakistani women also play their part in formal and informal income through their productive and reproductive activities and contribute to their family’s income which results in their respect and status in their families. However, despite of their economic independence, they still have more respect for the male dominance and superiority. This sort of mental development is on the one hand due to the religious, cultural and moral norms but on the other hand, due to a pre-assumed fear, coming through their development, which never allows them to claim their place like men as if they would demand, their social life and family set up would be ruined. In the rural areas of Pakistan, women’s subordinate position is more pronounced where the majority of women work in fields to support their family’s income which is again due to the cultural and religious norms. The situation in urban areas where professional women are involved in income generating activities is relatively promising where to some extent women’s productive role is recognized by the family. Therefore, women’s involvement in income activities could be considered as an important variable for the enhancement of their status and position in the family.

Another explanation of male dominance emphasises its economic causes and its exponents are generally Marxist. This explanation is more materialistic than the explanation centring on biological differences between the sexes. According to this explanation, economic dependency is the main factor of women’s subordinate position in the family and in the society and only economic independency i.e. the involvement of women in the capitalist production and reproduction system, could improve their status. The ideas of Marx and Friedrich Engels on the "woman question" were published in Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, which provides the first and still unrivalled theoretical framework for understanding women’s oppression in capitalist society.

Engels located women’s oppression firmly in the real, material conditions of society, and not in "human nature" or the ideas in people’s heads. According to Engels women’s oppression was a product of class society and the development of private property. In pre-class societies, the absence of a surplus and the need to survive imposed certain egalitarianism. However, once ownership and inheritance of property became an issue, the "mother right" was overthrown and men took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of his children (Engels, 1972: 66).
Engels welcomes the participation of women in the workforce alongside men and insists that they should be organised as an integral part of the workers’ movement. Only then could women fight alongside men on an equal basis and achieve their own emancipation. He shows that women and men have their own sphere of work and have equal rights in participation of political and economical decisions and solutions (Ibid. 149). According to him, it was necessary to raise the monogamous family to identify the children’s father or paternity in order to solve property / wealth problems. His writings link between reproduction and relations of production and influenced other feminists to defy women’s subordination and oppression in society.

However, still a question arises that how far and in which ways women’s domestic labour is necessary in capitalism? One aspect of this question concerns women’s contribution as housewives to production. Engels depicts domestic labour under capitalism as unproductive, in the strict sense that it does not produce commodities for exchange and so does not generate surplus value for the capitalist. It is clear now that under capitalism, women’s status is not changed though they enter into productive work. Their exploitation still exists in the family as well as in the capitalist labour market.

Harry Braverman in his book ‘Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century’ (1974) writes that the labour process has become the responsibility of the capitalist (Braverman 1974: 57). The worker suffers the progressive alienation of the process of production, while the capitalist gets to decide what to do with it. That’s the basis for the development of a profession called ‘management’ and the progressive refinement of the division of labour, both of which determine what the firm does with the workers’ labour power. And, of course, they do what is most efficient for the production of capital, while the worker fights holding actions on wages and conditions of work. According to him, the more work is centralised, the more items are mass-produced, and the more science and technology get built into the machines and procedures, the more interchangeable workers become and the less control they have (Ibid. 227).

Due to the scientific-technological revolution based on the systematic use of science for the more rapid transformation of labour power into capital, a new occupational distribution of the employed population, creation of mass occupations and change of working class results. Labour required for the new mass occupations provided from the female portion of the population and as they are employed in low pay scales, monopoly capital considers them as supplementary labour force. Braverman largely explains why women are such an ideal reserve of labour for the new mass occupations and help keep wages in them low. This is related to what he sees as the two apparently opposing forms taken by the increased relative surplus population created by monopoly capital. This is how capital incorporates the increasing portion of human work which is one of the fundamentals of capitalists’ society. Braverman says that the structure and mode of functioning of capitalism reproduces the present process of labour a thousand fold more rapidly, more massively and more widely (Ibid. 38, 254).
Women’s cheap, flexible and disposable labour power, their situation both when employed and unemployed, stems fundamentally from their actual and assumed role in the family. Furthermore, their lower educational attainments, compared with men, reflect the degree to which their tasks are the most fragmented and deskillied. Braverman says that with the rapid urbanization of the society and acceleration of the pace of economic and social life, the need for other government-provided services has increased. Foremost among these services is education, which has assumed a much enlarged role in the era of monopoly capitalism (Ibid. 287).

The impact of industrialization and scientific-technological development in Pakistan has opened new ways for working class, especially for women. It has created non-traditional occupations and job facilities. Culture in its turn is significantly shaped by economic forces and majority of women, striving for new horizons, took this opportunity to adopt professional and non-traditional work in order to achieve their economic independence which could be explained from the Braverman’s theory as discussed above.

It seems unlikely that the biological differences between the sexes were the root cause and to a lesser extent continue to underpin male dominance. Women’s greater physical vulnerability enabled men to dominate them; their reproductive role gave men a motive for doing so. Even now it is women’s reproductive role that enables men to keep them subordinate. However, it could also be that the emergence of an economic surplus encouraged man’s more systematic domination not only of other men but of women. In the context of an already male dominated society like Pakistan, the industrial revolution depressed women’s status still further as they were tethered to a domestic sphere whose social values steadily declined.

Foregoing discussion reveals the status of women in the family and in the society but still does not give detailed information and comparison about the impact of social, cultural and religious norms and values on the social status of urban and rural working women as well as the impact of global economic changes resulting in non-traditional working class in Pakistan. Therefore, a comprehensive data about the social status of rural and urban working women and their comparison with respect to Pakistani society is crucial.
5 Pakistani Women in the Labour Market

The following chapter aims to analyze the urban and rural market in Pakistan from a gender perspective. The focus shall be on social and cultural embedded-ness of the market, and on the way in which the interaction between the market and its social context influence the labour force participation of women as well as the distribution of working women among the different occupational groups. One important part of the chapter shall be the discussion of the changes that are taking place in the formal and informal sectors and the gendered structure of the informal sector and in the participation of women in more market-oriented educational programs and training courses.

There are numerous studies of markets that have been conducted in Western societies in the course of the resurgence of economic sociology that pointed out the social and cultural embedded-ness of economic action and processes; however, only a few analyses concerning the embeddedness of markets in non-Western societies exists so far. One of them is the study of Evers and Schrader (1994) in which the authors analyze the strategies that traders in moral economies of agrarian societies develop to avoid the “traders’ dilemma”. While sociological studies often stress the discrimination and ethnic isolation of the traders, Evers and Schrader focus on the perspective of the traders themselves. In the course of economic restructuring that has been taking place since the beginning of the 1980s in the countries of the South, an increasing number of women have become integrated into the labour market, especially into industrial labour. This economic restructuring is closely lined to the emergence of a “global assembly line” (Bakker 1994:2) – i.e. the flexibilisation of work and the relocation of labour-intensive production, particularly of export-oriented industries (like manufacturing and electronics), from countries of the North to those of the South, and the filling of these new (formerly male) jobs with women. Thus, a huge number of empirical studies, focusing particularly on male factory workers in export-oriented industries have been published since 1980s.27

However, these studies, dealing primarily with the life and working conditions of women in export oriented industries have tended to discuss the effects of economic restructuring on women in too narrow of a way, namely in the form of the advantages and disadvantages that women’s entry into paid employment, i.e. into factory work in export-oriented industries, has brought for women (Pearson 1996:175f).28

27 See Pearson 1996; Dunn 1995; Lim 1990; Young 1994 (Asia); Standing 1996 (South- east Asia); Rosa 1994 (Southeast Asia); Safa 1990 (Southeast Asia); Safa 1996 (Dominican Republic); Arregui/Baetz 1991 (Dominican Republic); Safa 1990 (Caribbean), Kabeer 1994 (Bangladesh); Maenner 1988 (Sri Lanka), Sharma 1990 (India); Ecevit 1991 (Turkey); Dannecker 1998 (Bangladesh).

28 On the one hand, employment of women in export-oriented industries is seen as another proof of their deteriorating living conditions. The low wages, no prospects for advancement in the jobs and also the observed appropriation of the incomes by male
It has been pointed out by feminist economists that gender relations (and gender inequalities) are reflected in the market and influences the way economic processes take place (Cagatay 1995:1827f; Elson 1993a:545; Elson 1995:1864). Furthermore, women’s responsibility for the social reproduction of the family, which is often ignored in economic analyses, leads to different economic behaviours of women as compared to men.  

Elson therefore, stresses the importance of looking at economy “from the standpoint of women’s lives, in which much time is devoted to unpaid work in social reproduction as well as paid work in production and that we recognize unequal gender relations as an intervening variable that structures economic processes at macro, meso and micro levels” (Elson 1995:1863). Similarly, unequal gender relations are perceived as barriers to the most effective and productive use of human resources (Elson 1995:1856), and to the achievement of the macroeconomic objectives of adjustment policies (Cagatay et. al. 1995:1828; Elson/ McGee 1995:1991; Walters 1997:49).

In the following section, the structure of the female employment in Pakistan would be discussed in the light of recent labour force survey. Discussion would also be focused on the informal and formal sector as well as gendered structure of the informal sector. Finally, the participation of females in education and training programs would also be a part of the discussion.

5.1 The structure of the female employment in Pakistan

Pakistan’s population has grown at an average rate of 3 percent per annum since 1951 and until the mid 1980’s. Since 2000-01 Pakistan’s population is growing at an average rate of almost 2 percent per annum only. Had Pakistan’s population grown at an average rate of 2 percent per annum since 1959-60, Pakistan’s per capita income would have been $ 1083 rather than $ 736. During the last 50 years, Pakistan's population has increased from 33 million to 152.53 million in 2004-05; thus making Pakistan the 7th most populous country in the world (LFS 2003-04). Since, Pakistan is on the favourable end of the population spectrum. Thus, an increase in population consequently leads to an increase in labour force as well. This is evident from Pakistan’s labour force figure of 45.76 million in 2004 as compared to total labour force figure of 40.49 million in 2000; there is an increase of 5.27 million working hands in Pakistan.

Family members all indicate a negative impact of female employment on the women. On the other hand, it is argued that women’s own income apart from the actual amount and its final use, positively influences the self-perception of the women, enhances their independence and status, and increases their mobility outside their families.

Elson (1995:1881) gives the example that female heads of households in rural areas may not adopt export crops to the same degree men do because they have greater direct responsibility for well-being of their children, and for this reason prefer risk aversion.
Through systematically analyzing the earlier labour force surveys, it is evident that the female participation rate in the labour force in Pakistan is one of the lowest worldwide. In the labour force survey 1996-97 informal sector activities had been included for the first time, the crude labour force participation rate for women in urban areas was only 59%,\(^{30}\) with 53.3% of the urban female workforce being engaged in the formal sector activities (Government of Pakistan 1998d).\(^{31}\)

Contrary to the low female labour force participation rate in the official statistics (LFS 1996-97), the World Bank (1998) named a much higher figure. It was estimated that, apart from 4.7%\(^{32}\) of all women working in the formal sector of the economy, 20.3% of all urban women were working in the informal sector, in which about 69% of the urban workforce were engaged:

\begin{quote}
Evidence from micro level-studies, combined with deductions from the official statistics and more informal research and analyses, suggest a conservative estimate of about 20-30% of the female urban population working in the formal and informal sectors combined. Altogether it is likely that the total female work force in the urban sector (formal and informal) is just under 2.5 million women (full-time equivalents) including about 2 million in the formal sector (World Bank 1989:29).
\end{quote}

In other words, less than one-forth of the urban working women were recorded in the official statistics (Labour Force Survey 1996-97). However, these figures are much encouraging if we examine the recent labour force surveys. From the table 1 we can decipher that Pakistan’s total labour force has increased by 4.38 million in 2004-05 as compared to 2001-02. Similarly, the number of people employed has also registered an increase of 2.87 million (7.4 percent), whereas unemployment has only increased by 0.3 million. This in fact points towards the successful employment generation policies of the present government of General Musharraf.

According to the to date Labour Force Survey (LFS 2003-04), the overall labour force participation rate (CAR) is 30.41 percent (48.74 percent of males and 11.16 percent of females). CAR was 28.7 percent in 1996-97 increased to 29.4 percent in 1997-98 but later declined to 29 percent in 1999-00. It has increased to 29.61 percent in 2001-02 and finally to 30.4 percent in 2003-04. Similarly, RAR was 43 percent in 1996-97, increased

\(^{30}\) The crude labour force participation rate is defined as the percentage of the persons in labour force in respect to the total population. The refined labour force participation rate, which is 8.4% for women in Pakistan, is defined as the percentage of persons in the labour force in respect to the population 10 years of age and above.

\(^{31}\) In the Labour Force survey 1994-95, which does not include informal activities, the labour force participation rate for women was 4.97% (Government of Pakistan 1998b).

\(^{32}\) This figure is taken from the Seventh Five-Year-Plan (1988-1993).
to 43.3 percent in 1997-98, decreased to 42.8 percent in 1999-00 and has increased to 43.3 percent in 2002-03 and further to 43.7 percent in 2003-04.

A comparison of male and female participation rates reveals that the labour force participation rates for females have been increasing over the years and it has increased from 13.72 percent in 1999-00 to 15.93 percent in 2003-04. Multiple factors like increased awareness, better educational opportunities, equal employment opportunities, changing social attitudes, etc are responsible for this. But it still remains less than the male activity rate, which means that their participation in economic activities is also low. On the other hand, male participation rate has seldom wavered and has generally remained steady since the early 90’s.

It is estimated that the agricultural sector has absorbed 17.97 million of the total employed labour force  (see table 2). On the whole, an increase has been observed in almost all-major industries/sectors gender neutrally. Sector wise break up of employed labour force shows that female labour force participation is on the up for most sectors especially agriculture and fishery workers. It is important to note that the employment of the rural females increased despite a considerable rise in female labour force participation rate. The increase in rural female employment was mainly in the category of unpaid family helpers, which may be due to enhanced growth rates in agriculture in recent years or due to the combined efforts of various NGOs. The distribution of female labour force by major sectors also supports the view that employment gains are concentrated in female unpaid workers, as the largest increase in the female employment is seen in agriculture and allied industries. On the other hand, the increase in urban female employment is mainly in community services, manufacturing and construction industries. Similarly occupational distribution of urban females shows employment increase in the category of unskilled, craft and trade related workers.

The employed labour force is defined as all persons of ten years and above who worked at least one hour during the reference period and were either “paid employees or “self-employed””. Based on this definition, the total number of the employed labour force in 2005 is estimated at 43.22 million compared to 42.24 million in 2004. The total number of employed persons in rural areas has increased from 28.98 million in 2004 to 29.65 million in 2005. Similarly, urban employment increased from 14.69 million in 2004 to 15.03 million in 2005. In 2003-04, rural employment (1.98 million increase) has increased more than urban employment (0.89 million). Whereas total employment has also risen considerably from last year (0.71 million increase) (LFS, 2003-04).
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry/Sector</th>
<th>2001-02</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture,</td>
<td>16.37</td>
<td>12.69</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>13.22</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing &amp; Mining</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail trade</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing, &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Social services</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.2 The formal and informal sector

A closer look at the distribution of women among the different occupational groups shows a clear gender-specific segmentation of the labour market. The fact that about 35% of the women belong to the category of the “professionals, technicians and associate professionals”, but only 9.5% of the men, is remarkable, and it offers evidence to support the assumption, that highly-educated women have considerable possibilities to take up employment and pursue a professional career. Indeed, the percentage of women among the “professionals’ technicians and associate professionals” has steadily increased since the beginning of the 1970s; it rose from 9% in 1970 to 15% in 1981, to 19.4% in 1993/94, and it is 21.1% to date (Kazi 1990:3; Government of Pakistan 1995a, 1998d). In other words, one out of five professional workers in the country is a woman. In the urban areas women even constitute more than one-third (33.5%) of the “professionals, technicians and associate professionals”. These are high figures if one takes into account that, in 1998 only 14% of the 15-years old women (and 41% of the 15 years old men) were literate (The State of World Population 1998, quoted in Dawn, 05.09.1998), and barely 0.8% of the female population have a university degree (Thiel 1994:82).

Apart from the 35% of the working women that belong to the category of the “professionals, technicians and associate professionals”, the categories of “service workers, shop and market sales workers, craft and related trade workers”, and “elementary (unskilled) occupations” include about 55% of the female workforce. These workers stand

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34 It has already been mentioned, that a gender specific segmentation of the labour market can also indicate societal concepts of gender differences; it should therefore not be equated with “distortions” of the market that have to be removed by all means (as, for example, presumed by Palmer, 1995:1983).
in sharp contrast to the professional workers as far as the social status of the tasks they perform is concerned. It can be assumed that women in “elementary (unskilled) occupations” and female “craft and related trades workers” are heavily concentrated in the formal sector, where they perform home-based and low-paying piece-rate work, which also includes craftwork like sewing, crochet, and embroidery. Female “service workers, shop and market sales workers” seem to be concentrated among the service workers, where they are employed as cooks, maids, sweepers, washwomen, street cleaners, hairdressers, etc.\(^{35}\)

Substantially a large portion of the country’s economic activity is in the hands of the informal sector; they employ 70 percent of Pakistan’s total labour force. Proportion of employed persons involved in the rural informal sector (73 percent) is higher as compared to that of urban areas (67 percent). As expected informal activities are more concentrated in urban areas (33 percent) as compared to rural areas (27 percent) (see table 3). Since informal activities are predominantly non-agrarian, male workers are relatively more concentrated in the informal sector both in rural and urban areas of the country. The informal sector is, therefore, not only the main engine of growth but it is also the main source of employment generation.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\multirow{2}{*}{Sector} & \multicolumn{3}{c|}{2001-02} & \multicolumn{3}{c|}{2003-04} \\
\cline{2-7}
 & Total & Male & Female & Total & Male & Female \\
\hline
Total & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 \\
\hline
Formal & 35.4 & 35.3 & 37.0 & 30.0 & 29.6 & 34.3 \\
\hline
Informal & 64.6 & 64.7 & 63.0 & 70.0 & 70.4 & 65.7 \\
\hline
Rural & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 \\
\hline
Formal & 31.7 & 31.5 & 34.3 & 27.1 & 26.7 & 30.1 \\
\hline
Informal & 68.3 & 68.5 & 65.7 & 72.9 & 73.3 & 69.9 \\
\hline
Urban & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 \\
\hline
Formal & 38.9 & 38.9 & 39.3 & 32.8 & 32.2 & 38.4 \\
\hline
Informal & 61.1 & 61.1 & 60.7 & 67.2 & 67.8 & 61.6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Distribution of Labour Force (%)}
\end{table}

*Source: Labour Force Survey 2003-04*

\(^{35}\) In the Labour Force survey, 1993-94, “service workers” and “sales workers” appears as separate occupational groups, with 14% of the female urban workforce being categorized as “service workers” but only 7.9% as “sales workers”. Furthermore, about 15% of the “service workers” are women, but only 2.5% of the “sales workers” (Government of Pakistan 1995a).
Furthermore, the overall unemployment rate has declined from 8.3 percent in 2001-02 to 7.7 percent in 2003-04, due to mainly steeper decline in women’s unemployment vis-à-vis that of men. Taking into account the decline in female unemployment in both rural and urban areas it can be said that this decline could be due to two reasons; females were able to get job opportunities or they withdrew from the labour force mainly because of “discourage phenomenon”. But female participation in the labour force has increased considerably over the last few years thus it appears that female unemployment reduced primarily due to expansion in job opportunities for females. Microfinance facilities, with some other governmental strategies, focusing on women particularly in

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36 The Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the current fiscal year 2004-05 has been increased to Rs. 202 billion, a 26 percent increase over last year’s PSDP of Rs 160 billion. Employer-led Skill Development Councils developed by Ministry of Labour Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, have been established in all provinces to identify needs of geographical area, prioritize them on market demand and to facilitate the training of workers through training providers in public and private sectors. As a result of developmental efforts of the government, GDP growth rate has started picking up. It was 5.1 percent in 2002-03, increased to 6.4 percent in 2003-04 and is around 7 percent in 2004-05. On the other hand, the population growth rate, which was 1.99 percent in 2003-04, has declined to 1.9 percent in 2004-05. Both the parameters have helped to make dent in the unemployment situation as result of which the unemployment rate has declined from 8.3 percent in 2001-02 to 7.7 percent in 2003-04. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) represent a signifying component of Pakistan’s economy in terms of value. They are highly labour intensive and provide employment to the bulk of the non-agricultural labour force. Realizing this constraint the government has opened two specialized non-credit banks namely, the SME Bank and Khushali Bank. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is also actively developing programmes for managerial skill development and technical and informative support to the SMEs. Realizing the importance of microfinance in improving the lives of the poor people, the government has established Khushhali Bank in 2000 – a microfinance institution – under a public-private partnership program. In the next five years the outreach will increase to three million households. The Khushhali Bank alone has so far disbursed Rs.4.5 billion and nearly 33 percent of its clients are women. The services of these institutions will be the most effective instruments in improving the lives of the poor people in both urban and rural areas. The housing and construction sector provides substantial additional employment opportunities as it contributes through a higher multiplier effect with a host of beneficial forward and backward linkages in the economy. Many national and international real estate developers have launched or are launching large construction projects in Pakistan, which has further accelerated construction activity in the country. Pakistan Poverty Alleviating Fund (PPAF) was set up in April 2000 with an endowment of $ 100 million, as a wholesale lender to NGOs engaged in providing micro financing. PPAF, as of 31st Dec 2004, is present in 94 districts across Pakistan. Whereas, it has 52 partner organizations. So far it has made disbursements of Rs. 8.2 billion and it has around 7 million beneficiaries. The government has so far spent one thousand billion rupees on pro-poor sectors in the last five years (FBS, Labor Force Survey 2003-2004).
rural areas could be the major contributing factor for reduction in female unemployment rate.

To sum up, women in the urban and rural economy are heavily concentrated at the top and at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy, and they are only marginally represented between these two poles. In other words women are either highly qualified or work in professionals jobs where they can pursue a career (that is, in the majority of the cases, even compatible with gender segregation), or they work in the unskilled, low status positions out of economic need. In all middle range occupations that are filled - even though not exclusively - by members of the lower-middle class, i.e., in office (and sales) jobs, in administrations, and in industry, women only constitute a small minority of the workers.

