Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies
Vol. 17, 2018, pp. 143-164, ISSN: 2072-0394

Piece Work And Feminization Of Informal Economy: Case Study Of Cholistani Women

Rukhsana Hasan
Department of Gender Studies
Fatima Jinnah Women University

Abstract

It is an accepted reality that woman plays an important part in the economic growth of a society. It has been well documented that there has been a steady decline in the low paid formal sector jobs for women, while the prevalence of low paid informal sector jobs are on the rise. Women's contribution in the production process as principal producer of food products and services along with reproducers and managers of labor power, is crucial for the existence and maintenance of a social structure. The gradual political and economic integration of pastoral community of Cholistan desert into larger national economies has stimulated distinct divisions based on access to wealth and other resources among Cholistani pastoral nomads. The study utilized qualitative research method to explore the experiences of women involved in piece work production, in order to examine how various gender related ideologies in the communities had relegated women to lower tiers of the paid economic activities. Results were based on the information obtained from 10 women home based workers, supplemented with a focus group discussion and the narratives of 2 representatives of shop keepers. On the basis of thematic analysis it was concluded that the sexual division of labor within the work force of Cholistani community was not created by market economy, but it did create a system in which pre-existing gender distinctions were reproduced in the wage labor system.

Keywords: Informal Economy, Pastoralists, Social Differentiation, Economic Diversification.

تلخیص

یہ ایک مُسَلّمہ حقیقت ہے کہ عورت معاشرے کی معاشی ترقی میں اہم کردار ادا کرتی ہے۔ یہ بارہا ضبط تحریر میں آیا ہوا ہے کہ

خواتین کے لئے معمولی اجرت والے رسمی شعبہ جات کی ملازمتوں میں خاصی کمی ہے، جبکہ معمولی اجرت والے غیر رسمی شعبہ جات کی ملازمتوں میں اضافہ ہو رہا ہے۔ سماجی ڈھانچے کے تحفظ اور بحالی کے لئے ثانوی پیداکاری اور افرادی قُوّت کے منتظمین کے ساتھ ساتھ، غذائی مصنوعات اور خدمات کے بنیادی پیداکار کے طور پر پیداواری شعبے میں خواتین کا حصہ اہم ہے۔ قومی معیشت میں چولستان کے دیہی معاشرے کا بتدریج سیاسی اور معاشی انضمام چولستانی خانہ بدوشوں کے درمیان دولت اور دیگر وسائل تک رسائی پر مبنی مختلف تقسیم کا سبب بنتا ہے۔ پیداواری شعبے سے وابستہ اکائی یا مِقدار کے حِساب سے کام کرنے والی

عورتوں کے تجربات کا جائزہ لینے کے لئے اس مطالعے میں کیفیتی تحقیق اور تجزیے کا طریقہ کار اپنایا گیا ہے تا کہ اس امر کا جائزہ لیا جاسکے کہ معاشرے میں رائج مختلف صنفی نظریات نے کیوں کر خواتین کو کم آمدنی والی معاشی سرگرمیوں تک محدود کر دیا ہے۔ یہ نتائج گھر پر مزدوری کرنے والی ۱۰ خواتین پر مبنی ہیں، ساتھ ساتھ دکاندار طبقہ کے ۲ نمائندوں سے حاصل کی گئی معلومات کے نتائج اور بیانات شامل کیے گئے ہیں۔ نظریاتی تجزیے کی بنیاد پر یہ نتیجہ اخذ کیا گیا کہ چولستانی معاشرے کی افرادی قوت کے اندر جنسی تقسیم کی وجہ مقامی معیشت نہیں ہے بلکہ اس نے ایسا نظام قائم کیا جس میں پہلے سے موجود صنفی تفریق اجرتی محنت کے نظام میں بھی پروان چڑھی۔

کلیدی الفاظ: غیر رسمی معیشت، خانہ بدوش، سماجی تفریق، معاشی تفاوت۔

Introduction

Over the past many decades, employment in theinformal economy has risen rapidly across the developing world. It has been documented that more women than men are part of the informal workforce (Saigol 2010;Hasan & Farooq 2015) in most of the developing and under developed countries of the world, and majority of them are home based workers (Home Net South Asia (HNSA), 2014).Simultaneously, due to globalization pastoral and agro-pastoral production systems are experiencing profound changes as a result of various political and economic forces working at the international, national and regional levels(Horowitz, 1981, 1987). Over the years, the expansion of irrigated agriculture and the closing of frontiers between India and Pakistan has resulted in the loss of grazing land ofCholistani pastoralists, which in turn has initiated a process of their voluntary sedentarization. This progressive process of political economic incorporation of the Cholistani pastoral economy into a broader sphere of regional and national economies has fostered an unprecedented rise in the growth of informal economy as well as accumulation of capital by a few nomadic and settled Cholistanis who had access to sufficient livestock and land, respectively.