5.3 The gendered structure of the informal sector

There is a distant difference between male and female informal labour markets. The male labour market spectrum includes, at one end, unskilled, marginal workers subsisting in such casual jobs as hawking and car washing and, at the other end, small-scale, family owned enterprises that are visible, efficient, and labour intensive. The informal labour market is organized along different lines, because women’s choice of activity is determined by the norms of female seclusion.

Work in which contact with males cannot be avoided is associated with loss of respect and diminished marriage prospects for single girls. Thus Pakistan's informal urban labour market is highly segregated, even for a Muslim country. The workers, street vendors, market sellers, carpenters, mechanics, and barbers are almost exclusively male. Women are confined to being domestic servants (who work in a home when the master of the house is away at work and have dealings only with the mistress) or home-based workers (who stitch clothes, make lace, weave baskets, embroider, make food products and “bidis”; home made cigarettes, for sales by male family members or middleman) (World Bank 1989:55f)

37 The low representation of women at the middle range of the occupational spectrum is also mirrored in the civil service, which, due to its benefits (health insurance, pension fund, paid maternity leave, short working day, and job security), enjoys great popularity. 9% of the employees in the occupations labelled as “qualified” are women (NDS –grade 17-22), while women constitute only 4.6% of the civil servants of the middle range, i.e., of the secretaries, receptionist, office workers, etc. (Kazi 1990:8). No information about the women at the lower level of the occupational spectrum could be found out. It can be assumed that the percentage of female employees here is again higher than at the middle range.
According to the World Bank, 77-83% of the women in the urban informal sector\textsuperscript{38} and 53% of all urban working women are home-based workers. About half of these women work on a piece-rate basis for middlemen or factories; the other half is self employed. None of them have any financial or job security and they work for minimum wages. Between 17 and 23% of the women in the informal sector work outside their houses. The great majority of these women (77%), again, work in other people’s house as char-women, cooks, ayas (baby sitters). Only very few women, the poorest ones with the lowest socio-economic background, work in the public as road workers, and labourers in brickyards and in quarries.

In her study of poor (lower-class) working women in the Old City of Lahore, Weiss, stresses the importance of the compatibility of the norms of \textit{purdah} with the economic activities performed by the women. Weiss points out that women in the informal sector do essentially the same kind of small-scale manufacturing that men do in the bazaars, but they do it at home and for significantly less remuneration. The high level of exploitation of home-based work is also caused by the dependency of women on middlemen since the women can not market the products themselves and need someone to deliver the raw materials and pick up the finished products later. The women had chosen economic activities that could be performed at home because they feared gossip and a loss of respectability and social status that mingling with the other sex would cause.\textsuperscript{39}

To sum up, while the informal sector includes a broad spectrum of economic activities with very different skill levels and incomes, women are concentrated in unskilled and semiskilled fields of employment with the lowest remuneration and social status.

\textsuperscript{38} According to the Resolution adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), the informal sector comprises units, such as households enterprises, engaged in the production of goods and services with the primary objective of generating employment and income to the persons concerned, not necessarily with the deliberate intention of evading the payment of taxes or other legislative or administrative provision. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, on a small scale, and with labour relations mostly based on casual employment. The assets used do not belong to the production units as such but to their owners. Expenditure for production is often indistinguishable from household expenditure. The units as such cannot engage in transactions or enter contracts with other units, nor incur liabilities. This concept of the informal sector is formulated into an operational definition based on three criterions, the first of which is essential (household enterprise), and the two others (size and registration), can be used optionally, alone or in combination. Given the ambiguity of the registration criterion in the circumstances of Pakistan, and the difficulty of obtaining reliable response on this item from household members, the definition of the informal sector in Pakistan is formulated in terms of the first two criteria, namely, household enterprise and size of employment.

\textsuperscript{39} For other studies of women in the informal sector see Weiss (1992); Khan (1990); Hussain (1983).
In the recent years there have been small changes with regard to the gendered structure of the informal sector. Women have, for example, started selling exotic fruits in certain areas in Rawalpindi that are commonly not available from ordinary fruit stalls in the bazaars. These women do not have their own fixed stalls as it is common in the bazaars, but they sit at the roadside with one or two baskets filled with fruit like mulberries and/or strawberries. Once I asked a friend of mine, when we were sitting in a bus and could see several of such women sitting at the distance of 20 or 30 meters from each other along one of the big roads a bit outside of Rawalpindi (towards Murree), why they could sell the fruits there but were not present in the bazaars. “In the bazaars“, she told me:

“a lot of guys just hang around and when they see such women they might tease them”. But this is a road it does not have any shop on either side, and there is not even a footpath. People don’t hang around here; they just pass through on their motorbikes or in their cars. Most of them will only stop if they really want to buy some fruit.”

Similarly, I saw some women were selling vegetables and fruits in the itwar bazaar and in the mangal bazaars, markets that differ from the ordinary bazaars in so far as they only take place once a week on the public holidays. There are no fixed stalls but the traders sit under the big tents that are built up only for that day. I saw several women even young girls that were not more than 14 or 15 years old, sitting on the ground under the tent at the itwar or mangal bazaars in Islamabad and selling their products that were piled up around them. It was obvious that the male and female sellers, who were sitting quite close to each other due to the absence of fixed stalls and walls, knew each other. May be the men were even relatives and provided the women with some kind of protection that enabled them to work in a mixed environment without fear of being harassed by other traders or customers.

It is therefore clear that women in the informal sector have made some steps towards working in occupations in a mixed environment, in which although no specific skills or education are required to perform the tasks, the remuneration will definitely be much higher than for home-based work. Yet, there is still great lack of sociological studies regarding how women manage to embed such unconventional occupations in their life and are able to work in a mixed environment, despite the norms of gender segregation and seclusion.

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40 “Itwar bazaar” literally mean “Sunday bazaar” and “mangal bazaar” literally mean “Tuesday bazaar”, because public holiday is only on Sunday and these bazaars take places on the whole day of Sunday and on Tuesday the half day bazaars from noon till evening.

41 One exception are the studies of Lessinger (1989; 1990) about female market traders in Madras, India. Lessinger analyses how women manage to overcome the strong
It is clear from the ongoing discussion that the gender-specific structure of the labour market, of both the formal and informal sector, shows a strong segmentation. Women working in the formal sector are concentrated mainly in occupations at the top and bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy and the informal sector does not offer any job prospects for women between these poles either. A nationwide study on female factory workers points out that the “average” female worker does not belong to the uneducated lower class, but has finished secondary school.\(^{42}\) The wages of the women stand in marked contrast to their educational background. In 1990, 60% of the female factory workers earned less than Rs. 1000, which was the official minimum wage at that time (Dawn 07.01.1990). 80% of the factories were not registered and were therefore situated in a Grey area between the formal and the informal sector. Only 20% of the female factory workers had permanent employment status with paid holidays, medical and maternity leaves, and right to increments (Mumtaz 1985:50; Mumtaz 1987:21; Hafeez 1983:8). A hierarchical gender-specific division of labor seems to be more common, in which women are assigned to unskilled tasks with the lowest remuneration and no chances for upward mobility (Kazi 1990:9; Khan 1989:8; Mohiuddin 1991:970).

Women have also increasingly entered the office sector. Between 1980 and 1990 their numbers increased by twelve times. At the beginning of the 1990s they still formed only about 3% of the office workers but women have become much more visible in the offices during the last years. Even in nursing, an occupation with very low social status, the increasing demand of lower-middle-class women for employment has become evident. Only few years ago the hospitals could barely scrap together women for their four-year programs in nursing because nobody wanted to learn and work in such demanding occupation.\(^{43}\) Nowadays the demand for seats in the training programs for nursing has increased to such an extent that many applicants have to be rejected.

\textit{purdah} norms in Indian society and work in an occupation that requires extensive public dealing with unrelated men. She states that the women traders redefine the market place through fictive kinship and thus manage to treat the market place as if it were an extension of their home or neighbourhood. As a consequence the male traders are protective and courteous, and they can even be instrumentalized for “social chaperonage”, i.e., they can later vouch for the innocence of interactions with male strangers. Furthermore, women rely on male relatives for tasks that have to be performed outside the marketplace like travelling or purchasing goods at the pre-dawn wholesale.

\(^{42}\) 89% of the women in the cosmetics industry, 83% of the working women in the pharmaceutical industry and 80% of the women in the electronics industry have at least finished secondary school. Even in the garment factories, one-fourth of the female workers have studied up to 10\textsuperscript{th} class or beyond (Government of Pakistan 1990).

\(^{43}\) In contrast to the high status that is attached to being a “lady doctor” who treats female patients, nursing is a profession that is looked down upon because it requires close contact with male patients. Although nurses receive a relatively good income and their employment in the civil service is guaranteed, nursing has traditionally been dominated by the Christian minority. They have been, due to the increasing
5.4 Women in education and training programs

Education is a key to change and progress;\textsuperscript{44} therefore, the Government of Pakistan has adopted this sector as one of the pillars for poverty reduction and benefit of masses. It was stated by the Human Development Report for 1998, the adult literacy rate is only 24\% for women, this figure should not blur the fact that more and more girls, particularly in urban areas, have got access to formal education during the last decades. According to The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2003-04, literacy rate\textsuperscript{45} improves from 50\% in 2001-02 to 52\% in 2003-04. Improvement in female’s literacy is relatively more pronounced as compared to that of males, particularly, in urban areas. However, females are yet to catch up with the historical lead of males. A comparative picture of literary areas of both sexes, male & female by province and rural/urban areas for the two surveys, 2001-02 & 2003-04 and 1998 Census is given in table 4.

\textsuperscript{44} The reasons for Pakistan’s low educational status are varied but one important factor is that Pakistan’s educational system has been highly fragmented and segmented. It has, therefore, created some intractable problems in the optimal utilization of human resources under the given labor market condition. Existing National Education Policy 1998-2010 was formulated keeping in view the prevailing problems in the society. The Government has initiated major administrative reforms, such as Devolution of Power and Education Sector Reforms. Moreover, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFAs) are the International policy concerns announced in 2000, which need to be properly reflected in our Policy. As such, the Ministry of Education has taken in hand an exercise to review the National Education Policy (1998-2010) for its updating to bring it in line with the current needs of the country. For the year 2004-05, The Ministry of Education had initially allocated Rs 3359.04 million in the PSDP for 72 development projects. During the mid year review, this allocation was revised to Rs 2025.117 million. For the year 2005-06, an amount of Rs 11.2 billion has been demanded by this Ministry for PSDP. However, the Priorities Committee agreed to an amount of Rs 3.8 billion for major programs (LFS 2003-2004).

\textsuperscript{45} Overall literacy rate of 52 percent has increased by about two percentage points compared to that of Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2001-02. The data shows that rural household are generally deficient in human capital. For instance, 70 percent urban literacy rate is 28 percentage points higher than that of rural. As expected, male population is more literate compared to female and male literacy level (64\%) is about 25 percentage points higher than that of female’s (39\%). Comparatively high incidence of illiteracy among female may be due to their limited access to the available educational facilities. Obviously, the developed provinces of Punjab and Sindh are more literate as compared to the less developed provinces of NWFP and Balochistan (LFS 2003-2004).
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Area</th>
<th>Census 1998</th>
<th>2001-02</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:  

i) Population Census, 1998 wherein literate is a person who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language.

ii) Derived from Statistical Appendix Tables 3 to 3.4 of LFS 2001-02 and 2003-04.

According to official statistics, nearly two-thirds of all girls are nowadays enrolled in primary school, and one out of four finishes secondary school. However, LFS 2003-2004 showed that males are more educated compared to females.\(^{46}\) Further, an improvement picture of percentage distribution of population of ten years of age and above

\(^{46}\) As per Labour Force Survey 2003-04, 34 percent of the literate persons have received education less than matric, 10 percent matric but less than intermediate level, 4 percent intermediate but less than degree and only 4 percent degree and above level. Access to post-matric education appears to be restricted for, probably, (a) it puts, relatively, more squeeze on the purse; (b) the post-secondary institutions are concentrated in towns and cities; (c) expectation of employment is not strong enough to justify long years of education.
by level of education for the Labour Force Survey 2001-02 and 2003-04 is given in table 4. Detailed position has been shown in Table 5.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>2001-02</th>
<th></th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below matric</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric but less than intermediate</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate but less than Degree</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree and above</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literate</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The enrolment at the primary level⁴⁷ has increased in both the public and the private sector as compared to the enrolment figure for the year 2002-03 which was 18.220 million. The net increase in enrolment is 1.575 million. In case of urban areas, the public sector has almost closed the gender gap where the proportion of female to male enrolment was 98 percent. In case of the private sector, the proportion of female to male enrolment was 81 percent. In case of enrolment in the rural areas, the gender gap in both the public and private sector institutions is quite pronounced. In both cases, the proportion of female to male enrolment is 62 percent. With policy emphasis on female enrolment and launching of free text books and scholarship schemes, the gender gap should close in the rural areas as well.

The gap in public sector female enrolment in the rural areas is quite pronounced and points to the need for accelerating progress in the opening of new schools for girls and

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⁴⁷ The most challenging milestone for the Government of Pakistan is Universal Primary Education (UPE), which is a pre-requisite for Pakistan’s integration in the global framework of human centered economic development. The country is making a major effort to expand access to primary education. It now has a total of 154970 primary schools in 2003-04 with an enrolment of 19,794 million students and 432222 teachers.
upgrading existing primary schools to middle level. The private sector needs to be encouraged to expand their presence in the rural communities with greater focus on female enrolment. The private sector has also been unable to ensure gender parity in enrolment at the secondary and higher secondary level in the both urban and rural areas. The gender disaggregated enrolment in public sector institutions not run by the Ministry of Education and the Educations Departments at the secondary and high secondary level of education is contained in the following table 6.

**Table 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Urban Boys</th>
<th>Urban Girls</th>
<th>Rural Boys</th>
<th>Rural Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>389103</td>
<td>353609</td>
<td>473165</td>
<td>163249</td>
<td>1379126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>33070</td>
<td>42938</td>
<td>25992</td>
<td>16370</td>
<td>118370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>422173</td>
<td>396547</td>
<td>499157</td>
<td>179619</td>
<td>1497496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While enrolment of girls in the urban centres could be termed as satisfactory, the huge disparity in case of rural areas needs policy intervention.

Getting a formal education, at least up to 10th class, has become more and more important in the lower middle class during the last decades. Nearly all working women I talked to during my filed research had mothers that were not educated beyond a few years of schooling, some had not been to school at all, and in all cases the mothers were significantly less qualified than their daughters. This development toward educating the girls does not mean, however, that girls acquire the same kind of education as boys, and that they learn job-specific skills that prepare them for later employment. An education is not really considered as important for preparing women for future employment and for imparting job-specific skills. Being “educated” has rather become a social status symbol for the women and their families and an important differentiation from the lower classes. Going to school or college does not threaten the reputation of the girl as long as she studies in gender-segregated educational institutes, and it improves her chances to find a good match in the “marriage market”, because nowadays men from lower-middle-class families do not want to marry uneducated women. In other words, neither in the educational system nor in the families are women encouraged to orient their education towards later employment particularly in the rural Pakistan or among the traditional families in urban areas of NWFP and Balochistan. Gender-segregated state-run vocational training institutes for women differ significantly from those for the men, and the trai-
those for the men, and the training programs which are offered to women barely enable them to acquire market-oriented skills (Shaheed/Mumtaz 1990:55)

Pakistan’s overall record in promoting and delivering gender equality is weak. There are, however, areas like education in which significant progress has been made in the recent years and indicators\(^48\) point to a steady though slow improvement. The ratio of girls to boys at all levels of education has improved; the ratio of literate females to males has risen; the share of women in urban employment (as a proxy indicator for share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector) has improved marginally; the role of women in national decision-making has improved significantly. However, gender concerns are not fully mainstreamed in the overall educational planning and management. The situation of urban women is better than their rural counterparts where parents are unable to afford the cost of education and access to schools is limited. Public expenditures tend to benefit boys rather than girls. The lack of access to education is compounded by dogmatic attitudes and socio-economic factors that inhibit girl’s education. The Provincial Governments are making substantial financial provisions on account of free textbooks and scholarships for girl students at the elementary level. This may lead to an increase in enrolment and retention.

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\(^48\) The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) was founded in June 2002, is a public private partnership formed under the directive of the President of the Pakistan with a mission to promote development in the fields of health, education and micro-finance. It is funded through the Pakistan Human Development Fund registered under the Company’s Ordinance 1984. It has mobilized $5.5 million from private donors and $34 million from government resources. In education, NCHD aims to help the government achieve its Education For All (EFA) objectives by 2015. The NCHD is operating in 32 districts of the country and aims to cover all of Pakistan by the year 2007. The core strategy of the NCHD consists of: (a) public private partnership (b) capacity building of government’s line department, community organization and elected officials. In order to expand enrolment and provide access to the disadvantaged communities, education up to matriculation has been made free in all Federal Government Institutions and by the Provinces of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP. Free textbooks are also being provided by the Provincial Governments to elementary level students. It is proposed to expand this facility up to matriculation in all the Provinces. Steps have been taken to strengthen the delivery of education services through greater NGOs and private sector involvement. The NGOs are being assisted by the recently restructured National Education Foundation at the Federal level and by the Provincial Education Foundations. The grades and pay scale of teacher at various levels of education are being revised and will be made effective from the commencement of next financial year. Steps have been taken to introduce teaching of English from Class 1 in selected institutions to regain the lost comparative advantage, which Pakistan enjoyed after partition. Science will be taught in the English language in Urdu medium public schools. Necessary steps for training of teachers are being adopted.
6 Socio-Economic Situation of Working Women in Pakistan

6.1 Introduction

Socio-economic characteristics play a vital role in the formation of man’s personality and his behaviour. Pakistan is a developing country of the third world where cultural constraints are a major impediment to women’s productivity. Gender specific roles are very clearly demarcated by culture: women are responsible for the reproduction of society and servicing this collective within the home; men are responsible for their families’ financial and physical needs and carrying out chores outside the household. The implications of cultural practices for women’s economic activities are severe. These shape the perception of Pakistan’s women, who rarely consider their own tasks and activities as either essential or economically significant.

The social and cultural context of Pakistani society is predominantly patriarchal. Men and women are conceptually divided into two separate worlds. The false ideological demarcation between the public and private inside and outside world is maintained through the notion of honour and purdah. In Pakistani society, women’s mobility is strictly restricted and controlled through the system of sex segregation and violence against them.

However, the spread of patriarchy in Pakistani society is not even. The nature and degree of women’s oppression/subordination vary across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Patriarchal structures are relatively stronger in the rural and tribal setting where local customs establish male authority and power over women’s lives. Women are exchanged, sold, and bought in marriages. They are given limited opportunities to create choices for themselves in order to change the realities of their lives. However, women belonging to the upper and middle classes have increasingly greater access to education and employment opportunities and can assume greater control over their lives.

Every society has class differences. But in countries like Pakistan, where wealth is concentrated in the hands of very few, this difference is extenuated all the more, and the religious and social constraints which are less binding in many western states, make this difference all the more pronounced (for further details, also see part 2.3). Moreover, according to a house woman:

“Women’s development programmes have to be defined within the parameters of the social and traditional values. One cannot fight a campaign for women’s rights asking for the liberty of northern women. Such a campaign will never be grassroots based because many of the Pakistani women themselves won’t believe in it because of their strong religious beliefs and social upbringing.”
Regarding the status of women’s economical situation, the country director of ILO in Pakistan, Mr. Lokollo said (May 2003) that the status of women in employment sector still needs a lot of improvement in order to meet the level of other countries in the region and even in South Asia. There are as many as 77 per cent of working women employed in the informal employment sector of Pakistan and getting meagre salaries (for further details, also see part 4.1). In Pakistan, low literacy rate of women had been a major problem and the female-male literacy gap had increases from 19 in 1981 to 24 per cent in 1998. A majority of working women (77 per cent) are engaged in informal sector at low wages under poor working conditions. These women, majority of them working in agriculture and informal sector, are not recognised or accounted for when surveys are carried out while they are contributing significantly to the national economy.

A new global report released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2003) on equality at work shows that women are still being discriminated against in the workplace worldwide, with Pakistan having one of the lowest rates in the world for female participation in the workforce. There were a number of reasons for such a small number of women in the workforce. Most women are working in the informal sector, which is not recognised or accounted for when surveys are carried out. Of those who were visible, 73 percent were working in the agricultural sector.

The Pakistan Integrated Household Survey 1990-91 (for recent figures, see chapter 4) provides conclusive evidence of increasing female employment in the informal labor market (Kazi 1993 and Kazi 1991). The informal labor market is characterized by lack of regulation, lack of security in conditions of employment and ease of entry. It includes small, unregulated enterprises, often family-managed or self-employed enterprises that use traditional technology and labor-intensive methods (Qadeer 1983). This segment absorbs most of the available unskilled and uneducated women in urban areas in Pakistan (Kazi 1993).

Paradoxically, women are portrayed as economically unproductive (Habib 1985) and as highly dependent on their husbands, sons and other male members of the family for economic resources and support. The influence of informal-sector work on the status of women in the patriarchal Pakistani households largely remains unexplored. Studies however, have been conducted in Asia and they provide conflicting findings. In the Philippines, women’s contribution to household income was not associated with greater household power (Alcantara 1990), nor did the gainful employment of women through carpet weaving in Iran bring a change in the social conditions of those women (Afshar 1985). Studies in East and South East Asia report that a woman’s financial contribution to her family’s resources is one of the factors that enhances her status within the family and increases her decision making capacity.

This study investigates the socio-economic situation of the working women in Pakistan in the formal and informal sectors. It also briefly describes the effects of age and marital status on the productivity of women as well as the investigation of various professions of the working women and finally discusses about the reasons of the involvement of working women in the work force. The data also show an insight into the women’s eco-
nomic participation in the various sectors of the Pakistan’s economy, in rural and urban areas. Finally, it also comes up with some major findings.

6.2 Data analysis

With a view to collect and know the information and data about the social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan, I have collected (in 2003) a sample of 50 female workers from urban areas and 50 from the rural areas. I selected Rawalpindi and Islamabad as urban areas and villages of Gujar Khan and Chakwal as rural areas due to having the detailed information about the locality and its people. From the list of professions, I selected the five major professions keeping in mind the availability and accessibility of the respondents. A structured questionnaire was used to get the data from the respondents. In addition to the above survey, a few secondary sources of information were incorporated for the development of the study.

6.3 Factors affecting women’s employment

In order to have a detailed understanding about the women’s involvement in income oriented activities, it is important to know which are the factors affecting or limiting the job possibilities for women in Pakistan. Therefore, in the following part I would like to discuss about the factors such as age, education and marital status of the working women and then will give a brief explanation about their occupations and income status. Finally I would like to give some detail about the reasons of the work of working women.

6.3.1 Age groups

Table 7 shows that 40% of the urban respondents belonged to the young age group of 21-30 and 28% of them belonged to the medium age group (31-40) and 20% of respondents belonged to age group of 41-50 and remaining 12% belonged to the old age group of 51-60.

The table further shows that 30% of the rural respondents belonged to the age group of 21-30, 22% of respondents belonged to the age group of 31-40, 16% belonged to the age group of 41-50 while 32% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 51-60.

The table further shows that 35% of the total respondents belonged to the age group of 21-30, 25% of respondents belonged to the age group of 31-40, 18% belonged to the age group of 41-50 while 22% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 51-60.
Table 7: Age of working women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category in years</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Studies in South Asian countries have shown that older women are much less likely to work in the age group of 55 and above (Sang-Hyop Lee, USAID 2000). A study by T. Akhtar (1992) shows that most of the factories tend to employ relatively young, unmarried women.

Above results show that most of the respondents in the urban sector which belonged to the young age group were working but in the rural sector most of the old women were working. This is due to the reason that in urban areas educated young female are enthusiastic and passionate and they want to utilize their knowledge but in the rural areas the main purpose of the female work is to support their families. I also found that the specific reason for majority of the factory workers to be in younger age group was that single or quite young woman get preference for jobs in factories.

6.3.2 Education level

On a global scale, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan have the least amount of facilities for educating girls and women. The percentage is about 50% of men and women combined, but considering women alone, it only comes up to 25% in Pakistan (for further details, see part 4.4). For quite some time this state of things has been getting worse. The amount of money in the budget for education is also decreasing. Now if we take Pakistan into consideration things vary a lot from place to place. Girls from villages are receiving very little attention and the metropolitan areas are getting a lot of attention to help improve educational standards. In Islamabad, there are about 72% of student girls. But, if you look at Balochistan, there are only 13%. This difference is due to the difference between rural and city life, and the attitude of parents. For example, mothers in cities who are educated themselves send their girls to study. But the women in villages, who have a heavy workload and need girls to help, don’t really pay attention to their daughters' education. And keeping family rituals in mind, they separate the girls from an education.
Education plays an important role in women’s decisions of economic participation. Education qualifications enhance the job prospects of all individuals, and also for women. Generally, for women as the education level increases the economic participation increases.

Table 8: Education of urban professional working women (outside the home).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Urban working women outside the home</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.A. / F. Sc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A. / B Sc. / B. Ed.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A. / M.Sc.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.B.B.S.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.L.B.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 8 indicates that 20% of the urban working women had passed their intermediate educational level, 16% were educated up to graduation level, 24% of the respondents were having master degree, 20% with degree in medicine while 20% were having a degree in law.

These data show that the doctors, layers and teachers were highly qualified because of the required profession (for further details, also see Chapter 1).

Table 9: Education of urban non-professional working women (inside the house).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Urban working women inside the house</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 9 shows that a significant majority of 36% of the urban respondents who were working inside the house were illiterate; 16% of them were having primary education,
24% until the middle level while remaining 24% were having their matriculation examination (SSC, secondary school certificate).

The data indicate that most of the females who were working inside the house were uneducated or with a very basic education because of the reason that families with low income can’t afford to send their daughters for higher education. They find it more profitable to send them for any technical training or for learning any skill so that they become a helping hand to the family. These data are in agreement with the results discussed by T. Akhtar (1992) that people belonging to low income class can’t afford to send their girls for higher education.

**Table 10: Education of rural working women (outside the house).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Rural working women outside the house</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metric</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.A. / F.Sc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A. / B.Ed.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 10 shows that 56% of the rural respondents were having a SSC certificate, 20% with HSSC (higher secondary school certificate), 12% with a bachelor degree while 12% were having their master degree.

The data show that in rural areas the majority of the respondents were less educated because there are fewer facilities for education in rural areas and people don’t like to or sometimes can’t afford to send their daughters for higher education.

**Table 11: Education of rural working women (inside the house).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Rural working women inside the house</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*
Table 11 shows that a significant number of the respondents (44%) who were working inside the house were illiterate; 16% were having their primary education while 40% were educated till the middle level.

The data indicate that the majority of the rural women working inside the house are illiterate or with very basic education. This is because of the reason that in rural areas people are more rigid in their believes and they prefer to educate their sons instead of daughters and sometimes less facilities for higher education result in poor education for females.

Pakistan has never had a systematic, nationally coordinated effort to improve female primary education, despite its poor standing. It was once assumed that the reasons behind low female school enrollments were cultural but research conducted by the Ministry for Women’s Development and a number of international donor agencies in the 1980s revealed that danger to a woman’s honor was parent’s most crucial concern. Indeed, reluctance to accept schooling for women turned to enthusiasm when parents in rural Punjab and rural Balochistan could be guaranteed their daughters’ safety and, hence, their honor (SPD Center, 1998). One of the most deplorable aspects is that in some places, particularly northern tribal areas, the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. This is a gross misinterpretation of Islam which like all religions urges men and women to acquire education (for more details, see part 2.2 and part 4.4).

Furthermore, above findings are in accordance with the empirical results of Weiss (2002) in her book “walls within walls”, on the life histories of working women in the walled city of Lahore. According to her, people of lower middle class can’t afford to educate their daughters due to several reasons. Besides financial problems, the most important reason being the izzat of the family and the mahool of the mohalla. Particularly young girls don’t find it easy to go out alone to school or college as male members of mohalla look at them with suspicion.

I calculated the correlation between age and education. In accordance to my hypothesis that females belong to young age group are more qualified than old age group, I found a positive relationship between age and education. It can be explained on the basis of more education facilities for females in Pakistan compared to few decades earlier. Although there still exist a vast difference in such facilities in rural and urban areas but a clear sign of change can be seen within an area in recent years. The literacy among females in both areas is increased and gender gape has reduced over time. In fact the females out perform males in most of the fields of education (R. Sidiqui: PIDE). Education has the positive effect on the overall environment of the society. Education produces the sophistication in human behaviour which in return increases the welfare of economy as well society and ultimately the rate of productivity increases. The literacy rate among females particularly in urban area has increased during the last decades (see Table 4). Getting a formal education at least up to 10th class is more and more important in lower middle classes. Nearly all working women I talked to during my field research had mothers that were not educated beyond a few years of schooling. Some had
not been to school at all and in all cases mothers were less qualified than their daughters (for further details, see part 4.4).

6.3.3 Marital status

Marital status of women is another factor affecting the decisions of women in economic participation. In Pakistan, married women are less likely to participate in economic activities. The opposite is true for the widow or divorced women. The results of a study conducted by Z. F. Naqvi (World Bank, 2002) about how do women decide to work in Pakistan indicate that married women are 4.2% less likely to participate in economic activity. However, divorced women are more likely to participate in economic activities by 5.2%. Being a divorcee is also another significant factor, which positively increases the possibility of women’s economic participation by 16%.

Table 12: Marital status of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-married</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 12 shows that 58% of the urban respondents while 74% of the rural respondents were married. It also shows that 30% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were unmarried while the remaining 12% of the urban and 10% of the rural respondents were widows.

The table further shows that total of 66% of the respondents were married, 23% were un-married and 11% were widows. The data indicate that both in urban and rural areas mostly married women are working. These results are contradictory to the findings of Z. F. Naqvi where she reported that mostly un-married women participate in economic activities. This is because my respondents include mostly working women who work inside as well as outside the house. They want to help their husbands in the household economy and want to achieve a better living standard. In my study, very few respondents were selected who were working in the factories (outside the house) where un-married working women are always preferred by the employer.
6.3.4 Occupations

In some economically and socially advanced countries women have succeeded in gaining greater access to training and employment and increased economic autonomy and social status. The impact of globalization is two-sided, offering an opportunity for more and better jobs provided women can balance work with family responsibilities, while at the same time fostering types of work that disproportionately expose women to precarious and vulnerable employment. Without training, information and finance, many women and their families face dim prospects for the future.

Over the last decade agricultural and rural populations in the developing world have become more extensively and directly affected by several new processes in a rapidly changing global context. Rural populations are being confronted with more dynamic and, therefore, less predictable market-dominated conditions of production. Recent studies have shown that more varied employment becomes available as workers move out of agriculture and subsistence production and into paid employment in the expanding manufacturing and service sectors (Mehra and Gammage, 1999). However, this trend does not necessarily reflect healthy growth in the agricultural sector. A slightly increasing feminization of the agricultural labour force in most developing countries may reflect the fact that women are lagging behind men and abandoning agriculture at a slower rate (Mehra and Gammage, 1999). Furthermore, women tend to work in low-productivity jobs more often than men, especially those who remain in the agricultural sector.

It is unfortunate that individuals apparently similar with respect to productivity receive widely different earnings on the basis of non-economic criteria like sex, which raises serious questions of equity, efficiency and human rights. Labour market conditions are usually unfavourable for the female labour force (FLF) in many developing countries like Pakistan. Conditions in high paying professions are usually not favourable for women as they are mostly absorbed in traditional sectors like agriculture and low paid occupations pertaining to petty services. Their contribution towards economic development is not duly acknowledged and moreover accurate data pertaining to FLF and their economic contribution is not available in developing countries.

In the urban areas of Pakistan due to higher literacy rate, women are seen working in every profession accepted by the Pakistani society. They have much more chances to adopt a profession which they like compared with the rural women who have limited choice due to the lack of education. A large number of gainfully employed women nation-wide work in agricultural occupations, as farmers. The next much smaller group is the teaching and educational occupations, then spinners, weavers and related workers. Some other professions include tailors and related workers, sales workers, medical workers, construction workers and housekeeping occupations. Comparatively few women work in the clerical occupations, although for the coming year’s high growth rates are anticipated precisely in this group. A report of the working group on women’s development programmes in Pakistan (1983) shows that only 13.7% of the female labor force work as teachers (10.9%) and in medical occupations (2.8%). The picture is, however, radically different if one considers the economic activity of women exclusively in
the modern sector. According to the International Standard Classification of Occupations, a Punjab’s modern sector is made up of a total of 175 occupational group and only 63 occupations are represented which means that women are not yet represented in 112 occupations. Only a few women work in comparatively highly qualified occupations as doctors, judges and university teachers, as economists or in the scientific or engineering occupations. Although women in rural areas work in professions like teaching and medical occupations etc but majority of them still work in the fields with the male members of the family. A selection of various professions from the rural and urban areas for detailed study is given in the following tables.

**Table 13: Occupations of urban professional working women.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Urban working women (Professional)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauticians</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

**Table 14: Occupations of urban non-professional working women.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Urban working women (non-professional)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stitching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroidery</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 13 and 14 show that a selected number of professional and non-professional respondents from urban area were chosen.
Table 15: Occupations of rural professional working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Rural working women (professional)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady health workers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 15 shows that 14% of the rural respondents belonged to the teaching profession and 12% belonged to each of the professions like lady health workers, midwives and nurses.

The data indicate that the percentage of females belonging to teaching profession is comparatively higher because in rural areas people think that teaching is the best and respectable profession for females.

Table 16: Occupations of rural non-professional working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Rural working women (non-professional)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working in fields</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in somebody's house</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop keeper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stitching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 16 shows that 40% of the rural respondents (non-professional) were working in the fields; 28% were working in somebody’s house as maid; 12% were having their own shops while 20% were engaged with the stitching profession.

The data indicate that the majority of females in rural areas are working in the fields and this is because of the reason that most of them are uneducated and there are very few training centres in such areas where such uneducated females may learn some skills. Therefore, in order to run the household economy, they have to work in the fields with their males. These findings are in agreement with the results of S. Zahra (2003) where she indicated that in rural areas of Pakistan, 90% of the women work in fields with their male family members (for details see 4.1 and 4.2).
6.3.5 Income and purpose of job

As discussed earlier, the incidence of women labor force participation is very low in Pakistan. According to the Labor Force Survey, 1999-2000 female participation rate was merely 14% of the total labor force (for recent data, see chapter 4). Even though average annual growth rate of female labor force participation has been increasing slightly in Pakistan; it was 4% in 1980-99 and has gone up to 5.1% during 1995-98 (Labor Force Survey, 1997-98), however, this rate is still very low as compared to the other South Asian countries -- 42% in Bangladesh, 41% in Nepal, 32% in India and Bhutan, 37% in Sri Lanka. (World Bank, 2002).

The integration of Pakistani women into the labor force is of great concern. Because of economic pressures and the dissolution of extended families in urban areas, many more women are working for wages than in the past. Women’s contribution to the family economy has changed beyond recognition, as compared to conditions forty years ago. These changes seem to be having a greater impact on lower middle class families with monthly income ranges from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 5000 than either working class families or upper class ones. The families with monthly income below Rs. 3000 come in the category of lower class which certainly is the most neglected class and the working women belonging to this class suffer all the more as they are badly paid with more physical work. In the big cities like Karachi and Lahore, working class consists of workers from the north of the country whose women either do unskilled work in factories or operate in the so-called 'informal economy' or are engaged in domestic employment. Women of such lower middle or lower class families, work very hard in order to support the family economy but such women continue to be subjected to patriarchal domination.

Table 17 shows that 42% of the urban respondents were having a monthly income of Rs. 1000-3000; 16% with Rs. 3000-5000; 8% with Rs. 5000-7000 while 34% of the respondents were having a monthly income of Rs. 7000-or above. Table 9 further shows that 76% of the rural respondents were having a monthly income as Rs. 1000-3000; 22% with Rs. 3000-5000 and 2% were having a monthly income of Rs. 5000-7000 while none of the rural working woman was having a monthly income above Rs. 7000.

Table 17: Monthly income of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly income in Rupees</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000-3000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000-5000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000-7000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7000-or above</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)
The data indicate that in rural areas the majority of the respondents were in the lowest income group which is due to the difference between the qualification and the nature of job and their income is hardly sufficient for their lives.

The data further indicate that a significant number of the respondents (59%) belonged to the lowest income group which clearly shows that most of those respondents were from the lower class living on the poverty line.

I calculated the correlation between the income and education level. According to my hypothesis that average income increases with increase in the level of education, I found a positive correlation between the two. The same results can be found in the analysis carried out by Z. M. Nasir and H. Nazli (PIDE, Islamabad) where they examined the role of education, technical training, school quality and literacy on the earnings of wage earners and salaried persons in Pakistan. The analysis confirms the positive role of education as each year of education brings approximately seven percent returns of wage earners. The effect of literacy, technical training and private schools found to be positive and significant. Furthermore, the present results are also in agreement to Blaug (1976) and Colclough (1982) where they reported that education is playing a vital and significant role in the improvement of earning of family.

### Table 18: Source of income of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of income</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside the house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the house</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 18 shows that 28% of urban respondents and 22% of rural respondents were working inside the house while 72% of urban and 78% of rural respondents were working outside the house. The table further shows that the majority (75%) of the respondents from both the areas were working outside the house while only 25% of the respondents were working inside the house.
Table 19: Reasons of doing/seeking a job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To support family</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To utilize knowledge</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get high standard of life</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 19 shows that 62% of the urban respondents and 84% of the rural respondents were doing jobs to support their families; 14% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were doing jobs to pass their time; 18% of the urban respondents and 2% of the rural respondents were doing jobs to utilize their knowledge while 6% of the urban respondents and 6% of the rural respondents were doing jobs in order to get a high standard of life.

The data further show that overall a relative majority (73%) of the females are doing job to support their families, 11% females work in order to pass time, 10% work in order to utilize their knowledge and only 6% of the females work in order to get the high standard of life.

A vast majority of South Asian women work long hours in their households and the informal sectors in order to support their families. Yet, their work is hardly recognized in the respective national income accounts. This is the same situation as discussed above from the results that a majority of the working women work to support their families. According to some micro-level studies in Pakistan, women’s contribution to total income in crop production is between 25 to 40 per cent and 54 per cent of all employed women are counted as unpaid family helpers. In the labour-market generally, gender-specific inequalities in pay and job security are widespread.

In the foregoing part the socio-cultural situation as well as labor force participation of women in Pakistan is briefly discussed. A brief explanation about the various factors such as age, education, marital status which affect women’s employment is given and finally an overview about the various occupations adopted by Pakistani women as well as their involvement in jobs is given. The results also indicate some information about the social position of Pakistani women. However, a detailed analysis about the work of the Pakistani women and their position in Pakistani society will be a part of the following chapter.
7 Working Women: Their Work and Position in Society

7.1 Introduction

Female employment has never been condemned in principle, approval or disapproval rather depends on the compatibility of an occupation with gender segregation, i.e., on the ability to perform a job in a female working environment. Furthermore, attitudes concerning female employment also vary among the different socio-economic classes. The most negative attitude toward female employment can be found among the lower middle classes (Shaheed 1989:18; Marker 1987a:3) for several reasons: first, the life of this section of society is pervaded by the norms of purdah – by the lack of concepts for social interaction between unrelated men and women; second, most jobs that can be attached to the middle range of the occupational spectrum are nearly exclusively performed by men. These include work in shops and offices, in hotels and restaurants, and in the bazaars, in industries and handicraft. Working in such middle-level occupations, in which mingling with men cannot be avoided, would clearly result in a loss of social status for the respective women and their families. Doing home-based work in the informal sector, a field of employment that is often chosen by unskilled and uneducated women from the lower-classes who have to work in order to make ends meet but who prefer to work in a gender segregated environment, would be considered to be below the standards of women from the lower middle classes. The few occupations that can be performed within a female working environment, like teaching (in the female-only educational institutes) and practicing medicine (for the treatment of female patients), need a high educational background that is normally above that of lower-middle class women, and are therefore mainly occupied by women from the upper and upper middle classes. Due to this structural position, female employment in the lower middle classes is closely identified with economic need, and the inability of the male family members to provide for their family. Therefore, observance of purdah and keeping the women of the family out of the market is not only a religious obligation but it has also become a social status symbol. The strong equation of female work with disgrace and a fall in social standing has also been pointed out by Shaheed (1989:26) in her study of lower-middle-class women in Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, Pakistan.

Attitudes toward female employment are quite different in the wealthier and more Westernized upper and upper middle classes. Particularly, highly educated women like teachers and doctors are needed for keeping up gender segregation, and this demand has had a positive influence on the employment of highly educated women in these fields. Due to the compatibility of these professions with gender segregation and the high educational background which they require, they are associated with a high social status, and highly qualified women are still mainly concentrated in these two professions: one quarter of all doctors and one third of all teachers in Pakistan are women (Government of Pakistan 1989b).
During the last two decades, though, changes in the occupational choice of working women from the upper middle and upper class can be observed. Women have taken up occupations that were formerly regarded as exclusively “men’s jobs”. This trend of women entering new, so called “male” professions has definitely been influenced by the freezing of public-sector employment since the 1980s, which, due to women’s concentration in the public educational and public health system has disproportionately affected women’s career options. In the beginning of the 1990s there was even a total freeze on further recruitment in the public sector for about two years, and this made women, particularly academics that would formerly have found (and probably preferred) employment in the traditional women’s professions, switch to other fields of employment.

While, for example, only 25 years ago no women were employed in banks in Lahore (Nestvogel/Klein 1986:161/168), nowadays many banks have female employees. Women are responsible for the female clients or they are assigned for tasks that do not require much contact with male customers. The establishment of the “First Women’s Bank” in 1990 which already has several branches in major cities, has definitely made the entry of qualified women into banking much easier than it was before.

Journalism is another typical example of a formerly “male profession” which women have managed to enter in considerable numbers. The number of women journalists has increased steadily during the last years. Women work for women’s journals and magazines, for the women’s page of newspapers, or they write on women’s issues in general. This development has found its counterpart in the increasing recognition of women as an important client in the press.

It can be argued that in many of the new fields of employment, the concept of gender segregation has remained more or less intact. Yet, highly-qualified women from the upper and upper middle class have also entered professions that require a considerable degree of mingling of the sexes. More and more women are choosing law as an academic discipline and starting to work as lawyers after their graduation. Similarly, women have entered disciplines like “economics” and “business administration” in higher education, and they work in higher administrative positions in the government and private sector.

It is true that until now highly-qualified women are still heavily concentrated in teaching and medicine, and that they still constitute only a small minority in unconventional professions. 49

Nevertheless, they seem to have considerable possibilities as far as their career choices are concerned. One reason for this phenomenon might be the fact that the observance of purdah is not as strong among the upper classes as among the lower middle classes. Children of the upper and upper middle classes are mainly sent to good private English-language (and co-educational) schools and colleges, and even go abroad to Western

49 In the beginning of 1990s, about 60% of all professional working women were teachers (Mohiuddin 1991:972).
countries like the US or Europe for higher education. Among this section of society, female employment is not uncommon; working women can even be found among the older generation, though they commonly work (or worked) in “female” professions (teaching, medicine). In addition, employment in the upper sections of Pakistani society is identified with career aspirations and not with economic need.\(^{50}\)

The women in Pakistan have been constantly complaining of having being isolated from the mainstream of society. Women feel disillusioned on being maltreated by the male-oriented set up in Pakistan. They strongly claim that if they are given a chance, they can contribute more positively towards the development of all social aspects. Numerically the women in Pakistan are almost equal to men. They are equal in potential as the men. The Pakistani women live in the most diversified location of the tribal, feudal or urban environments. She can be a highly qualified and self-confident professional or a diffident peasant toiling along with her men-folk.

In the areas like NWFP and Balochistan, life is governed and regulated by strict beliefs and behavioural patterns. A woman has no say in any aspect of her life, including her marriage. In the populated provinces of Sindh and Punjab, a woman may keep her connections with her family after marriage. She expects support from her brothers and father in case of separation and divorce from her husband. In Punjab and Sindh, women are seen working in the fields with their men-folk collecting fuels and in some cases working on the construction sites shifting material from one place to another.