The process has led not only to the impoverishment of the pastoral community, but has created a sharp divisions on the basis of economic resources among Cholistani pastoralists, subsequently, leading to the interconnected processes of "economic diversification (Horowitz 1989), marginalization, and social differentiation"[1] (Horowitz & Jowkar 1992:23). Accordingly, these changes have had a considerable impact on Cholistani women and their access to economic resources. The objective of the paper is to explore the experiences of women involved in piece work production, in order to examine how various gender related ideologies in the communities provide bases that channel women toward certain positions in the paid production process.

It is well documented that women in urban and rural areas have been involved in various types of paid economic activities, both in formal and informal sectors of the national economies. Generally, workers involved in piece work production are home-based workers. Home-based workers produce merchandises for the market from within their own homes. In developed, developing and under developed countries, home-based workers produce a wide array of goods for local, national and global markets. Akhtar & Vanek, (2013) have defined home based workers as those individuals who perform work for businesses, firms or their intermediaries normally on a piece-rate basis. Some of them are self-employed and some are sub-contracted. It is challenging to stipulate the precise data on the magnitude of home-based workers around the world, yet the available data compiled by Anyidoho, & Steel (2016) for the working paper of Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) network identify that home-based work accounts for a substantial portion of urban employment in Asia, and that the vast majority of home-based workers almost everywhere are women Home-based workers can be categorized into two broad categories, self-employed and subcontracted.The self-employed buy their own raw materials and supplies and sell their own finished goods, mainly to local customers and buyers. The sub-contracted workers (called home-workers) produce goods for firms, both at the national and global level. Unlike self-employed workers, the subcontracted workers do not buy their own raw materials or sell their own finished goods, yet most of the time they have to bear the cost of production. Factors like age, marital status, lack of education make the home-based work most attractive form of income generating activity for women in both rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Piece work is defined as a type of employment in which worker is paid a fixed amount for each unit produce rather than the length of time he/she may work.

Literature Review

The landmark book of Ester's Boserup, "*Women's Role in Economic Development"* (1970), has inspired many scholars to critically analyze the issues regarding women's socio-economic status and their economic contribution in the society. Some of the issues that became the part of feminist debates are related to the apparent invisibility and underestimation of women's work in both paid and unpaid economic activities (Agarwal 1985; Beneria 1981; 1992; 1999, Dixon 1983; Dixon-Mueller & Anker 1988; Deere 1983), relationship between women's unpaid work at home and production of capital & labor force (Meillassoux 1981), the relation between the process of capital accumulation, variations in the women's work and in the form of their relegation (Beneria& Sen 1981; 1982; 1986; Wilson 1985), lack of access to productive resources, especially land (Shimwaaye & Blackden 2001), capital and financial resources (Akinboade, Oludele Akinloye. 2005, Bolnick 1992, Grosh & Somolekae 1996, Tundui 2002), participation of women in the informal economy (Barauh 2004) as well as how has export processing has resulted in transnationalisation of production, feminization of low skilled labor as well as

affected the traditional sex based division of labor, and family structure in Third World economies (Safa 1981; Elson & Pearson 1981 & 1988; Elson 1992; Feldman 1992). Studies have also documented that export processing as well as restructuring of economies have resulted in creating inequalities on the basis of class, gender, and ethnic divisions (Mohanty 1997; Momsen 2004; Mies 1987).

Apart from it there has been a large body of literature documenting the affect of paid work on the position of women in the household as well as in the larger society (Momsen 2004; Leslie & Buvinic 1989; Sharma 1986; Standing 1991). Some of the researches have documented that the participation of women in wage work has a positive affect on their situation, including improved negotiating position within the household (Folbre 1986; Horton 1996; Hart 1997; Joekes 1987; Kabeer 1997a), while Salway, Jesmin, & Rahman, (2005) have documented that not all research studies have established such positive effects on women. They are of the opinion that women's economic contribution will not necessarily result in the equal power as men's, since the socially constructed extrapolations of women and men's work are generally unequal.

As pointed out by Horn (2010: 264), just like in other developing countries, in Cholistan too, "the informal economy is the principal source of earnings for women, and usually they are concentrated in the temporary, low-paying, and insecure jobs within the informal sector. Apart from being the lowest paid wageworkers, they also bear the burden of market production and the reproduction of the labor force. Religious ideologies of seclusion and veiling and dominant urban middle class ideology of "women as housewives have worked together with a particular set of productive relations to assure a cheap supply of female labor" (Moore 1988:85) to entrepreneurs in nearby urban centers.