Some studies in Pakistan analyzed the effects of selected demographic and socioeconomic variables on labour force participation (LFP) in the four provinces of Pakistan. The results indicate that work participation is inversely associated with child-women ratio and nuclear family type. Marital status, dependency ratio and literacy rates are found to have a positive relation with LFP.

Kozel and Alderman (1990) studied the factors determining work participation and labor supply decision in the urban areas of Pakistan. Similarly, Rashid, Lodhi and Chishti (1989) investigated different demographic and socio-economic factors of women’s labor force participation behaviour in their study in Karachi. Empirical results of both the studies indicate that LFP rate rises with increase in the expected earning, wages and level of education. The presence of male members in the family tends to decrease the likelihood that a woman will work, while the presence of other women (aged 7 years and above) tend to increase the likelihood of women employment. LFP rate also declines with domestic and foreign remittances.

A study conducted by Z. F. Naqvi and L. Shahnaz (2002) shows that approximately 10% married women are less likely to decide their employment decisions by themselves.

\(^{50}\) Interestingly, as among the upper (middle) classes, many members of the lower middle classes do not consider being a pilot, a lawyer, or a computer programmer in an office to be totally unacceptable for women (though it is not as respectable as being a teacher or doctor). The reason is probably that these professions, in contrast to secre-
and 3% less likely to be consulted by the other members of the household in making their employment decision. This negative correlation is understandable in Pakistani society that husbands will have ‘a say’ in their spouse’s decision to enter the work force especially if it conflicts with their roles as a wife or a mother. It is generally accepted that in Pakistani society, the husband’s approval or disapproval is an important factor in whether a wife will perform a certain activity or not (Shah, 1986).

In Pakistan, the place of residence matters a lot, because of the traditions and customs that prevail especially in the rural areas. People cannot be against these circumstances although having education or other exposure. In rural areas a very small number of women are likely to decide their employment decisions by themselves while in most of the cases their decision are conducted by other members of the household.

Socio-economic status of the household is an important factor in determining women status among the households. It is generally believed that women’s decision to enter the work force are caused by a low level of income available to them and their entry into the labor force is necessitated by their lack of income.

### 7.2 Working women and family

Women in the Pakistani society are not independent at any point in their life. First they are controlled by the father, then brother and husband and eventually by the son, all of whom make the key decisions in their lives on their behalf. It was a famous saying that educating your daughter was like watering the tree in your neighbour’s house and many in our society appeared to subscribe to this viewpoint. Therefore, unless such attitude is radically altered little change could be expected. However, in recent years a change in the attitude of families towards their females appeared which ultimately resulted in giving some sort of independence to women regarding their rights for taking their own decisions in their lives.

Table 20 shows that 70% of parents of urban respondents were cooperative with them towards their jobs; 20% of parents were non-cooperative and 10% of parents were respectful with their daughters towards their job. The table further indicates that 88% of parents of rural respondents were cooperative; 10% of parents were non-cooperative while only 2% of parents were respectful with their daughters towards their jobs.

The data further reveal that a total of 79% of the parents were cooperative towards the job of their daughters, 15% were non-cooperative and only 6% of parents were respectful with their daughters towards their jobs.

tarial or factory work, require a great deal of education. This point is also raised by Weiss (1992:99).
Table 20: Attitude of parents towards the job of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data show that in both rural and urban areas parents are cooperative with their daughters towards their jobs. These findings are also in accordance with the results of Akhtar (1992), who concluded that the majority of the working women were having a favourable attitude from their parents towards their jobs.

Table 21 shows that a majority of the urban (72.41%) and rural (83.79%) respondents were having cooperation from their husbands towards their jobs while only 27.59% of urban and 16.22% of rural respondents were having a non-cooperative attitude of their husbands towards their jobs. The data further show that a total of 78.78% of the husbands were having cooperative attitudes towards the job of their wives while only 21.21% were having non-cooperative attitude towards the job of their wives.

Table 21: Attitude of husband towards the job of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>72.41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>83.79</td>
<td>52 (78.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.22</td>
<td>14 (21.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003) (only married respondents are included)

The data indicate that the majority of the working women both from rural and urban areas have a favourable attitude from their husbands and their husbands like their job because they are helping them to run the household economy. This is certainly a kind of positive change in Pakistani society which would help in improving the social status of women and in particularly of working women.

Table 22 shows that 60% of the urban working women and 52.63% of the rural working women were having a cooperative behaviour from their colleagues while 6.67% of urban respondents and 15.79% of rural respondents reported the non-cooperative behav-
bour of their colleagues. The table further shows that 33.33% of the urban working respondents and 31.58% of the rural working respondents were having a respectful behaviour by their colleagues. It is also evident from the data that overall a relative majority (57.14%) of the colleagues were cooperative towards the job of working women, 10.20% were non-cooperative and 32.65% were having the respectful attitude towards the job of working women.

**Table 22**: Attitude of colleagues towards the job of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Colleagues</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td>28 (57.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td>5 (10.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.58</td>
<td>16 (32.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003) (Only respondents with colleagues are included)*

The above results show that a majority of the colleagues are cooperative towards the job of working women which is also positive change as far as the social status of working women is concerned. Although a small fraction (10.20%) of the colleagues is non-cooperative but still an appreciable number (32.65%) of colleagues show respect towards the job of working women.

Table 23 shows that 63.64% of the urban respondents and 46.15% of the rural respondents were having a polite behaviour from their bosses; 27.27% of the urban respondents and 38.46% of the rural respondents were having normal behaviour from their bosses while 9.09% of the urban respondents and 15.38% of the rural respondents were having a harsh behaviour from their bosses. It also evident from the given table that a total of 55.93% of the respondents reported about the polite attitude from their bosses, 32.20% as normal and 11.86% reported the harsh behaviour form their bosses.

**Table 23**: Attitude of boss about the work of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63.64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>38 (55.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>19 (32.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>7 (11.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>59 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003) (Only respondents with bosses are included)*
The above data indicate that a relative majority of the working women are stating a polite behaviour from the bosses and only a small fraction reported about the harsh attitude of their bosses.

The above data depict a clear picture about the attitude which a working woman faces in her family as well as at workplace which is certainly very positive. However, the above results show only those women who are professional, educated and are working in some respectful professions like teaching and medical occupations (where mostly they have female colleagues).

However, in recent years, due to education and science and technological developments a dramatic change appeared in the attitude of people towards the job of women particularly in urban areas. This change resulted in more awareness among the youthful women about their identities, their capabilities and they are now more ambitious. The inflation and exposure through media has opened minds in the Pakistani society, where parents feel confident that their daughters can also be successful in lives. Similarly, young men want to choose sanguine women as wives who can be more of a partner than just glorified maids who would cook and look after kids. Time has also come to an extent when women, in some instances, themselves choose to be housewives. And one thing the Pakistani woman will always enjoy is the respect and acceptance of her decision to be a housewife. She can make the choice to work in case of need too. However, there is a vast difference in attitudes of people towards working women in urban and rural areas which is determined by the social, cultural and religious norms.

The following data will indicate the results of this study about the restrictions and likeness of families towards the job of working women as well as it will give some insight into the right of working women to take any decision regarding their job etc.

Table 24 shows that 14% of the urban respondents and 12% of the rural respondents were having restrictions from their families in coming back home early; 8% of the urban respondents and 4% of the rural respondents were not able to invite their male colleagues to their homes; 30% of the urban respondents and 24% of the rural respondents were having restrictions from their families that they could not work with males, while 48% of the urban respondents and 60% of the rural respondents were having no restrictions from their families towards their jobs. The data further show that a relative majority (54%) of the working women were having no restrictions from their families towards their job and 37% of the families believed that their females should not work with males (also see part 2.2).
Table 24: Restrictions of families towards the jobs of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restrictions</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Come home early</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t invite male colleagues in house</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t work with males</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No restrictions</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 25 shows that 62% of the urban respondents and 92% of the rural respondents gave their viewpoint that their families like their jobs while 38% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their families do not like their jobs. The data further indicate that a majority (77%) of the respondents were having the opinion that their families like their job while only 23% gave their opinion that their families do not like their jobs.

Table 25: Does the family of the working woman like her job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data indicate that in rural areas mostly people have a favourable attitude towards the jobs of females because without female participation, it is very difficult for males to work in fields. Therefore, in rural areas the majority of the families like the jobs of their females compared to urban areas. However, overall results show that majority of the families like the jobs of their females which is again a positive change regarding the economic independence of working women in a male dominated society like Pakistan. The following data show the degree of likeness of families about the jobs of working women.
Table 26: Degree of likeness of family about the job of working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of likeness</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To great extent</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 26 shows that the families of 44% of the urban respondents and 78% of the rural respondents like their jobs to a great extent; families of 18% of the urban respondents and 14% of the rural respondents like their jobs to some extent, while 38% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their families do not like their jobs at all. The data further show that overall the families of a relative majority (61%) of the respondents like the jobs of their females to a great extent and only 16% like the jobs of their females to some extent. However, the following tables indicate the reasons of likeness and disliking the jobs of working women by their families.

Table 27: Reasons of likeness of the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons of likeness</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm in a respectable profession</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45.16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>22 (28.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm utilizing my knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>8 (10.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm contributing to family's income</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38.71</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>76.09</td>
<td>47 (61.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>77 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 27 shows that 45.16% of the urban respondents and 17.39% of the rural respondents were of the view point that their families like their jobs because they are in a respectable profession; 16.13% of the urban respondents and 6.52% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their families like their jobs because they are utilizing their knowledge while 38.71% of the urban respondents and 76.09% of the rural respondents gave their opinion that their families like their jobs because they contribute to their family’s income. It is also evident from the above table that overall a relative majority (61.03%) of the respondents were of the opinion that their families like their jobs because they are contributing to their family’s income, 28.57% gave their opinion...
that because they are in respectable professions and only 10.38% of the respondents showed that their families like their jobs because they are utilizing their knowledge.

In rural areas, people like female’s work because of their contribution in the house economy but in urban areas people feel proud if their females are in respectable professions. However, the overall results show that most of the families like the job of their females because they play a part in house economy.

Table 28 shows that 31.58% of the urban respondents and 25% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their families dislike their jobs because they spend more time out which is not acceptable to their families; 31.58% of the urban respondents and 50% of the rural respondents were of the opinion that their families dislike their jobs because they have to ignore their children due to the nature and timings of jobs, while 36.84% of the urban respondents and 25% of the rural respondents expressed the opinion that their families think that their jobs are against the family’s customs, so they dislike their jobs (also see part 2.1).

It is also evident from the given data that overall the majority of the families have more or less the same reasons of disliking the jobs of their females.

Table 28: Reasons of disliking the job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons of dislike</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I spend more time out</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7 (30.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to ignore my chil-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.58%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8 (34.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dren</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against family’s customs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8 (34.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>23 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 29 shows that 28% of the urban respondents and 30% of the rural respondents were of the opinion that they have the right to take any decision to a great extent; 54% of the urban respondents and 46% of the rural respondents having the opinion that they have the right to take any decision to some extent while 18% of the urban respondents and 24% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that they have no right to take any decision in their family’s and personal matters.

The data further show that overall a relative majority (50%) of the respondents were of the opinion that they have the right of taking any decision to some extent, 29% respondents gave their opinion that they have the right to take any decision to a great extent and only 21% of the respondents gave their view as not all.
The data indicate that in urban areas some more working women have the right to take any decision compared to working women of the rural areas. However, overall working women have right to take their own decisions only in some cases.

Understanding a woman’s involvement in household decision making in a patriarchal society like Pakistan is a complex phenomenon. A woman’s involvement in household decision making in poor Pakistani households can be explained partially by her income-earning status, which in turn is dependent on a multitude of factors. These factors include individual characteristics (such as her age, duration of marriage, literacy and number of living children), socioeconomic status, attitude of family members about women working outside the home, and availability and accessibility to financial support systems. The ability to make decisions, particularly health-related decisions, within the household is important for the survival of poor Pakistani women. A study investigating the cause of delay in 118 pregnant women brought dead to the maternity unit of public hospital in Karachi revealed that social and economic barriers including waiting to seek permission from the husband, were the important reasons cited for not being able to bring these women to the hospital earlier (Jafarey 1993).

A study conducted by Khan and Qureshi (2002) suggests that compared with housewives, a significantly larger proportion of working women reported having greater autonomy as measured either by involvement in or independent domestic decision making as well as in freedom of movement.

Employment of women thus seems to be an enabling process helps to break down the patriarchal system and promote egalitarian relationships within households. Paid work for women is likely to bring internal change within the family by transforming power relationships between men and women (Mhloyi 1994).

The above data suggest that although working women receive cooperation from their families and also at work place regarding their job and their families like their job as they contribute to family’s economy. However, working women are not fully independent and not enjoying the full rights of taking any decision in their life. This is true for a male dominated society like Pakistani where women in general are considered economically unproductive, and their role is confined to domestic spheres and with this some social and cultural norms restrict their participation in the work force.

### Table 29: Degree of right of taking any decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To great extent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)
The above discussion reveals that working women play a relatively major role in decision making compared with non-working women and their work also give them their financial independence. To empower women in a sex segregated society like Pakistan, it is important to make them financially independent which can only be achieved by elevating their educational level so that they can better start their professional life.

Expressing their feelings, some field workers working in Pakistan Health and Nutrition Association (PAVHNA) say:

"I want my daughter to know there is life beyond the 'chardivari' (four walls) of the house, a different life if she chooses with some control over her destiny."

"I work as a field worker and go door-to-door to talk to women about life and choices. Perhaps most important of all, for the first time in my life I have money of my own, not just handouts from my father, my brother or my husband. It’s not much, but I respect myself more."

It is clear that employment of women in their projects contributes directly and positively to society and the community at various levels. A large majority say they feel increased decision-making power within their own households because they have some control over money. Their aspirations for their daughters have also changed, particularly their desire for a good education for them, which tends to be dependent on discretionary family income. An overwhelming majority of field workers believe that their work has a positive impact in the community and has improved their own status by showing they can function in something other than their traditional reproductive role.

### 7.3 Working women’s satisfaction and aspirations

A man works only to satisfy his needs. Money plays a pervasive role in the satisfaction of needs (Smith 1964). On the other hand lack of his ability to satisfy needs would result in frustration and disliking for the job while a satisfied person will produce more with zeal and devotion. So satisfaction stands for quenching of the desires, wants and needs of respondents from their jobs.

The nature of women’s productivity in the labor market is largely determined by socio-cultural and economic factors. The occupational choices for women are limited due to social and cultural constraints, inherent gender bias and lack of supportive facilities. Therefore, women’s labor power is considered inferior because of employers’ predetermined notion of women’s primary role as homemakers and that compell women to look for jobs in the secondary sector of labor market where they are low paid with low status. Economically active rural women work on their own family farms. The majority
of women in the urban sector work in low-paying jobs. In the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1998–2003), the Government of Pakistan committed itself to promote women’s employment by creating more opportunities for them. The specific sectoral programs include education, training, and skill development of women; promotion of female labor-based industries (i.e., ready-made garments, electronics, pharmaceutical); and credit provisions for self-employment.

It is clear from the above discussion that working women in Pakistan work very hard to support their families and still they are not well paid. Such a situation leads to dissatisfaction from the jobs and working women always strive for better and well paid jobs. However, the scenario is not so simple and there are various factors which affects their productivity. The following part explains the degree of satisfaction of working women in Pakistan with their present.

Table 30 shows that 54% of the urban respondents and 42% of the rural respondents want to change their present job, while 46% of the urban respondents and 58% of the rural respondents do not want to change their present job. It further shows that overall 48% of the working women want to change their jobs and 52% do not want to change their present jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

The above data show that majority of urban working women like to change their present job which is because of the reasons that in urban areas women are educated, there are many possibilities to get jobs and due to financial problems resulting from expensive living costs in urban areas working women always look for some better paid job. However, majority of the working women from the rural area do not want to change their jobs which is because of the reason that mostly working women in rural areas are illiterate and have less job possibilities to shift from one to the other.

The following table shows the reasons of working women’s satisfaction from the present jobs.

Table 31 shows that 30.43% of the urban respondents and 6.90% of the rural respondents do not want to change their jobs because of sufficient salary; 13.04% of the urban respondents do not want to change their jobs because of having nice colleagues; 43.48% of the urban respondents and 13.79% of the rural respondents were satisfied with their present job because of not having any problem; 13.04% of the urban respondents and
27.59% of the rural respondents considered that being a female, the present job is the most suitable for them while 51.72% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that being illiterate this job is better for them. It is also evident from the table that overall a relative majority (28.84%) of the working women who are satisfied with their present jobs indicated that being illiterate the present job was the most suitable job for them, 26.92% of the working women had no problem in their present job, 21.15% were of the view that the present job was the most suitable for females in Pakistan, 17.30% were having sufficient salary and 5.76% had nice colleagues at their work place.

Table 31: Satisfied with the present jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons not to change the present job</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient salary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>9 (17.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice colleagues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (5.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problem in present job</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>14 (26.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a female present job is suitable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>11 (21.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being illiterate this job is better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51.72</td>
<td>15 (28.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data indicate that the majority of the urban working women do not want to change their present job because they don’t have any problem, while the majority of the rural working women do not want to change their job because they think that being illiterate, they are having the best job presently like working in the fields and stitching etc. The data suggest that if the working women are educated, they are more ambitious and always look for new possibilities while most of the working women in rural areas who are illiterate or with very basic education have no desire to compete and this is the most discriminated class in the Pakistani society.

Table 32 shows that 74.07% of the urban respondents and 90.48% of the rural respondents want to change their jobs because of less income and more work load; 7.41% of the urban respondents and 4.76% of the rural respondents want to change their jobs because their offices were far away; 11.11% of the urban respondents want to change their present job because of the reason that their colleagues are not cooperative while 7.41% of the urban respondents and 4.76% of the rural respondents want to change their jobs because their bosses are very strict. It is also evident from the results that a clear majority (81.25%) of the working women who want to change their present job are of the view that they have less income with more work load and only a fraction (6.25%) of the
working women reported the reason that either their office is far away or their bosses are very strict.

The data indicate that in rural areas more working women want to change their jobs because of less income and much work load compared with the working women in urban areas. However, in both of the areas the majority of the working women want to change their present job because of much work load and less earnings. It suggests that the problems of the majority of the working women are financial and again this is because they are poor working class of a male dominated society as discussed above.

Table 32: Dissatisfied with the present jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to change the present job</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less income with more work load</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74.07</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90.48</td>
<td>39 (81.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office is far away</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>3 (6.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues are not cooperative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>3 (6.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss is very strict</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>3 (6.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 33 shows that 9.09% of the urban respondents and 5.88% of the rural respondents were of the opinion that their daughters should do job according to their interests; 21.21% of the urban respondents and 23.53% of the rural respondents expressed their opinion that their daughters should stay inside the house and do some household work; 45.45% of the urban respondents and 35.29% of the rural respondents were having the view point that their daughters should get higher education so that they may adopt a respectable profession; 9.09% of the urban respondents and 2.94% of the rural respondents wanted their daughters to get married as early as possible, while 15.15% of the urban respondents and 32.35% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their daughters should work only with female colleagues. It is also evident from the results that overall a relative majority (40.29%) of the working women were of the opinion that their daughters should get higher education so that they can adopt a respectable profession, 23.88% of the working women were of the opinion that their daughters should only work with females, 22.38% reported that their daughters should stay at home as housewives and a small fraction of the working women were of the opinion that their daughters either should make their career according to their choice or they should get married.
Table 33: Aspirations of working women for their daughters in respect of some job.

Hypothesis: In rural areas people consider that women should work only with females. Working or studying with males is against the religion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to their interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only household</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>5 (7.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get higher education and adopt a respectable profession</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>27 (40.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get early married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only do job with females</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>4 (5.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32.35</td>
<td>16 (23.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003) (Only respondents with daughters are included)

The data indicate that in urban areas majority of the working women want their daughters to get higher education in order to get better and respectable professions, and the working women of rural areas have also the same view point. However, a second majority of the rural working women want their daughters to work only with females which is because of the influence of some family traditions and the rigid nature of the head of the family although in urban areas less than half of the respondents are having this viewpoint. It is evident from the above data that a relative majority (40.29%) of the working women want their daughters to get higher education in order to adopt respectful profession and such aspirations of working mothers are the same as discussed above. However, the second majority (23.88%) who believes that their daughters should work only with females comes mostly from the rural areas or the traditional families of the urban areas where family traditions and cultural norms play a deciding role for the destiny of the females.

Some comments of my respondents:

I spent my whole life in kitchen and I don’t want my daughters to waste their lives like me. If they will do some job and their own money they will be more respected in society and they don’t have to ask some one for their personal needs like me (Adila).
I want my daughters to get high education but work only with females as people say bad about those girls who go to some office (Amina).

I was always dependent on my husband for my personal needs. I don’t want my daughters to be dependent on their husbands. I want them to get high education and do adopt some profession (Naila).

7.4 Position of working women in the society

It is a fact that in both rural as well as the urban society, Pakistan remains a rigidly patriarchal society in which women are treated as slaves to spend their lives in the service of a male dominated social system. It is not only a single patriarch, the head of a nuclear family, but the whole male dominated kinship organisation which has a stake in the subordination of women. No woman, even one with an independent career in a city can set up a home on her own, without the ‘saya’ (lit: shade or protection) of a male. A divorced woman or a widow must turn to her father or brother, if they will have her unless she has a grown up son under whose protection she can live. This is a powerful factor of control over women.

In the case of lower middle class families we can identify a two-fold division. On the one hand there are families whose women are educated, sufficiently at least to hold down a ‘respectable’ job. On the other hand there are more traditional families whose women have not received a good education who therefore do not qualify for ‘respectable’ salaried jobs. In these latter cases women contribute to the family economy by taking in home-based work under a putting out system operated by entrepreneurs who are only too happy to exploit this extremely cheap source of labour.

The continuous inflation in the cost of living in Pakistan over the decades has brought about a situation where a man’s wage is no longer sufficient to keep the family. There was therefore a continuous pressure to broaden the base of the family economy. Gradually and steadily, more and more women were forced to find jobs to supplement family incomes. The change is visible and quite striking. Initially only a few occupations were thought to be respectable enough for such women. As the pressure for jobs increased the concept of a ‘respectable job’ was progressively broadened to take in a wider range of jobs (see also part 6.1). Today one finds women in a wide range of occupations, including laboratory assistants or ticket clerks at railway stations or clerks at post office counters and so on, as well as lawyers, architects, engineers, journalists and broadcasters as discussed earlier. Needless to add, the numbers in the latter categories of occupations are extremely small. With more and more women taking up salaried jobs and in keeping with an increasing number of women taking to higher education, new values have emerged. Women now desire jobs and careers for their own sake so that an in-
creasing number of wives of well-heeled professionals and women from the upper classes take jobs not out of economic necessity but for self-fulfilment.

Today Pakistani women are striving for their challenging careers to achieve the high life standard and to cope with the economic necessities in order to play an active part in supporting the household economy as well as their role in national economy. In the following part, I would discuss about the respect, degree of respect and the position of working women in Pakistani society.

Table 34 shows that 68% of urban working women and 84% of rural working women were of the opinion that working women are respected in Pakistani society; 28% of urban respondents and 14% of rural respondents were of the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society while 4% of urban respondents and 2% of rural respondents were having no opinion about the respect of working women in Pakistani society. It is also evident from the data that overall a relative majority (76%) of the respondents were of the opinion that working women are respected in Pakistani society, 21% were of the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society and only 3% of the respondents did not give their opinion.

**Table 34: Respect of working women in Pakistani society.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Are working women respected?</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 35 shows that 40% of the urban respondents and 48% of rural respondents were of the opinion that working women are respected in Pakistan to a great extent; 28% of the urban respondents and 36% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that working women are respected in Pakistan to some extent; 28% of urban respondents and 14% of rural respondents were of the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistan at all, while 4% of urban respondents and 2% of rural respondents did not give any opinion. The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (44%) of the respondents were of the view that working women are respected in Pakistani society to a great extent, 32% reported that working women are respected in Pakistani society to some extent, 21% were having the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society and only 3% were having no opinion on this subject.
### Table 35: Degree of respect of working women in Pakistani society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

Table 36 shows that 29.41% of the urban respondents and 28.57% of the rural respondents expressed their viewpoint that working women are respected in Pakistani society because of their education; 23.53% of the urban respondents and 4.76% of the rural respondents were having their opinion that working women are respected in Pakistani society because they contribute to their family’s income; 8.82% of the urban respondents and 11.90% of the rural respondents gave their opinion that working women are respected in Pakistani society because they participate in country’s progress; 20.59% of the urban respondents and 19.05% of the rural respondents were of the opinion that working women are respected in Pakistani society only because they are independent while 17.68% of the urban and 35.71% of the rural respondents expressed their opinion that only those working women with authoritative jobs are respected in Pakistani society. It is also evident from the results that overall a relative majority (28.94%) of the respondents were of the view that working women are respected in Pakistani society because they are educated, a second major group of the respondents (27.67%) were having the opinion that only those working women are respected in Pakistani society who have authoritative positions, 19.73% of the respondents gave their reason that working women are respected in Pakistani society because they are independent, 13.13% of the respondents regarded their respect due to their contribution to family’s economy and only 10.52% of the respondents regarded the respect of working women due to their contribution in the country’s progress.
Table 36: Reasons of respect of working women in Pakistani Society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are educated</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>22 (28.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are contributing to their family’s income</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>10 (13.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They participate in the country’s progress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>8 (10.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are independent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.05</td>
<td>15 (19.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only women with authoritative jobs are respected</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.68</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>21 (27.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>76 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data show that a relative majority of rural working women were having the concept that only those working women with authoritative jobs are respected in Pakistani society because they think that poor women are not respected. However, overall majority of the respondents regarded the respect of working women in Pakistani society due to their education. The following data show the reasons of not respecting the working women in Pakistani society.

Table 37: Reasons of not respecting working women in Pakistani society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They spend more time outside the house</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>6 (28.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They do a job against the will of their family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>4 (19.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can’t properly take care of children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>4 (19.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society does not accept them to go out</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (14.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to poor knowledge of Islam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>4 (19.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>21 (100)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 37 shows that 28.57% of each from urban and rural respondents were of the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society because they spend more time outside the house which is not accepted to any extent in a conservative society like
the one in discussion; 21.43% of the urban respondents and 14.28% of the rural respondents expressed their opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society because most of the time their jobs are against the will of their families; 14.28% of the urban and 28.57% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that as working women they can’t properly take care of their children, so they are not respected in the family and in the society around; 21.43% of the urban respondents were of the view point that as society does not accept working women to go out, so they are not respected when they go out for work against the traditions of the society while 14.28% of the urban respondents and 28.57% of the rural respondents expressed their opinion that due to poor knowledge of Islam, working women are not respected in Pakistani society. The data further show that overall a relative majority (28.57%) of the respondents were of the opinion that working women are not respected in Pakistani society due to the reason that they spend more time outside the house while rest of the respondents regarded this due to the reason that working women work against the will of the family, they can’t take care of their children and due to poor knowledge of Islam. Only a small fraction (14.28%) of the respondents regarded this issue due to the reason that society does not permit working women to go out for work.

Table 38 shows that 86% of the urban respondents and 80% of the rural respondents were of the view point that their social class effect to a great extent their status in the society; 6% of the urban respondents and 4% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that their social class have some effect on their status in the society; 2% from each of the urban and rural respondents gave their opinion that their social class does not have any effect on their social status while 6% of the urban respondents and 14% of the rural respondents did not show their willingness to give their view. The data show that a large majority of both the urban and rural working women have the view point that their social class affects their social status in the society around them.

It is also evident from the results that a reasonable majority (83%) of the respondents were of the opinion that social class of the working women affects their status in Pakistani society to a great extent, 10% of the respondents did not give their opinion on this issue, 5% of the respondents regarded it to some extent and only 2% of the respondents were of the opinion that social class of the working women does not affect their social status in Pakistani society (also see part 2.3).

Table 38: Social class affects the status of working women in the society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of effect</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)
The above findings clearly depict a picture where majority of the working women believe that social class of the working women affects their status in Pakistani society. The following table gives some reasons of this class and status issue.

Table 39: Reasons of question in Table 38.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women with high education have a better status</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women belong to a high class have a better status</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor working women are not respected</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate working women are not respected</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

Table 39 shows that 20% of the urban respondents and 30% of the rural respondents were of the view point that working women with higher education have a better status in the society; 46% of the urban respondents and 32% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that working women who belong to high class always have a better social status; 14% of the urban respondents and 20% of the rural respondents expressed their view that poor working women are not respected in the society; 16% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that illiterate working women are not respected and have no status in Pakistani society while only 4% of the urban respondents and 10% of the rural respondents did no give their opinion.

The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (39%) of the respondents were of the opinion that working women belonged to high class have a better status in Pakistani society, 25% of the respondents were of the opinion that working women with high education have better status, 17% of the respondents were of the opinion that poor women are not respected and have no status in Pakistani society, 12% of the respondents were also having the similar view point where they reported that illiterate working women are not respected and have no status in Pakistani society.

The above discussion indicates the factors responsible for the status of working women in Pakistani society. It is evident from the data that working women have more respect in Pakistani society compared with non-working women however, their social class affects their status and usually working women with higher class have higher status in
Pakistani society. The following data will again give an insight into the status of working and non-working women and perception of society about the status of women.

Table 40 shows that 16% of the urban respondents and 10% of the rural respondents were of the opinion that working and non-working women have the same social status; 62% of the urban respondents and 80% of the rural respondents were having the view point that working women have a higher social status compared with the non-working women, while 22% of the urban respondents and 10% of the rural respondents expressed their opinion that non-working women have a higher social status. The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (71%) of the respondents were of the opinion that working women have a higher social status in Pakistani society, 16% reported that non-working women have higher status and only 13% of the respondents were of the opinion that working and non-working women have the same social status in Pakistani society.

Table 40: Social status of working and non-working women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working and non-working women have the same social status</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working women have a higher social status</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-working women have a higher social status</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data indicate that in rural areas a large majority of the respondents have the opinion that working women have a higher social status than non-working women compared with the urban respondents. However, overall it is reported that working women have higher social status in Pakistani society compared with the non-working women which is in accordance with the above discussion and certainly it is a positive change in Pakistani society. The hypothesis that working women are respected more than non-working women in Pakistani society is accepted in this case which is indicated from the above data.
The above results indicate a picture about the status of working women compared with the non-working women in Pakistani society while the following results show the status of working women compared with the males in Pakistani society.

Table 41 shows that 20% of the urban respondents and 14% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that working women are superior to males in Pakistani society; 38% of the urban respondents and 20% of the rural respondents were of the view that working women are equal to males in Pakistani society; 42% of the urban respondents and 60% of the rural respondents expressed their view point that working women are inferior to males in Pakistani society, while only 6% of the rural respondents did not give their opinion. It is also evident from the results that overall a relative majority (51%) of the respondents considered the status of working women as an inferior to males, 29% of them reported the status as equal to males and 17% of the respondents were of the view that the status of working women is superior to males in Pakistani society (also see part 2.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior to males</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to males</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferior to males</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data indicate that the majority of the rural respondents have the perception that working women are inferior to males in Pakistani society which is because of the experiences of those respondents living in remote areas of Pakistan where their traditions never allow them to ask for their rights in a male dominated society around them, irrespective of the situation whether they are working or not. However, the situation in urban areas is little bit improved although still the majority of the respondents consider the status of working women as inferior to males and the overall situation is also the same. This can well be understood if we consider the social and cultural norms which adversely affect the status of women in Pakistan. However, with the improvement in the education level of the working women and their families and in overall literacy rate, it is hoped that the situation will improve. As discussed above that the families and society gives respect to working women as they consider that if women will work, there will be a change in the family’s economy and there will be an improvement in the economy of Pakistan. The following results reflect the thinking of people about the work of females.
Table 42 shows that 22% of the urban respondents and 4% of the rural respondents strongly agreed that people consider it below their honour to rely on the income of their daughters/wives; 24% of the urban respondents and 20% of the rural respondents agreed to this query; 2% of the urban respondents and 8% of the rural respondents were having an indifferent opinion to this query; 38% of the urban respondents and 54% of the rural respondents disagreed with this query; 8% of each from the urban and rural respondents strongly disagreed with this query while 6% of each from the urban and rural respondents had no opinion in this regard. It is also evident from the results that a relative majority (46%) of the respondents were disagree with the query that people consider it below their honour to rely on the income of their wives/daughters, 22% of the respondents were agree to this query, 13% were strongly agree, 8% were strongly disagree and 5% had indifferent view about the query.

Table 42: People consider it below their honour to rely on the income of their wives/daughters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data indicate that the majority of the rural respondents disagree with the statement that people consider it below their honour to rely on the income of their wives/daughters because most of the respondents consider that they are helping their males, and it is at all not a matter of dishonour if our males rely on our income due to not having sufficient income sources. The same situation can be seen in urban areas and over all results again indicate the same pattern of thinking of working women. The data is in accordance with the previous results as discussed above about the work of females and their status in Pakistani society.

Above discussion gives a detailed analysis of the status of working women in the family as well as in the society while the following chapter will deal with the problems of working women at home and at the work place.
8 Problems of Working Women

8.1 Introduction

No society in this world is free from social problems just because life is not static but dynamic, ceaseless and at times bewildering. Working women face a number of problems due to their new modes of life. Women are still being discriminated against in the workplace worldwide, with Pakistan having one of the lowest rates in the world for female participation in the workforce and there is a huge gap in gender in the employment sector. The total workforce in Pakistan today stands at 40 million, of whom 37 million are employed, under a definition of working for at least one hour per day. However, of this figure, a staggering 31.6 million are men and only five million are women (official statistics, for recent figures, see chapter 4). Most women are working in the informal sector, which is not recognised or accounted for when surveys are carried out.

Women are continuing to suffer at the workplace. They are still lower paid than men, and are completely abused in some cases. According to a survey by the NGOs, some 77 percent of women in employment country-wide are in the informal sector, where jobs are often badly paid, with no legal protection, and poor working conditions.

A study conducted by Khan and Qureshi (2002) indicates that a significantly greater proportion of working women reported independent mobility as measured by being able to go out of their homes without prior permission from their husbands. A greater proportion of working women reported that they could go to the physician (57%) or market place (50%) alone compared to 45% and 31% housewives respectively.

8.2 Analysis of the data

In Pakistani society, where traditions still rule and there are social taboos concerning female behaviour, women have more obligations particularly as housewives. In the following part the results of the present study concerning the problems of working women (rural and urban) inside as well as outside the house and at workplace will be discussed. A brief comparison of the problems of working and non-working women will also be discussed.

Table 43 shows that 36% of the urban respondents and 32% of the rural respondents were having the problem of not taking care of their children; 14% of the urban respondents and 36% of the rural respondents were having the view point that they could not properly manage their houses; 12% of the urban respondents and 6% of the rural respondents gave their opinion that they could not visit their relatives due to their jobs; 6% of the urban respondents and 2% of the rural respondents expressed their concerns about not attending the functions of their families due to their jobs; 8% of the urban
respondents and 4% of the rural respondents were concerned about not giving the proper time to their husbands, while 24% of the urban respondents and 20% of the rural respondents had any problem due to their jobs.

It is also evident from the data that overall a relative majority (34%) of the respondents were having problems of not taking proper care of their children due to their job, 25% were of the view that they can’t manage their house due to their job, 22% reported having no problem due to job, 9% of the respondents were of the view that they can’t visit their relatives due to their job, 6% reported that they can’t spare time for their husbands and only 4% of the respondents were of the view that they can’t attend family’s functions.

Table 43: Problems of working women inside the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can’t take care children</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t manage house</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t visit relatives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t attend family’s functions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time for husband</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problem</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The data show that compared with the working women of the urban areas, the majority of the working women in rural areas have to face problems of not managing their houses due to their jobs which is probably because of the reasons that in rural areas due to less income, working women can’t afford servants and again the jobs timings are not flexible as in urban areas. In urban areas the majority of the working women face problems due to not taking proper care of their children which is due to increase in the number of nuclear families where working women have no option to give their children to their elders during their working hours and they have to look for some sort of day care centres for their children. This is the same problem which can be seen from the overall results of the above data.

The life of lower middle class women in salaried employment is subject to rather different kinds of pressures. Her working day starts early, for she must feed her husband and children and send them off to school before she herself rushes off to work. In the case of a woman who is the first to be picked up or the last to be dropped home this can add an hour, or even two, to the long day spent at work. She has to finish many chores like preparing dinner for the family, taking care of children, washing etc. after a long day of
work. Very few women happen to have particularly enlightened and helpful relatives (e.g. a mother-in-law) or a co-operative husband who is willing to take over some of their chores. Ennis (1975) talking about “Women’s Fight Back” remarked that a working woman gets only half the average man’s wage. The married women at a hard day at work return home only to start another job, housework (for more details see part 2.5).

The domestic labor of working women is a full day’s work but Pakistani system does not reward this labor and our system gets the labor of women in running the society for free. Such working women after coming back from their work place have to perform a second, unpaid and unrecognized, shift at home. It seems that the views of Simone de Beauvoir are still applicable to a sex segregated society like Pakistan where indicating the problems of working women she says that it is much more difficult for women to combine their employment with household duties, which would seem to require at least three and a half hours a day (The Second Sex, 1989: 135).

Table 44 shows that 26% of the urban respondents and 12% of the rural respondents face problems due to the negative behaviour of the people (harassment) around them; 34% of the urban respondents and 20% of the rural respondents have transport problems, while 40% of the urban respondents and 68% of the rural respondents have no problem outside the house.

The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (54%) of the respondents did not report any problem outside the house, 27% reported transport problem and 19% reported about the negative attitude of the people.

When I discussed the reasons of harassment (negative behaviour of people) of women in the public sphere, the answers I got were very similar. I was told by many women that the people in Pakistan are uneducated and therefore did not know how to behave with a woman. With the rising of educational standards of the people men would stop harassing women. (For more details see part 2.3). Harassment is not only restricted to uneducated men, women are harassed by men in cars and on motorbikes and at places like theatres, and libraries which are commonly not visited by the uneducated section of society. It cannot be ignored that there is difference between upper-class and lower-middle/lower-class areas. If a women goes to an upper class shopping center she won’t have many problems with men there, but if she goes to common bazzar, not only the men who are walking and standing around, but also the salesmen will drop their work and stare at her (see also Jang 11.08.1997). It can be concluded that harassment of women is closely linked to the strong sexualization of gender relations in Pakistani society, and the absence of concepts for social interaction between na-maharam men and women, particularly in public life (for more details, see part 2.1)

It is of course more problematic to establish women’s spaces in the areas where either there is no economic or other benefit involved or even a financial loss might be involved. Women face such problems, for example, in the public transportation system. The busses in the local and long distance traffic are run privately, and only the different routes and fares are laid down by the government, merely two seats in the whole bus, the ones next to the driver are reserved for women. Even this space for women is not always acknowledged, neither by the male passengers nor by the drivers and conduc-
It is a common phenomenon that during rush hours men just occupy the front seats in order to cut short their waiting period thereby forcing women to look for the second bus and so on (for more details see part 2.4). This is certainly one kind of problem faced by women in the urban areas. The nature and number of problems faced by the rural women are not alike sometimes.

Table 44: Problems of working women outside the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative behaviour of people (Harassment)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not any</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*

The data clearly indicate that working women in rural areas have fewer problems outside the house compared with the working women of the urban areas. However, overall results show that majority of the working women have no problem outside the house which is again a positive change in Pakistani society.

Table 45 shows that 40% of the urban respondents and 38% of rural respondents were having a problem of lack of facilities at their work place; 12% of urban respondents and 2% of rural respondents complained about the non-cooperative behaviour of their colleagues; 36% of urban respondents and 50% of rural respondents were having much work load with less income.

The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (43%) of the working women reported about much work load at their work place, 39% reported about the lack of facilities at work place, 11% did not report any problem and only 7% of the respondents were of the view that their colleagues were not cooperative.

Table 45: Problems of working women at work place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Urban working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rural working women</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues are non-cooperative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much work load</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not any</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Own field survey (2003)*
The data show that in rural areas the majority of working women were having much work load with very low income e.g. working in fields from morning till late evening, while in urban areas this problem is negligible while on the other hand majority of the urban working women face problems due to the lack of facilities at work place. It is also evident from the above results that very few working women have non-cooperative colleagues which can again be considered as a positive change towards the improvement of working women’s status in Pakistani society.

The following data reflect the results concerning the comparison of the problems of working and non-working women in Pakistan. Table 46 shows that 38% of the urban respondents and 50% of the rural respondents were having the opinion that non-working women can properly look after their children due to having more time and less work load; 12% of the urban respondents and 4% of the rural respondents had the view point that non-working women can give more time to their husbands; 34% of the urban respondents and 26% of the rural respondents had the opinion that working women can enjoy a better life standard than non-working women which is probably because working women earn and spend money by themselves whereas non-working women always depend on the earnings of their husbands/parents; 8% of the urban respondents and 18% of the rural respondents gave their opinion that non-working women have limited exposure to society compared with the working women which is because working women spend time outside the house and can establish more contacts with people around them while 8% of the urban respondents and 2% of the rural respondents did not give any comment on this issue.

The data further indicate that overall a relative majority (44%) of the respondents were of the view that non-working women can better take care of their children compared with the working women, 30% of the respondents reported that working women have better life standard compared with the non-working women, 13% of the respondents were of the opinion that non-working women have limited exposure to society and 8% of the respondents reported that non-working women can give more time to their husbands.
Table 46: Working and non-working women in Pakistani society.

| Hypothesis: A non-working woman can take better care of her children and house compared with a working woman. |
|---|---|---|
| Category | Urban working women | Percent | Rural working women | Percent | Total |
| Non-working women can properly look after their children | 19 | 38 | 25 | 50 | 44 |
| Non-working women can give more time to their husbands | 6 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| Working women have a better standard of life | 17 | 34 | 13 | 26 | 30 |
| Non-working women have limited exposure to society | 17 | 34 | 13 | 26 | 30 |
| No opinion | 4 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 13 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Own field survey (2003)

The above results show that majority of the working women think that non-working women can properly look after their children which is again due to many problems of working women such as much work load, long hours of working etc. It is also evident from the results that the proposed hypothesis that a non-working woman can take better care of her children and house compared with a working woman is accepted (for further details, see part 2.5).
9 Few Case Studies of Working Women from Various Backgrounds

Twelve case studies on working women from the rural and urban areas of Pakistan have been taken for having insight into the issue of their social status in Pakistani society. As the present study involves the social status of rural and urban working women, therefore, I selected six working women from each area to study their life histories. To get a thorough understanding on the issue, I selected the working women from various age groups, educational level, occupations and financial background as these are the factors which affect the social status of working women. My sample includes working women from the formal as well as informal sector.

The interviews took place in the houses of the respondents. In order to get very explanatory information, I made an interview guideline. I visited my respondents several times to get responses according to my interview guideline. Sometimes whole family members like mother, father, husband, children and other siblings were present during the interview while sometimes only respondents were at home. I noticed that in the presence of other family members, respondents were hesitant to give responses to questions like the position of women in the society, attitude of family towards women’s work etc. In such cases, I always prefered to visit my respondents when they were alone at home. In most of the cases their attitude was very positive which helped me a lot to get appropriate information and responses.

The following part will give an insight into various important aspects of working women’s life in Pakistani society. I divided working women which were interviewed into three subgroups depending on their social status, educational level and need for job. These types are:

Bread winner with sever economic needs
To achieve high standard of life
Women searching for new perspectives

Each of the above types is further discussed under various subheadings like, socioeconomic situation of working women; reasons of their work; problems faced by the working women; their views about the social status of working women in Pakistani society etc.

I concluded from these case studies that the motivations of working women were different. Some working women just wanted to utilize their knowledge and some were working in order to achieve the high life standard. Almost all of the working women were of the view that education is the key for a respectable life. Women with high education can
adopt many respectable professions and definitely can have high social status. All of the working women were having the view that working women have more respect in Pakistani society.

9.1 Bread winner with severe economic needs

9.1.1 Socioeconomic background

Rahila Begum is in early forties, separated from her husband for the last five years, lives in Rawalpindi. She is educated till middle level and has her own house comprising one bed room, one sitting room, a kitchen, a bath room and a small balcony. Her husband did not divorce her but also does not support her for her economic needs. She did not tell me the dispute between the couple which resulted in her present situation because she was reluctant while speaking about her husband.

“He is still my husband although he does not live with me but he is the father of my children and I don’t want to say anything against him”.

In Pakistan there is a rigid belief that husband is majazi khuda and wife should not disobey him as otherwise she will go to the hell. Majority of uneducated females consider their husbands as lords and never disobey them. Rahila’s husband is not even supporting her and other family members but still she does not want to speak against him.

She has four children, three daughters and a son. Her elder daughter is 16 years old, son is 14 years old, second daughter is seven and third one is six years old. Her elder daughter could not continue her education after middle level due to financial problems and Rahil further commented that her husband was also against the education of daughters. Her other two daughters are in class one and two. Her son was not very good in study, so he also did not continue his further education and is working in a supper store as a sales boy.

When her husband left her there was nobody else to support her financially and she decided to work and did develop a small indoor business to support her family. She stitches clothes and is able to earn Rs. 4000-5000 per month which is variable depending on the seasons like marriages seasons and Eids celebrations.

“When my husband left me, my son was too small to support me but I had no other way except to start working on my own”.
It is evident from the response of Rahila that had her son able to support her, she would not have started working to support the family. It can be generalized in Pakistani society where people prefer to educate their sons to get support from them at the later stages of their lives. It is also given by Weiss (2002: 126) that people in Pakistan prefer to educate their sons or to learn them some technical skills in order to receive helping hands for the family. Girls are expected to get married at an early age and stay at home, raise children and not doing work in a trade or profession, hence they would not be able to help in supporting the family.

**Salma Bibi** is in her mid thirties, educated till secondary school, lives in Chakwal. She works as a teacher in a private school in her village. She has her own house with three rooms, a kitchen, a toilet and a room for animals. She has five children, two daughters and three sons. Her elder daughter is eight years old and she is in class three while younger daughter is six years old and is in class two. Her sons are four, three and one year old. During her working hours, her mother-in-law looks after them. Her husband has a small tea shop in the market of the same village. Their monthly income is Rs. 5000-6000. During the wheat season, they also work in the fields but the wheat produced is hardly sufficient for their own use for the next six months. Therefore, there is no additional income due to the wheat production.

Salma belongs to a very rigid family. She wears *burqa* while her daughter wears *chador* with *niqab* (a piece of cloth covering the whole face except eyes). I asked her whether she removes the *burqa* in school and that if wearing *burqa* is her own decision or a compulsion from her husband. She said that in school she only wears *dupatta* and that her husband never imposed *burqa* on her while it is her own decision to wear the *burqa*.

"When I was very young, my father was very strict regarding purdah and now I'm used to it and I don't feel comfortable without *burqa* while going out. My daughters also observe purdah. I think when a female is properly covered, she is more respectable. In my family there are very few working women, so I'm much careful to have the comments from my family that due to my work, I'm against the religious and traditional values. However, even due to my earning status in the family, my husband is the head of our household and I can never take his position."

**Munawar Begum** is in her early forties, educated till primary level, lives in a village of Chakwal. She has five children, four daughters and one son. Her elder daughter is sixteen years old who is also educated till primary level. The second daughter is two years younger than the elder one and also educated till primary level. Other two daughters go to *madrassa* for religious education. She described that she cannot afford to send her daughters to school and with no tuition fee, *madrassa* is suitable for them to acquire some basic religious education. Her son who is six years old is in class two. She has her own small grocery shop in her house with the provision of items of daily use. She can
Amber Ferdoos

earn Rs. 4000-5000 per month from her shop. Her husband works in a shoe factory in nearby city and is educated till middle level. He earns Rs. 2000-2500 per month. Her parents in law also live with them. Her father in law was a soldier in the Pakistan Army who is now retired since five years and getting a pension of Rs. 1200 per month. However, he spends most part of his pension for his medication. Munawar has her own house with three rooms, with a courtyard and with the supply of electricity but no natural gas.

Shakeela is in her mid forties, a mother of six children, lives in a village of Chalwal. She is educated till middle level. She wanted to study further but her father did not allow her to study further as there was no high school at that time in their village and being a traditional father, he did not allow her to continue her education in a school situated in another village next to their own with a fear to mix with men during the way to school.

“I started to learn stitching from a lady who was a stitching and embroidery teacher at her own house. I was not willing to learn stitching but wanted to study privately but my parents did not agree and forcefully sent me to learn stitching and embroidery. Today I think it was good decision from my parents as now even with this skill (stitching) I can earn some money and share the burden of my husband”.

Shakeela has six children five daughters and a son. Her elder daughter is 18 years old and second one is 17, both are educated till secondary school. They did not continue their studies because there was no college in the village and she could not afford to send them to the city for further education. Now they are helping their mother in household work and stitching. Her third daughter is 11 years old and is in class 5, fourth one 10 years old and is in class 4; her fifth daughter is three years old. Her son is fifteen years old and works as a sales boy in the garments shop in the nearby city. He lives with his uncle’s family in the city. Every Sunday he visits his family in the village and every month he gives all his pay to his mother.

Her husband, head of the family sells fruits and vegetables in the small village market. His monthly income is Rs 3000. He is the patient of diabetes and asthma and a major part of his earnings goes for his medication.

Shakeela has her own house with two bed rooms and a sitting room with a small courtyard and with the supply of water and electricity but no gas. She can earn Rs 2500-3000 per month. She stitches clothes for her neighbours, relatives and friends and she also gets contracts from the factories. A middle man brings clothes for her to stitch, collect the prepared stuff and pay her the money. I asked her why she does not personally contact with factories or boutiques for orders as she could get more money. She responded that she is not very confident in dealing with men and does not know the addresses of factories as well. Furthermore, she finds it more comfortable to have work orders while staying at home as she does not have to mix with men.
**Shahnaz** is a forty years old working woman, educated till secondary level with some religious education, lives in the village of Gujar Khan. She has her own house comprising two big rooms, one sitting room, one bath room, one kitchen with the supply of electricity but no natural gas. She has four children, one daughter and three sons. Her daughter is educated till secondary school and did not continue her further education due to the lack of college in their area. As it was against their traditions to send daughters to city for getting education, she also became a victim of such traditions. Her daughter stays at home and helps her in household chores. Her elder son is seventeen years old and works in a car technician shop to learn the profession; the second one is fifteen years and the third one thirteen years old, both go to school. Shahnaz is the only earning member of the family as her husband died ten years ago. She is working as a lady health worker and also engages herself in stitching clothes. Her monthly income is Rs. 4000. She commented that the elder brother of her husband supports them with a Rs. 1000 per month. She can manage to buy all basic domestic appliances including another sewing machine for her daughter’s dowry from her income. She started this job after the death of her husband.

“My husband was a school teacher and was also earning money through part time job. I never felt that I should work but after his (husband) death, my brother in law advised me to do some sort of paid job instead of asking for money from other relatives. I was lucky as government started a program for lady health workers in rural areas where I was able to get the job. I’m very much satisfied from my job which is the only source of my income and survival”.

**Nasreen** is in her early fifties, educated till primary level, lives in a village of Gujar Khan. She works in houses as servant. She has her own house and her monthly income is Rs. 2000 while income of her sons varies from season to season (average Rs. 4000 per month). She has five children, two sons and three daughters. Her sons who are 22 and 25 are educated till middle level and work in the fields. Her elder daughter is 22 years old and never went to school but can read Qur’an as she learnt it from the imam of local mosque. Her second daughter is 15 years old and completed her 10th class and now learning stitching from a local stitching centre which is free for poor girls. Her third daughter is ten years old and is in class 5. Nasreen also had three miscarriages due to malnutrition.

“I know that I have a very big family but my husband does not allow me to take any precautions for family planning like pills etc. My husband is drugs addict for many years and does not work. He stays mostly at home and demands money from me and from my sons and in case of refusal, he beats me”.
Nasreen is passing a very miserable life. Her parents in law also live with them and due to their old age she has the responsibility to take care of them.

9.1.2 Women and their work

Women’s productive contributions in many Third World economies remain dismally underreported and miscalculated, particularly in those areas such as Pakistan where women tend not to work in the formal sector. Discourse on options for women’s employment in Muslim countries revolves around the issue of whether or not women should work for remuneration, instead of recognizing the existence of the work in which they are already engaged. As poorer Muslim women are often physically veiled, so are their productive contributions “veiled” in popular assessments and official documentation. When new technologies are introduced in areas such as Pakistan where work roles are complementary, they are usually directed towards men’s activities (Rogers, 1980; Barnes-McConnell & Lodwick 1982). The result of this tendency is a strengthening of the commonly held assumption that women sit at home solely engaged in food preparation, childcare and domestic maintenance; the reality is that in addition to all this, women are often engaged in labour for remuneration as well. However, the implications of overlooking women’s labour are directly related to issues of women’s empowerment economically, socially and politically (Weiss 2002: 73).

On the basis of the predominant fiction that most women do not labour outside of their domestic chores, there has been hesitancy on the part of the government to adopt deliberate policies increasing women’s employment options and to pass laws providing legal support for women’s labour force participation. While true virtually every where, it is particularly important in poorer areas of Pakistan for a women’s status (as well as for that of her family) that her activities are properly considered to be respectable. Historically, this has implied a prohibition on mixing freely with unrelated men and marked sexual division of labour. No one would stop a woman from working in a field or from taking care of another women’s child if her labour was considered necessary and beneficial to her family. When a woman came to identify with a higher class, any female member who had worked for others would generally withdraw from paid employment as soon as her contribution was no longer necessary for her family’s basic needs. Therefore, concerns over traditional notions of propriety have not prevented women working for pay; instead, they often simply prevented women and their families from admitting that they engage in such work (Weiss 2002: 74).

The sexual division of labour in most third world cities is marked by the majority of working women participating in marginal sectors of the economy, with relatively few working in the formal labour force. Women here are confronted with an additional dilemma in that socio-cultural traditions which more virtually exclude them from many of the informal sector activities in which their counterparts engage in other countries such as selling roadside snacks or raw fruits and vegetables from pushcarts. Instead, women are primarily occupied as piece-rate workers in home-based cottage industry, but with a remarkable social “twist”: they essentially do exactly the same work which men do in the bazaar, but given socio-cultural norms of women’s limited mobility, their workplace is solely within the home and they therefore labour for significantly less remuneration (Weiss 2002: 74).

The World Bank (1989:89) estimates that seventy percent of Pakistan’s urban labour force is engaged in informal sector activities. Here, the informal sector predominantly consist of a large number of small-scale production and service activities that are individually or family owned and use indigenous inputs and labour intensive, simple technology. It overlaps the small scale sub-sector, particularly household enterprises, and covers much of the “service” sector outside public service. The usually self-employed workers in this sector are engaged in activities ranging from hawking, street-vending, marketing, knife-sharpening, shoe-shining, and junk-collecting to selling fruits, vegetables, etc. Other find jobs as mechanics, blacksmith, carpenters, small artisans, handicraft workers, potters, barbers and domestics.

Female employment among the lower-middle class families is closely linked to economic needs and a fall in the social standing of the respective family. Women’s income constitutes an important part of the household resources, or women work in order to maintain the living standard of their families.

When the husband of Rahila Begum left her, her son was very young and there was no other financial source to live. Therefore, she decided to work for the livelihood of her family.

“When I was young, my parents did not allow me to get education due to their rigid beliefs. They were of the view that religious education is enough for females as girls don’t need to go out to earn money. But they did not know that there may come a time when I’ll have to support my family alone. If I would be educated, I could do some respectable job, like teaching”.

Rahila does stitching, embroidery and makes decoration materials at home and relies on a middle man for the selling of such materials. In order to save some money each month for the dowry for her daughter, she needs to work as much as possible to earn more than the living expenses of the family.

Salma started her job four years back when she felt that it’s very difficult for her husband to support the whole family alone. Having a certificate in secondary school, she
Amber Ferdoos applied for a job in a private school in her locality which she got easily due to very less educated females in the surrounding. She teaches junior classes (nursery and preparatory classes) and she earns Rs. 1000 per month. Due to very less pay, she started working as a cleaning woman in the same school besides her job which enabled her to earn Rs. 500 per month additional as to her pay.

Munawar Begum runs a grocery shop inside her house and she can earn Rs. 5000 per month.

“The income of my husband was not sufficient to support the family. It was very difficult for him even to bear the expenses of food and we were not able to save money for the dowry of our daughters. I realized of doing some work to support my husband and family and as I did not learn any skill. My husband did not allow me to go out for any work which left me with an option to open a small grocery shop inside my house.”

Munawar’s husband buys grocery items for the shop and she only sits there to sell them. This work enabled her to earn more money, enough to save even for the dowry of their daughters. She expresses that it is not very easy to have daughters in a society like Pakistan due to huge dowry which most of the poor families can not afford.

Shakeela has a big family to support. Her husband, due to his illness was not able to support the whole family alone and she decided to do some work in order to earn some additional income. Due to not having enough educational background to adopt a respectable profession, stitching was the only work suitable for her (in her view) and she started working in this area from which she can earn some money to fulfil some basic needs of her family. Besides the stitching work, she also works for few hours each day in some houses as cleaning woman to earn some more money. Her work starts early morning and continues till late night which resulted in her poor health situation.

“I never wished to have many children due to limited financial resources but as in our society, the birth of a son is more worth than a daughter, my parents in law and husband forced me to continue until I have a son. After the birth of my three daughters, I was finally blessed with a son who was certainly very important for the whole family. I decided not to have anymore children but my husband again insisted me of having at least one more son which resulted in two more daughters but no son. Due to traditional norms, it is my husband who decides about everything including the number of children we should have.”

Shahnaz is a widow and works to support her family due to not having other income source. Her son is still too young to work and earn money to support the family. She is
of the view that a woman in Pakistani society can do everything provided she has the courage to do.

“When my husband was alive he never allowed me to work in or outside the house. He always wished to educate the children, particularly our daughter and insisted me to stay at home and look after children. When he died, I was very upset about how to support my family. Being not very educated, I was lucky to have my present job as a lady health worker which at least provided me a source to support my family.”

Besides her job, Shahnaz also stitches the clothes from where she earns some additional money to save a part for the dowry of her daughter. She can not afford to send her children to school for education but she wishes that her daughter gets married and she should have enough dowries to find a partner in the marriage market.  

The husband of Nasreen is drugs addict who was working in a factory at the time of their marriage with a monthly income of Rs. 200 (thirty years back) which was sufficient to support the small family. He was also working in the fields and due to hard work, he decided to quit his factory job to work full time in his fields. However, after having three children it became difficult for him to support the family. He was not able to get the same job back in the factory and he became disturbed mentally and started spending most of his time at home with no interest in his work in fields.

“He started abusing and even beating me if I asked him to work. During the time he stared to use heroin to lessen his worries and within few months he became completely addicted in the company of other males of our area known to have a very bad reputation. He also started spending most of his time with his friends while on the other hand there was no one to support my family. I decided to work in order to earn for the livelihood for my children. As I did not have enough education to adopt a reasonable job, I started working in some houses as cleaning woman earning at least enough money to buy foods for my family.”

Nasreen had a very hard time but as now her both sons also work to support the family, her situation is bit better but still she has a big problem due to her husband who always demands money to spend for his addiction.

9.1.3 Problems faced by working women

Married working women have by far greatest problems coordinating their occupation with reproductive tasks because they are the daughter-in-laws and are expected to do most of the reproductive work, even when there are other women (mother-in-law, sister-
in-law). As a consequence reproductive work is hardly recognized and women are left with the double burden of handling most of the reproductive work of the whole family.

“Working women face lot of problems especially those who go outside the house to perform a job but in my case, I don’t have any such problem. My son brings material for decoration pieces from the market and I perform my job at home. However, I have to give my products to middle man, who gives me very less money compared with the market rates. I don’t have enough contacts to look personally for orders and have to rely completely on the middle man who always threatens to stop giving me orders if I demand more money for my products. I don’t have any problem inside the house as my daughters help me to perform the household chores and I can spare time for stitching as well to earn extra money. However, problem due to the less reward of my labour is always there but I don’t have other option and solution as my work is the only way to support my family and I don’t want to have any risk of losing the orders by arguing with the middle man” (Rahila).

“I have many problems due to my work as my children are very young and I cannot give them proper attention for which they need. I leave them with my mother in law during my working hours. She is very old and it is not easy for her to take care of them properly. My younger son always has the diarrhoea problem that needs proper care but I have no other way except to leave him with my mother in law. I wake up very early morning with my daughters and after finishing all household chores, I leave for the school. As my work place i.e. school is far from my house, I have to take bus to reach there which takes fifteen minutes for one way travel but during rush hours, it is very difficult to take the seat in the bus as I have to compete with men to enter the bus. There are very less busses in this route and if I miss the bus I have to wait for another 30 minutes for the second bus. Therefore, in order not to miss the bus or if missed reach the school on time, I have to leave my house at least an hour early. It takes around 45 minutes to reach the school on foot but it is always not very easy to walk through the road to school especially during the summer times when strong sunshine and dust cover all the way to school” (Salma Bibi).

“I don’t have any problem inside or outside the house because inside the house my daughters perform all household chores and I don’t have to go outside the house. My husband brings all grocery items for shop because he never allows me to go to bazaar to buy goods for shop” (Munawar Begum).
“I have much work load inside the house although my daughters help me in household chores. Due to my stitching work sometime I work whole night in order to deliver the orders which is very tiring and results in my poor health. When I go outside the house, I feel not comfortable while passing trough the busy street where every second eye focused on me (woman) which is very embarrassing. Men standing in these streets gaze every woman and pass comments, sometimes their behaviour is very insulting as if all women come out of their house in order to expose themselves. Most of such men are uneducated and the way of their harassment is very common but as I have to pass through these streets each day, I’m used to such comments and harassment and sometimes I never notice if someone is looking at me or present near me at all. However, I always make sure that there is enough space behind and in front of me while I pass through the streets” (Shakeela).

Shahnaz expressed that although she has much work load but she does not consider it as a problem as this is how one fights for survival.

“I wake up early morning and after morning pray, I clean house and at the same time my daughter prepares breakfast and I prepare lunch to save time during the day. Then I go to the nearby office where all the lady health workers of our area report each day and continue my work of visiting houses to speak with other women of my designated area to advise them in family planning and other first aid instructions. Sometimes I just sit in the small office in my village with other staff to do the same work or as specified by the manager. After my job I take my lunch at home and sit to start my work of stitching and continue until late evening. Due to such long hours of work, I have poor health and I need at least a month of bed rest but being the major bread winner of my family I cannot afford to take leave from my job and if I’ll stop my stitching work even for few days, I will lose my customers”.

“Due to my work I walk a lot to reach the houses which are outside the village and particularly during summer days, I feel very tired when I come back home. Sometimes due to pain in my legs, I feel it very difficult to walk but due to very limited income I can’t afford to travel by bus each day and if I travel at all, it is not very easy to have seat in the over crowded bus” (Nasreen).

9.1.4 Attitude of husbands’ and family regarding job

The extent to which women are involved in daily decision-making within the family appears to be based on objective circumstances which are not generalizable. In some instances, women are consulted and their suggestions or wishes are considered while in more traditionally orthodox households, male members wills tend to remain more de-
terminate. Age is not necessarily a significant factor, as some families take daughters’ suggestions into consideration while in others even wives are not asked for their input.

The basis on which decisions are made and extent to which women are involved in carrying out contributes to another aspect of changes in decision making power, notably perceptions of respectable activities for women and the visions they hold or freedom. Freedom is intimately linked to power and is associated with such issues as being able to study, being able to dress in the latest fashions, controlling one’s fertility by the use of contraceptives, and over all mobility.

“When I was living with my husband I was not doing stitching regularly, sometimes I was stitching clothes of my friends but not for money. He was against my work and he never allowed me to go outside of house for work. My children were small at that time; I had much household work so I could not do stitching properly. My husband never helped me to bring something from the market for my stitching. He was not cooperative in bringing up children. When my husband left me my brother initiated me to do some work to support the family instead of asking others for support. My relatives also supported my decision to work and earn for my children” (Rahila).

“Attitude of my husband regarding my job is positive. He encouraged me to start working in order to earn for the family. Attitude of my family is also very cooperative. My mother in law is an old lady but she encouraged me when I decided to do job. She looks after my children which is a great help as without her help I cannot even think to do job. My brother in law who is living with us working on teashop with my husband is very nice person and respects me a lot. He often helps my children in studies. My parents, who live in the nearby village, also encouraged me to start working” (Salma Begum).

“Attitude of my husband regarding my job is very cooperative. When I asked him that I want to open a shop, he supported my idea and helped me to start my shop. Initially he was a bit worried about the critical notion of the relatives that he is living on the income of his wife. However, when I explained him the fact that people always find something to criticize others and one should not consider them in such matters, he agreed and supported me. I never asked him to help me in house hold chores as I don’t like to send him to kitchen and cook food or to do any other house work. He always prefers my suggestions in important family matters. I think if a female is independent she gets more respect from her husband.”
When I decided to open a shop inside the house the elder brother of my husband did not support this idea. He was of the view that as males will also be your customers, being a female, it is not respectable to attend them. He even stopped sending his daughter to our house with a fear of the presence of males nearby. Many of our relatives criticized my idea of running a grocery shop and many are still angry. They are of the view that in our family women never work in shops because in shops women have to speak with na-mahram males which is against the religion. However, I don’t care others because for me most important is the cooperation from my husband.” (Munawar Begum)

“Attitude of my husband is cooperative towards my work. He always prefers my opinion in every important matter in the family. He gives all his income to me and I spend according to the needs of our household. He cares about me a lot due to my work load. In my in laws family, many females work in hospitals and in factories, so nobody opposed my work. I believe that one should not care about others and do what is right because people always criticize whether you do right or wrong. I don’t interfere others matters and don’t want others to interfere my matters. Once my brother opposed my work in other’s houses due to very low status job, but I told him that I find it better to work instead of asking for money from others.” (Shakeela)

“When my husband was alive, he never allowed me to work as he was thinking it his own responsibility to earn for the households. After his death I had no other income source for my family and I decided to work. The elder brother of my husband who is a school teacher encouraged me to work as he told me that in our family everyone earns hardly enough for one’s own family and it would not be possible for anyone to support your family. Almost all the members of my family supported my job/work and respect my decision of becoming a working woman.” (Shahnaz)

“Initially my husband opposed my work but later he changed his attitude when he saw that I can work independently and that I can earn for the households. However, he started asking for money for his personal expenditures and on my refusal he often beats me. It’s very difficult to live with him anymore. My father repeatedly advised me to take divorce from him but I always think that I spent most of my life and now I should live and bear such hardships for my children as they are innocent. My father initially opposed my work and told me that you just come back to my house and we will support you, and my brother also suggested me the same. I think the reason of not supporting my decision was their fear of losing the family honour but I never considered their opposition and continued my work.” (Nasreen)
9.1.5 Women in the men’s domain

In Pakistan particularly among the lower-middle classes, judgment or gossip about the woman’s character or conduct often take on sexual overtones, i.e., they often include allusions to sexual misbehaviour or sexually inviting behaviour. This phenomenon is closely linked to the perception of gender relations as predominantly sexual and the concepts for social interaction between the sexes, both of which are typical for purdah societies. Purdah is based on the assumption that external restrictions have to be imposed on unrelated men and women – particularly on women – in order to prevent extra marital sexual relations, or, in other words, that the desegregation of society and the mingling of the sexes will necessarily bring about decay in moral standards and therefore have to be prevented. It is a common anxiety that the contact with unrelated men at the workplace might result in friendship between the sexes or even love affairs. It is even suspected that women who leave their homes in order to work in a desegregated environment together with men are actually looking for possibilities to meet with men and break the purdah rules. However, considering the interaction of women with men at work places or in the society as a whole, there exist a great array of opinions due to rural / urban set up as well as social class of the working women.

Rahila belongs to a very conservative family. She and her daughters observe purdah. She expressed that the working with males is not completely wrong provided you remain in your limits. If you are on the right way no one can spoil you. But in our society especially in lower-middle class people do not respect those females who go to offices or work with males.

“If I would be educated I would prefer to join teaching profession. If a female stays at home she is more respectable but working with na-mahram is not right. I will not allow my daughters to go to some factory or some office where there are majority of males”.

Rahila believes that the social class matters too much regarding the respect for working women. In small streets people gossip a lot about those females who work with males. Belonging to a lower middle class, Rahila’s family considers izzat as more important than food. Her family does not like that people in the surroundings speak about their girls and their characters.

“People think badly of a girl who works in an office. They think that she goes to the office and has fun with men, flirts with them sits together with them. She goes out with male friends”.
Salma Bibi belongs to a very conservative family and most of the people of her family do not consider it good if woman works in an office or with males. But she thinks that there is no problem in working with males.

“In villages we work in farms with males. Sometimes we work with male relatives sometimes with other males of the village. If a female is respectable and concentrate on her work no one will gossip about her and say something against her”.

Salma thinks that women should get education and should adopt any profession as without female participation a country cannot progress.

Munawar Begum is of the view that in our society especially in villages people do not like those females who are working with males. Her family opposed her to start a grocery shop because of the reason that on shop she will have to speak with males. But in her opinion there is no problem in working with males. However, her views about the young girls contradict to a greater extent.

“My daughters are not educated and they cannot work in office and in factory. I will not allow them to work in factories because they are very young. I think for aged females there is no problem in working with males but young girls should not work at all.”

Shakeela finds it difficult for woman like her to work with males because her family does not allow her to interact with males. However, according to her, those females who are educated, it does not matter if they work with males. She considers money and education the most important criterion to be more respectable in society.

“I see many females and males sitting and chatting together in the University campus on my way to work. These females can work with males after the completion of their studies and they will be very confident in dealing with men. How can a female like me be confident who spends her whole life inside the house and only works because of financial problems? My sister in law is a midwife in a government hospital and she is more confident than me. I think those females who work with males are more confident.”

According to the Shahnaz’s view there is no problem in working with males as they are also human beings like us. She believes that if in our religion both males and females have equal right and status, why a woman cannot work with a man. She thinks that if a
female gets the opportunity to work, she should work. It does not matter whether it is a gendered specific job or not.

“In Pakistan we (females) always wait for the time and need to start working. I think all females should work like males whether there is need or not. They should be ready for the future challenges. I think those females who are working with males are very confident and courageous compared to those who just sit at home”.

Nasreen further adds to the views of Shahnaz that those females who work with males are very brave and courageous and confident. She thinks that she is ready to work in any factory with males provided she gets some opportunity and even she is ready to allow her daughters to work with males.

“For me it is no problem if my daughters find some job where they will have to work with males but their father and their brothers will not allow them. They think nowadays zamana is not reliable and one should always think for ones izzat. People do not like those females who work with males”.

The fear that a woman who works along with men corrupted i.e., that employment might negatively affect her moral character, or that the woman might become the target of character assassinations by the neighbours or members of the extended family simply because she works in a male space are important reasons for family members not to allow their daughter, sister, or wife to become gainfully employed.

9.1.6 The most suitable profession for females

Most women share the ideal that being either a teacher or doctor is the best profession a woman could possibly have. However, given the low literacy rate they also pointed out that such ideals are generally unrealistic. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were agreeing for their daughters to adopt any profession of their choice like working in office sector and factories. This result is contradictory to the findings of Weiss where she reported that professions like sales and banking which require women to mix with men are totally ruled out as having no izzat which being a doctor or teacher bring. (Weiss 2002: 82)

Rahila thinks that teaching is the best profession for females in our society because this is a profession where women can have complete seclusion from men if they remain in segregated educational institutes. She has aspirations for her daughters to teach in
school but not to work in an office because she thinks that for people of her class only teaching is a respectable profession.

**Salma** thinks that teaching is a respectable profession for females. However, in her view other professions are also equally respectable depending on the perception of people adopting such professions. She thinks that females can adopt any profession and work independently to achieve the high standard of life. She is of the view that if females will only prefer to adopt the teaching profession, how they will find other females in professions like medicine where according to our cultural and religious values we expect to have a lady doctor instead of a male doctor.

> “In my village it happened many times that women died due to delivery complications and in the absence of lady doctor, families did not allow them to go to male doctor. I want to educate my daughters and prepared to send them even to cities for higher education which will enable them to learn and adopt respectable professions but I want them not to forget our religious and social values.”

**Munawar Begum** perceives that people respect teachers as they are the nation builders and females can have complete seclusion which is considered to be the most important for women in our culture. She thinks in teaching females have less burden of work and they can also spare time for their children. However, she also thinks that other professions are equally good.

> “One should look for any profession where one can have respect as female. It’s unfortunate that due to financial crises I can not afford my daughters to get education but I want them to learn some skills to be able to work and earn for their families in case of need.”

**Shakeela** also considers that teaching is a nice profession for females due to suitable timings and segregated working environment. However, she thinks medical profession is even better than teaching because one can get education and teach in a non-segregated educational institutes but when it comes to medical problems, females cannot find it comfortable to get treatment from a male doctor in complications.

**Shahnaz** expresses that although she is not a teacher but she thinks teaching is the most suitable profession for females because they can take their children with them to school even when they are very young (in nurseries provided by school). She wants her daughter to learn some skills as she is not able to send her to nearby city for higher education due to not having any college in their locality.

**Nasreen** thinks that school is a safe place to work and that is why parents never feel any problem if their daughters work as teachers. She has aspirations for her younger daug-
ter to be a teacher and not work like her because she thinks in her work there is no respect at all in society.

The women share the idea that being a teacher is best profession for females. Because these women belong to rigid lower-middle classes and are not highly educated, they do not have any idea about the offices and the environment in the offices. They think that teaching is the best profession.

9.1.7 Social status of working women

Rahila expresses that the status of working women in Pakistan depends to which class they belong. Those women who are educated and belong to well off families are more respectable in the society as compared to those women who are working in somebody’s house or factories. Poor sweepers in the hospital can never get the status of lady doctor. Although women are now working in every field of life but educated women belonging to some respectable occupation have the higher social status in society.

“Once I went to one office to make the birth certificate of my daughter where no one in the office talked to me properly as people see your clothes, your shoes. Although I am independent but I am respectable only for my family not for the whole society because I am poor and our society respects rich people”.

Salama Bibi thinks that in Pakistani society the point of view of people has changed due to women’s participation in all walks of life. We find women working every where, in offices, in banks, in universities; in hospitals and people respect them and their work. She thinks that there is a great difference between cities and villages. In cities people are modern and educated and working women have high social status. However, due to old traditions and less education, village people still consider women’s work as a strike on the izzat of their families.

Munawar Begum considers that working women have a relatively higher social status in our society as compared with non-working women. However, she thinks that working women do not enjoy equal status with men. Furthermore, the social status of working women is directly related to their educational level and their social class and not with the nature of job or work. A highly educated woman from the upper middle class or upper class has higher social status no matter she has her own business or she is working in any profession.

Shakeela has the view that working women have a higher social status in our society. Females who live in urban areas are more respectable in society than those in the rural areas. Furthermore, women with higher education enjoy equal rights and status in the society.
Shahnaz thinks that with the awareness among people due to education and media, women’s status changed a lot. Working women get more respect from their surroundings in the changed society. Now women are getting education and participating in the every field of life. She thinks that women with higher education and position enjoy, if not equal, but almost equal status in the society with men.

Nasreen expresses that poor working women have no respect and no status in our society. Although in our religion all human beings are equally respectable irrespective of sex and occupation but in our society people respect only money.

These women have the point that the status of working women depends on their social class, education and profession. If a woman is highly educated and belongs to a respectable profession, she enjoys an equal status in the society but illiterate working women who cleans someone’s house or work, as labourer has no status and respect in our society.

### 9.2 To get high standard of living

#### 9.2.1 Socioeconomic Background

Noreen, a 22 years old girl lives with her parents and elder brother in Rawalpindi. She is educated till secondary school. Her father is a factory worker and earns Rs. 5000 per month while her mother is housewife and also makes stuffed toys at home. The elder brother of Noreen works in a garments shop as a sales boy and earns Rs. 3000 per month. When Noreen finished her secondary school she decided to enroll herself in college but her mother did not permit her to get further education. She was of the views that after higher education females look for job and because except some female teachers, none of the female in their family works in the formal sector with males, it would not be easy for Noreen to look for job in a non-segregated job market. Her mother suggested her to learn the technique of making stuffed toys and help her in her work if she really wants to keep herself busy in work. Therefore, Noreen learnt this job and started working with her mother which increased the earning power of the family.

Saima, a 29 years old lady, educated till primary level lives in Islamabad in a rented apartment with all the basic facilities. She has four children, two school going daughters at the age of six years and five years and two very young sons. Her husband is educated till bachelor level but due to unemployment he could not get any proper job and started his own grocery shop in a nearby market. He earns Rs. 10000-13000 per month.

Mrs. Gohar, a 58 years old widow, graduated from the Punjab University, Lahore, lives in Islamabad. She has one daughter and two sons who are married and she lives with her younger son who is working in a pharmaceutical company as a manager. She also has one grand son and they all live in a house with three bed rooms and one sitting room.
Her elder son lives in Karachi with his family while her daughter lives in Rawalpindi with her husband and parents-in-law.

Mrs. Gohar is a school teacher and her monthly income is Rs. 6000 per month. Her husband who was working in a bank died two years before.

When Mrs. Gohar got married, her husband was accountant in a bank. Her parents-in-law and two sisters-in-law were living with them. Her husband had to marry her sisters because he was the only working member of the family. His income was only Rs. 4000 per month at that time which was hardly sufficient for the household expenses and it was not possible for him to save some money for other purpose.

9.2.2 Reasons of job/work

Noreen does not belong to a rich family but the total household’s income is sufficient for the whole family to live a normal life. She wanted to utilize her time while engaging herself in some activity but she was not allowed to go outside for work or even to get higher education due to the conservative family set up. Therefore, she started working with her mother to earn money not for the household but to save it for her dowry.

“My work gives me pleasure and at the same time I can save some money to buy anything I want for which I don’t need to ask for money from my family.”

Saima commented that the income of her husband was enough for the households but due to the expenses like to give money to his parents and to enroll their children to a better school, it was difficult for him to spare extra money. Therefore, she decided to help her husband in running the house economy but due to very less education, it was not possible for her to find some job. Having young children to take care, she thought of doing some work while staying at home. She knew stitching before and thought of using her skill to earn money. Initially she requested her friends and neighbors to be her first customers as she agreed to prepare their clothes at very low costs. She got good response due to her low price compared to the other professionals in the same filed in her area. With time she developed her work very well and now she always has enough work pending for the next day. She can earn Rs. 3000 to 5000 per month, the major part of which she spends for the schooling of her children.

When Mrs. Gohar realized that it is very difficult for her husband to fulfil the needs of the whole family, she decided to do some sort of job to support her husband. At that time she was educated till matriculation; therefore, she decided to teach children at home and in this way she opened a small tuition centre at her house to teach the children of junior classes. Later she thought to improve her own education in order to teach the children of higher classes to earn more money and with this goal she started studying for her degree privately and within five years she was able to get the degree of bachelor
of education. With the degree of BE she was able to get job in a Government school near her house. After joining her job it became very difficult for her to continue teaching children at home. Therefore, she stopped her tuition centre and started giving time to her own children after her job. During these years she and her husband were able to save money for the marriage of her sisters-in-law, and later her parents-in-law died. Her husband was promoted to the post of manager and her children started going to school and their economic situation totally changed. She passed a very hard time but her husband always felt proud for his wife who helped him in difficult times.

“Education is very much necessary for every woman as I changed my life with my education. I am satisfied and feel proud and respectable as a school teacher. I started work due to my needs but now I enjoy my job as I am independent. I had lot of problems due to my job but now I’m satisfied that I did manage everything.”

9.2.3 Attitude of husband/family towards job

Noreen expressed that her family never asked her to work and her father always offered her money for her personal expenses. However, he respects her decision of working, probably due to the nature of job.

“I think his (father) attitude might be different if I would work outside the house. Perhaps this is due to the reason that my family is very conservative and never allows females working with males”.

Saima’s husband always supported her work. He prepares his breakfast and irons his clothes by himself which is not normal in Pakistani society. He respects the opinion of his wife in all family matters. Although the other family members of Saima don’t have any objection in her work but they would not like if she would work outside the house.

Mrs. Gohar expressed that her husband was very cooperative in household chores and always helpful in all other family matters. He always encouraged her as a working woman. When she started her job, it was very unusual for females to work even in professions like teaching but her family always encouraged her to join and continue her job.
9.2.4 Women in men’s domain and their status

In Pakistani society working women’s respect and status is connected with the social class and nature of job they do. If they come from an upper middle or upper class and are in any professions, their status is high and they are respected. However, if working women come from a lower or lower middle class and work in low paid, unskilled professions, they are not respected neither at work place not in the family. Such women are always harassed by their male colleagues. A friend of mine left her previous job from a pharmaceutical company only because of the reason that one of her colleagues (who was married with two children) always insisted her to spend time with him after working hours and once he forced her to sit with him in his car. She was so much afraid of this incidence that she did not tell to anybody including her parents but did not go to work next day.

**Noreen** thinks that if a female observes purdah and covers her body properly, there is no harm in working with males. Those females who work with males are more confident than those who stay at home but females should also not misuse the freedom of work in a male domain.

My observation is that the economic activities carried out by Noreen has changed the condition of the family positively and has brought comfort, economic security and happiness to the family and Noreen herself was content over what she was doing for herself and for her family.

**Saima** comments that those females who are educated and are working in formal jobs have no problems in working with males because their colleagues are also educated with proper respects for working women. Such women have better social status in our society. However, women working in informal and unskilled jobs have many problems while working with males because they work mostly with uneducated males. Such males consider them as women with bad character and never respect them or their work and such working women always have very low social status not only at work place but also in family due to social class and family background. Saima wants her daughters to be highly educated and professional and she will allow them to adopt any profession of their choice.

I observed that the respondent was contented and satisfied and talked about her work and the improvement of her family conditions with the sense of satisfaction and pride.

According to the view point of **Mrs. Gohar**, women working with male colleagues are more confident than those working in the segregated job environment. Such women have broad vision and respect. One should encourage females of the family to adopt any profession they like and never impose the education that they do not want to acquire and the professions which they think are not according to their aptitudes.
“Social status of working women in Pakistani society improved a lot over the last two decades. There was a time when people dislike the work of females in any profession and that was due to traditional and cultural norms. However, as the education among people improved, they started accepting the job of females not only in the segregated environment but in the areas which were totally occupied by males. This is the most important phenomenon that happened during the last decades which improved the social status of working women in Pakistani society.”

The respondent is confident and satisfied with her job. She is happy because of her job and is able to live with respect and does not have to beg for her living.

9.2.5 The most suitable profession for females

_Noreen_ considers teaching profession as the best profession for females who belong to particularly lower or lower middle class because they work in a segregated system. However, she said that the attitude of people towards working women has changed a lot over the last years because there are many females seen working with males in formal sectors where only males were seen few years back. Highly educated females working in formal professions are very much respected not only at work place but also in families.

_Saima_ expresses that teaching is the most respectable profession for women in our society. However, she thinks that other professions are equally respectable for women provided that women work and remain within the provided limits.

“I don’t have any male customers due to my job type but I will allow my daughters to learn and adopt any profession without fear of working in professions which are specified only for males”.

_Mrs. Gohar_ comments that teaching is certainly a respectable profession if we consider our cultural and religious values. However, one should not force daughters to get education to be only teachers. In order to work side by side with men for nation building and the progress of country, women should be allowed to adopt any profession of their choice. This would result in the presence of women in all formal jobs which will change the attitude of people towards the work of females.
“I think when more and more women will be seen working in offices, hospitals, business centers with male colleagues, the way our society perceives the work of women will change and this change will result in a better social status of working women”.

9.3 Women searching for new perspectives

Sadia, a 35 years old medical doctor lives in Rawalpindi in her owned house with all the basic facilities. She has three children, two school going daughters and one very young son. She has a servant for household chores during her working hours. Her husband has his own business and their total household income is Rs. 30000-40000 per month.

Sadia started her clinic three years ago after leaving her government job due to job timings. She works in order to utilize her knowledge and experience and she is of the view that women must work in order to take part in the progress of country; however, education and care of children should be preferred.

“When I was working in the hospital, I was not able to properly look after my children due to job timings and I had to quit my job which I think I’ll start again once my children will grow up, at least at the college going age. My husband is very much cooperative and respects my opinion. As I’m the first female doctor in my family, my parents feel proud of me and other family members also respect me due to my profession. I think a country can only progress fully when its females work side by side with men”.

Sadia feels that working women are very much respectable in our society; therefore, every woman should work according to the skills she learnt. The work for the financial needs or the work for the transfer of knowledge gives women a respectable position in the society and makes them happy, social and independent.

According to the view point of Sadia, teaching is also a respectable profession but girls should not be forced to adopt any profession. They should be allowed to decide what they think is more appropriate for them. She expresses that she personally will allow her daughters to adopt any profession and that she is even ready to send them abroad for higher education.

Once a friend of mine refused to teach the higher classes in a co-educational institute due to the compulsion from her husband that she should not teach the higher classes where normally the number of boys is higher than girls. Such behavior is very common from husbands in Pakistani society.
Concerning the problems of working women outside the house, Sadia comments that due to her own conveyance she never had any transport problem outside the house but she thinks for working women without proper transport facility, it is not easy to go out to work.

Asia, a forty years old lady lives in Islamabad. She has done her master degree in Urdu literature and has her own beauty parlor inside her house. Her husband is an Associate Professor of English in a college in Islamabad. She can earn Rs. 30000 to 35000 per month from her work while the salary of her husband is Rs. 30000 per month. They have two school going daughters.

Asia expressed that before her marriage she had a beauty parlor in her parent’s house who always encouraged her to work in order to achieve a good standard of life. When she married and came to her husband’s house, the income of her husband was enough initially but with the time they realized that they should save some money for children. She wanted to be independent financially and to help her husband to meet the expenses of the households. Therefore, she decided to open a beauty parlor for which her husband encouraged her who always gives respect to her decisions. Her father in law did not want her to work and particularly open a beauty parlor but with the help of her husband he agreed and now he is happy with her decision.

About the problems of working women, Asia says that certainly working women have many problems and the nature of problems is always related to their social class, education and type of job.

"In the beginning due to competition, I had to work a lot in my parlor with very low rates in order to be a part of the market. I had to ignore my house and to work from morning till late evening. However, as now I’m almost established in the market and have regular customers, I can earn lot of money to afford a servant for household chores which decreased my work load. I can spare time for my children and husband which gives me satisfaction that I’m a good mother and wife besides a working woman".

Talking about the work of females, Asia expressed that there was a time when the work of females was considered very much against the tradition and religion. However, now the time has changed and at least the families living in the urban Pakistan prefer to educate their females in order to adopt some respectful professions. Such families not only allow their females to work with males in such professions which are considered to be very respectful in Pakistani society like medicine, teaching but also in professions which were considered to be only for males such as banking, office sector etc.

"I want my daughters to acquire the best education and adopt any profession of their choice. I’ll never stop them in working with males if they decide to adopt such profession where no segregated working environment would be available".
I observed that the respondent was a very determined lady with very high ambitions to do anything in life.

**Tahira**, a 30 years old lady, educated till higher secondary school, working as a teacher and lives in Gujar Khan. She has four children, two sons and two daughters. The elder daughter is six years old and is in class two while her son who is five years old is in class one. The other two children are very young and stay at home. She has her own house provided with all the facilities. Her husband is graduated in education and also a teacher in high school. During the working hours she leaves her younger children with her mother who lives nearby and is also a retired teacher. The total household income of Tahira is Rs. 12000 per month. Tahira expressed that she wants to improve her education in order to get promotion in her job and that she is preparing for her bachelor examination.

> “I’m working to get higher standard of life. I spend a part of my income for the education of my children while rest of it, I save each month. Although the income of my husband was enough for our living expenses but I wanted to improve the life status, so I decided to work. My mother who was also a teacher always encouraged me to work”.

I found that Tahira works from morning till evening in order to perform her duties in the school as well as to maintain the house and take care of her children but she is satisfied with her life and work.

> “I’m satisfied with my job as my husband respects my opinion and work and helps me a lot in household chores and performs all outdoor tasks. As there are many working women in my family, the attitude of my family is very encouraging towards the job of females”.

According to the opinion of Tahira, there is no harm in working with males provided the working environment is good and male colleagues respect female colleagues and their work. Tahira thinks that the status of working women depends on the type of job and social class. Women with good education and a well paid job are really enjoying the high social status but uneducated women from lower or lower middle class working in low paid, unskilled jobs can not have the same social status.

In Pakistan the majority of females from lower middle class do not attach with some kind of productive work outside or inside the house. It’s the responsibility of husband to provide all necessities of life to the family. In case someone’s husband dies or someone faces economic problems then women get confused what to do now because they also don’t know any skill. They try to do some informal work inside the house. They are afraid to go out side of the house and contact with male strangers due to illiteracy and lack of confidence.
10 Summary; Major Findings; Conclusion and Policy Implications

10.1 Introduction

In the following part summary, major findings and conclusions of the study are discussed. Suggestions and recommendations to elevate the social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan are also discussed in the light of the findings of the study. Finally a brief note on the directions for further research in this area is given.

10.2 Summary

Pakistan with its population of about 153 million is a developing country and Pakistani society remains a male dominated society. Nevertheless women are assuming positions of influence in their communities, schools, work places, government and elsewhere. Women of Pakistan make up 34% of its total active population and the adult’s literacy rate for women is 25%. One of the challenges faced by Pakistani women is their right to work. Women stand at less than 20% of the salaried labour force. It is the rural areas that make up the real strength of Pakistan in the form of female population. There is a vast difference in attitudes of women, and their behaviour in urban and rural areas of Pakistan.

The status and role of working women have more or less always been the subject matters of discussion among philosophers, social scientists, reformers and specialists in various fields of knowledge. In the discussion on women in any society the general conviction has been to assess their roles in relation to men. In Pakistan, unequal social status and power of men and women are the main enabling factors of men to control their labour which defines women’s status as subordinate, dependent and inferior in the labour force. There are practices of gender inequality everywhere in the life-cycle of women in Pakistan. Women are exploited in the family as a second sex and in the labour market as a less paid labour force. Working women contribute financially to their families’ income and due to this economic independence, they gain more respect and status from their families but they have still respect for male superiority which comes from their fearfulness and morality as they think that if they claim their place like men in the family, their homes would be ruined.

There have been many studies concerning the role of urban working women in Pakistan and some researchers also touched some issues regarding rural working women but none of them discussed in detail about the social discrimination of rural and urban working women at all the social levels. It is also worthwhile to mention here that as the
women’s position and in particularly working women’s position varies from society to society, therefore theories regarding women’s status and socio-economic condition in the society and in the family need a new explanation in the context of each society. Therefore, it is required to study the problems and social status of urban and rural working women at home, in the society and at the work place and their comparison which will give an insight into the factors responsible for all forms of discriminations against women in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, participation of women in the labour market has increased because of increased employment opportunities and now women are coming out from homes to seek income-oriented work in order to achieve their economic independence as well as social status and rights like men in society and in the family. However, problems of such working women have also increased due to cultural barriers, and the nature of problems varies from urban to rural areas and also within the same areas. So, the broad objectives of my study are to understand all forms of negative discriminations against working women in both areas, factors influencing such discriminations and to look for the possibilities for the betterment of their social status.

From the available different sociological methods for research, the present study based on a survey which is a research method in which the subject responds to a series of items in a questionnaire or an interview. This method is particularly well suited to study attitudes, political and religious believes and to investigate the factors affecting the social position of the respondent. The survey was conducted by designating the population, and the data were collected from a sample. The questionnaire did not only include questions by a series of fix responses but subsequent interviews were also conducted to collect information according to the objectives. This is a comparative study, so two areas were selected to carry out the empirical research - Urban and Rural - aimed to find out the social status of working women in both designated areas. Two cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, and two villages, Chakwal and Gujar Khan, were selected for the research. A sample of one hundred working women belonging to different professions (like teaching, medical, law, stitching, working inside the house and factory workers), 25 from each area were selected for the present study. Besides, twelve case studies, three from each rural and urban area, were also conducted. Finally simple percentage method or statistical analyses were carried out for the analyses of the collected data.

The present data confirm the low status of working women in most of the cases. Women suffer additional constraints because their mobility is restricted, they have very little control over resources, have limited decision-making power, less knowledge of awareness of their rights, a poor self concept and limited aspirations. Despite this depressive state of affairs, the fact remains that most of the women work and work really hard. Their contribution remains mostly invisible, unrecognized and uncompensated in the national counts. However, from the recent past, a clear wave of change can be seen demanding new modes of adjustment for working women within and outside the family and in the job market.
10.3 Major Findings of the Study

The major findings of the present study are as under:

The majority of working women in urban areas are young, but in rural areas mostly old women are working. This is because in rural areas mostly people are poor and are rigid in beliefs. They don’t want to send their young females for work, but in urban areas women are getting higher education and are participating in every field of life.

In rural areas the literacy rate among females is very low compared to urban areas, which is either due to less facilities for education in rural areas or poor people can’t afford to send their daughters to far off places for education. But in urban areas the literacy rate among females is comparatively very high as there are many facilities for education, and people feel proud if their daughters are getting higher education.

In urban areas those females who are working inside the house are mostly uneducated or with very basic education because poor people in urban areas can’t afford to educate their daughters. They prefer to send them for any technical training or for learning any skill so that they may become helping hands to run the house economy as early as possible.

Both in urban and rural areas married women prefer to work instead of staying at home because they want to help their husbands to run the house economy and want to achieve a higher standard of life.

In urban areas women are seen working in every field of life and adopting every profession like teaching, law, medicine etc. but in rural areas mostly educated women join the teaching profession because rural people still think that teaching is the best profession for females. They don’t allow their females to work with males. On the other hand, uneducated rural women are attached to agriculture or working inside the house like stitching.

In rural areas people are mostly poor as compared to urban areas because in rural areas there are limited opportunities of work while in urban areas there are many facilities and opportunities of work resulting in the strong economy of the families.

In rural areas the main purpose of working women is to run the house economy or to support the family but in urban areas, working women have different purpose of adopting a profession or job as they want to utilize their knowledge, they want to be social, they want to get a high standard of life, while in some cases women with grown up children feel bored to stay at home, and they start some job or activity.

Both in rural and urban areas husbands of working women like their jobs and have a favourable attitude towards their jobs because females are helping them to run the house economy and in rural areas it is very difficult for males to work alone in the fields and they need help and support from their females.
Both in rural and urban areas parents feel proud if their daughters are getting education and adopting any respectable profession. They also cooperate with their daughters to get education and start any work. With the exception of few rigid families, working women of both the rural and urban areas are having the opinion that if our parents are relying on our income, it is not a matter of dishonour because they spend money on our education and upbringing.

The majority of rural working women have the opinion that only those working women have respect in Pakistani society who are highly educated and belong to high class. Illiterate and poor women who are working in the fields or in somebody’s house are not respected and have no value in Pakistani society. Poor urban working women have almost a similar point of view, and they consider that working women who work in somebody’s house or in some factory or belong to some cheap profession like cleaning and washing have no respect, and only women with education with a respectable profession are respected in Pakistani society.

Both in rural and urban areas the majority of people like the job/work of females, and people feel proud if their females are highly educated and in some respectable profession so that they can share the responsibilities of the house economy with their males. However, still there are some rigid people in both areas who think that females should stay within the four walls of her house, and the major duty of the female is to take care of children. However, there are some families with the opinion that females should work only if her economic needs are not fulfilled by the male.

In urban areas the majority of working women want their daughters to get a high education and adopt any profession but in rural areas working women want their daughters to get a high education but work only with females because in rural areas people think that working with males is against their religion.

In both rural and urban areas working women have the point of view that their social class affects their status very much. Educated and economically well off working women say that all working women should have the same respect and social status in society because the main objective of all the working women belonging to any profession is the same, and that is of earning money. There should not be any difference of status due to the level of education and type of profession. However, such words are without having any change in the overall attitude of the society which is evident from the fact that to change the attitude of a society where more than half of the people are uneducated, a society full of traditions and customs is - if not impossible - but very difficult.

Working women of both the rural and urban areas are having the point of view that compared with the non-working women, working women have a higher social status in Pakistani society because they are the helping hands and support the house economy and play some role in decision making with their males. However, it can’t be generalized as working women with problems due to their children or a negative behaviour of people around them, or with much work load are having an opposite view point.
In rural areas mostly working women have the viewpoint that females are always inferior to males and they can’t be respected like males. This is because of the illiteracy or a wrong interpretation of the teachings of religion. Such women think that God has given superiority to males and they can’t challenge the position of their males. Poor and uneducated urban working women have the same viewpoint. However, in urban areas most of the educated working women believe that they are not inferior to males and have equal rights as males, and there is no decree in Islam which forbids females to work and make them inferior compared to males.

In urban areas mostly working women are educated and they are enjoying high social status in society. They have almost all rights to take any decision about themselves. However, in rural areas irrespective of the fact that a female is educated or working, she has no or very less rights to take decisions in family matters or about herself. This is perhaps because that the overall literacy rate in rural areas is very low compared with the urban areas which is one of the reasons that people still strongly believe in old family traditions where only the head of the family is the ultimate authority to decide the fate of his whole family.

In rural areas females are mostly working in the fields and they want to change their work because of much work load with less earnings but they have no other option due to illiteracy. However, in urban areas females have enough salary with appropriate working hours which make them satisfied with their jobs and they don’t want to change their present jobs like teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers etc. Although poor working women of urban areas who work in a factory or somebody’s house have much work load with less salary which makes them unsatisfied with their job but due to financial problems, they are obliged to work to support their families.

Pakistani society is a male dominated society, therefore both in urban and rural areas, working women have some restrictions and they are not free to do anything they want because society limits female mobility and her contacts.

Both in rural and urban areas working women are facing certain problems. Those females in urban areas who have enough salary and belong to well-off families are having very less problems inside the house because they can afford servants to look after their children and to manage the house but poor urban working women have to face a lot of problems inside the house as they can’t properly take care of their children and also face difficulties in managing the house. They have double burden of work because they can’t afford servants. In rural areas, the nature of problems of working women is a little bit different. Working women have to take their children with them to the fields where they work irrespective of hot or cold weather. Their male members don’t help them in household chores, so they have to perform all household chores after coming back from the fields, and in this way they work from early morning till late night without having any recreational activity.
10.4 Conclusion and Policy Implications

After the analysis of the different theories, literature and their comparison with the above findings regarding the status of women generally and of working women particularly, it is evident that women have low social status in both rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Although present Government stepped towards improving the social status of Pakistani women but still women of Pakistan could not achieve the rights and status which they should have as a member of society.

Pakistani society remains a male dominated society where women, no matter they are working or not, still are inferior to males in every aspect of life. It is evident from the views of Simone de Beauvoir that women are never independent in the society and always have subordinate place, the status of women in Pakistan did not change to a great extent. Education plays a vital role in the development of societies and only educated women can have the understanding of their rights and can compete with men. It is clear from the data that more than 50% of the Pakistani population is illiterate and again the situation of women is even worse. In most of the rural areas the literacy rate for women is negligible (particularly in the provinces of NWFP and Balochistan) which is mostly due to their traditions and cultural norms where people consider that marriage is the most important for females. Such traditional families think that working women will try to have their part in decision making regarding their future which is not acceptable for them. If we look at the views of Simone de Beauvoir where she says:

“"We open the factories, the offices, the faculties to woman, but we continue to hold that marriage is for her a most honourable career, freeing her from the need of any other participation in the collective life (The Second Sex, 1989: 136)""

The situation of women in the rural areas of Pakistan did not change until recently. However, it is clear from the above findings that in the urban areas people feel proud if their females get higher education and adopt respectable professions.

In the context of the above findings and discussion, here I suggest the following policy implications and suggestions in order to improve the status of working women in rural as well as in urban areas of Pakistan.

Above results show that the chances of a woman to be a paid and productive member of the society increases with education and improves significantly the better educated the woman is. Education empowers women to make decisions about their own lives and to participate more fully in their development. Thus the focus on women’s education is not only important to start the virtuous cycle of higher human capital, lower fertility, better care of children, etc, but is an investment to push forward the boundaries of the country’s production possibility curve and have a higher GDP.

Pakistani society is a predominantly Muslim society, therefore, noble intention and policy statements in the light of Islamic principles is needed from the government for women’s uplift in the spheres of socio-economic development. The function of the na-
tional commission on the status of women should be improved with more power and authority. Since women are half of the population of Pakistan, neglect in this field is deterrent to the society and especially to the females and the social development is thus held up and so is the overall progress of the society. There is need for protective laws that would limit women’s hours of work and monitor their working conditions. Furthermore, adequate facilities like suitable accommodation near the place of work, nurseries and day care centres for the working women with young children and solution of conveyance problems can improve the efficiency of career women.

The role of the Pakistani woman should not be defined only in terms of wife-mother-housekeeper by the policy makers or society in general. She must be encouraged to develop her potential in other fields as well. While a woman should not be compelled to enter the labour force, as she is by circumstances in many cases at present, she should be encouraged, within the Islamic framework, to get training in any field in which she has interest and aptitude and can make a contribution toward the national development.

Equality is enhanced when women and men participate equally in all areas of family responsibility, including family planning, child-rearing and housework. The strong norm that forbids males to take part in household chores must be changed. Efforts to more effectively involve men in safe and responsible parenthood and family planning, emphasizing men’s and women’s shared responsibility, are needed. This responsibility includes control of and contribution to family income, children’s education, health and nutrition and the promotion of the equal value of girl and boy children.

Efforts should be made by the government to encourage and sponsor research to generate information, analysis and studies relating to women and gender issues to provide knowledge and awareness for rational policy and strategic action.

Women in Pakistan are now confronted with the challenge of how to ensure that the State will fulfil its commitment towards gender equality. International conventions require Pakistan to create a favourable social, legal, and political policy environment for women by introducing necessary changes. However, no substantive initiative has been taken by the Government to meet its international commitments. Therefore, it is important that the international community and social movements at the national level assume a stronger role in this regard.

There is a need to create a gender-friendly media based on dialogue and debate rather than on stereotypical perceptions and images of women.

There is a need to develop alternative (gender-neutral and non-sexist) concepts, approaches, and strategies for women’s development for use by male and female journalists and editors, to enable them to understand, recognize and acknowledge the multidimensional roles played by women in society.
10.5 Directions for Further Research

The above findings of the present study and discussion of the results show that certain areas of working women’s status in Pakistani society need extensive research. Therefore, certain guidelines for further research can be proposed as given below.

An extensive ground research is needed on issues like women-headed households and women in the extreme conservative belts where there is chronic depression because of no social outlets.

It is clear from the above findings that working women face a number of problems at home and at work place. Therefore, a detailed investigation of the problems of working women at home as well as at the work place and various factors responsible for such problems is required.

It is also evident from the above findings that mostly in rural areas of Pakistan women are being discriminated on the name of religion. Hence, it is extremely important to analyse the effect of traditions and religion on the lives of working women.
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Glossary of Urdu / Arabic Terms

Ahadith
Sayings of prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

Alim
A person who has full knowledge of Islam

Ayas
Baby sitters

Ayaat
Verses from Qura’n

Burqa
A long, often black or brown coat that covers the whole body and often the face of the woman and that is worn over the traditional shalwar kameez (a traditional Pakistani / Indian dress.)

Chaddor
A big veil which covers the whole body of the women.

Chardivari
Four walls of the house

Dupatta
A veil which is smaller than the chaddor and which covers the upper part of woman’s body; it’s worn by women in addition to the shalwar kameez.

Eids
Islamic festivals after the month of Ramadan

Fatwa
A Fatwa (Pl. fatâwâ) is an Islamic legal opinion, which is published by a Mufti (specialist for Islamic law “Fiqh”) on a special topic.

Hudud (s. Hadd)
It is a set of eight crimes which along with their punishments are defined in the Qura’n and/or specified explicitly in the Hadith. The eight Hadud crimes and their punishments are: (i) Stoning to death (rajm) for adultery (zina); (ii) one hundred
lashes for fornication; (iii) eighty lashes for slandering a chaste woman i.e., accusing her of adultery or fornication; (iv) death for apostatizing from Islam (irtida’d); (v) eighty lashes for drinking wine (shurb); (vi) cutting off the right hand for theft; (vii) cutting off of one foot and one hand for high way robbery; and (viii) death for robbery accompanied by murder.

Ilm (Arabic word) Knowledge

Imam Imam (Arabic: إمام) is an Arabic word meaning “Leader”. The ruler of a country might be called the Imam, for example. The common everyday use of the word is for a person leading Muslim congregational prayers (salah). In this meaning the imam is not required to be a cleric.

Itwar bazaar Sunday market

Izzat Honour; respect

Karo Kari Karo Kari is the form of honour killings

Madrassas Religious schools

Mohalla Residential area, closer neighbourhood

Mahool The social side of a set-up, e.g, an office, a family or even a society

Mahram Men and women who are not allowed to marry each other according to Islamic law

Majazi khuda ‘Imaginary God’, a term often used for the husband
Mangal bazaar  Tuesday market

Matric  Certificate which is obtained after tenth class and which is the entrance qualification for admission to colleges

Na-Mahram  All men and women who are allowed to marry each other according to Islamic law

Niqab  Face veil which covers the whole face, often including the eyes

Purdah  Literally ‘veil’; stands for the concept of gender segregation in Muslim (but also Hindu) societies

Qanun-e-Shahadat  It is a Law of bearing witness. Bearing witness to a crime has special significance in Islamic jurisprudence. As a matter of fact a whole branch of law has evolved based on the principles elaborated in Qura’n, Hadith and legal precedence set forth by companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the early jurists and Imams. This branch of law is called Qanun-e-Shahadat (law of bearing witness). The minimum requirement for the number of witnesses required for any situation, in general, is two. In most of the cases the testimony of a woman is equal to that of a man.

Qasas  The crimes that fall under this category are murder and the cases where someone has either accidentally or deliberately and unjustly wounded and mutilated or murdered another. In these crimes the law empowers the victim or the next of kin to accept blood money (diyat) as compensation. In case if the next of kin foregoes his right to accept blood money a ta’azir punishment is imposed upon perpetrator which in case of murder may be capital.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qazf</td>
<td>Enforcement of Hud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharia</td>
<td>Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shariat Court</td>
<td>Islamic court which follow the Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulema</td>
<td>Plural of Alim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamana</td>
<td>The social environment of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zina</td>
<td>Adultary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexure 1: Interviewing Schedule

SOCIAL STATUS OF RURAL AND URBAN WORKING WOMEN IN PAKISTAN-
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Schedule No.________

Basic information about the respondent:

Age _____________________________

Qualification ______________________________

Occupation ______________________________

Marital Status Married Single

Divorced Widow

Locality Rural Urban

Type of family Joint Nuclear

Questions:

What is your monthly income in Rs.? 1000-3000
3000-5000
5000-7000
7000-9000
> 9000
Source of income
- inside the house
- outside the house

Type of job

- private
- Government
- semi Government

What is the attitude of the following towards your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
<th>Non-cooperative</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Respectful</th>
<th>Not-respectful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have problems at workplace? Yes No

if yes; nature of problems:

- lack of facilities
- colleagues are not cooperative
- much workload
- others

Are working women considered as respectable in Pakistani society?
Amber Ferdoos

Yes No
- to a great extent
- to some extent
- not at all

if yes; because:

i). they are educated ii). they participate in family’s income
iii). they participate in country’s progress iv). any other

if not; because:

i). they spend more time out side the home ii). sometimes they do job against the will of their family
iii). they cannot properly take care of their children iv). any other

Does your family/husband like your job?

Yes No
- to a great extent
- to some extent
- not at all

if yes; because:

i). I am in a respectable profession ii). I am utilizing my knowledge
iii). I am contributing to my family income  iv). Any other

if no; because:

i). I spend more time outside the house  ii). I have to ignore my children

iii). My family doesn’t want me to do job  iv). Any other

Why are you doing this job?

Priority wise:

1st-to support the family

2nd-to pass the time

3rd-to utilize your knowledge

4th-to get high standard of life

-others

Do you feel yourself free to take any decision?

i). To great extent  ii). To some extent  iii). Not at all

Do you want to change your job?

-yes  -no

if yes; because:
Amber Ferdoos

i). Salary is less

ii). Office is very far away

iii). Colleagues are not cooperative

iv). Boss is very strict

v). Others

if no; because:

i). My salary is sufficient

ii). My colleagues are nice

iii). I have no problem in present job

iv). Any other

What are the restrictions of your family towards your job?

-come home early

cannot attend office parties

cannot invite male colleagues in the house

cannot work with males

-others

How is the behavior of your boss in general about your work and while ordering something?

-polite

-normal
-harsh

-in either case how does it affect your work?

-positively

-negatively

What kind of aspirations do you have for your daughter/s in respect of some job?

What are your problems inside the house?

Priority wise:

1st-cannot properly look after the children.

2nd-cannot manage the house

3rd-cannot visit the relatives

4th-cannot visit the family ceremonies

5th-cannot give time to husband

-others:
What are your problems outside the house?

- transport problem

- negative attitude (harassment) of the people

-others:

Do you feel yourself free to take any decision?

- to a great extent

- to some extent

- not at all

How do you compare yourself with other women who are not doing any jobs?

Priority wise:

1st - non working women can properly look after their children.
2nd - non working women can give more time to their husbands.

3rd - non working women have limited exposure.

4th - working women have better standard of life
Do you think that your social class affects your status in the society?

- to great extent

- to some extent

- not at all

How do you compare the social status of working women of different classes?

- working and non-working women have same social status

- working women have higher social status

- non working women have higher social status

- others

People consider it below their honor to rely on their wives/daughter’s income.

- strongly agree

- agree

- indifferent
How does society perceive the position of working woman near you?

-superior to males
-equal to males
-inferior to males
Annexure II: Interview Guide for Case Studies

Women from various social groups were selected as under:

1. Bread winner with severe economic needs
2. Women striving to get higher standard of living
3. Women searching for new perspectives

For each of the above categories, interviews were carried out under the following headings:

a). Socioeconomic background
b). Women and their work
c). Reasons of job/work
d). Problems faced by working women
e). Attitude of husband and family regarding job
f). Women in the men’s domain
g). The most suitable profession for females
h). Social status of working women