Barauh (2004) has discussed in great detail the economic contribution of women in the national economies of the developing and underdeveloped countries. She is of the view that although women's contribution in the economies of the developing and underdeveloped countries is crucial, yet it is very difficult for the majority of them to find job opportunities in the formal sectors of these countries, rather they formed major bulk of labor force in the sector that is variously termed as 'unorganized', 'unprotected', 'unregistered' or 'informal.' Anthropologist Keith Hart (1973) was the one who coined the term "informal sector" to refer to low- paid economic activities by migrants living in Accra, Ghana. Dignard & Havet (1995) have defined informal economy, as the sector of paid economic activity which is not listed with government agencies and does not conform to the rules governing labor practices, taxes and licensing. International Labour Organization (ILO 2002) has defined the informal sector as all productive units that are not recognized or governed by the state, and all those employed persons who are not entitled to receive social security benefits through their work. The definition of informal economy, by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO's),

as economic activities or workers as those "that are not regulated or protected by the state" is in line with the definition proposed by ILO (2002), while WIEGO, has further elaborated the term informal economy as "own-account workers" who work at home to produce goods or services, receive remuneration, and participate in market activities. On the other hand Carr& Chen (2001:4) have defined informal economy, as the economy which include "allnon-standard wage workers who work without minimum wage, assured work, or benefits, whether they work for formal or informal firms." Generally, scholars have a consensus over the definition of informal paid work which refers to the paid production and sale of goods and services that are unregistered by, or hidden from the state for tax, social security and/or labor law purposes but which are legal in all other respects (Feige, 1990; Portes, 1994; Thomas, 1992; Williams & Windebank, 1998).

The occurrence of informal sector is not a new phenomenon, Charmes (1998a), in a study conducted on Informal Sector, Poverty and Gender, have indicated that the share of the informal economy in the nonagricultural workforce ranged from over 55 percent in Latin America to 45-85% in different parts of Asia to nearly 80% in Africa. It has been well documented that over the last few decades despite widespread economic development, the proportion of informal economies is on the rise, at the global level (Ghani &Kanbur 2015; Meagher 2014). Research by Meagher (2014) has documented that the proportion of informal economy in West Africa and South Asia has been estimated to over 50% and 48% percent, respectively. Barauh, (2004 quoting Jhabvala & Subrahmanya, 2000) on the other hand, has documented a very high figure for informal sector in India. According to her, the informal economy in India accounts for 93%of the total labor force and 64% of GDP. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan (2006-07) in the year 2003-04, the informal sector employed 39.84% of total labor force and 70% of nonagricultural labor force, where as in 2005-06 the informal sector employed around 41.25% of total labor force and 73% of non-agricultural labor force. Whereas, Pakistan Employment Trends, (2013), has documented that 70.9% females are involved in the informal sector economy as compared to 60.8% of male population.

Home based workers or those involved in piece work production constitute a major chunk of informal economy. Akhtar & Vanek, (2013)have defined home based workers as those individuals who perform work for businesses firms or their mediators normally on a piece-rate basis. It has been documented that globally there are around 250 million home-based workers and out of which 200 million are from the poorest families (Rehman &Khan 2016). Benaria & Roldan (1987) discussing the double role of women have documented in their study of homework and subcontracting in Mexico City, that women not only bear the burden of production for market but also for the reproduction of the labor force. This type of production system, as pointed out by Benaria & Roldan (1987), is beneficial for the jobbers, who do not have to invest in the infrastructure, i.e., buildings,

machines or any other tools, as all cost of production and reproduction of the labor force are borne by workers, especially by women workers.

The primary reasons of increased involvement of women in informal sector of economy documented by various researches are (Hasan & Farooq2015; Sudarshan& Sinha, 2011) poverty and gender based discrimination. Apart from it there are different other causal factors that have led to the growth and expansion of informal economy, especially home-based work in different regions of the world. In many countries, it may be because of the fact these countries have experienced little or no economic growth at all. While in others there is upsurge in high-tech sectors, resulted in the creation of high-skill formal jobs as compared to low skilled manufacturing jobs. In such context, those who are unable to compete for high-tech jobs find work or continue to work in the informal sector. White (1992) has documented that economic crisis is also a reason for unprecedented growth of informal sector jobs in many underdeveloped and developing countries. It has been documented that economic restructuring has led to the downsizing of public sector enterprises along with the cutbacks in public expenditures thus the only alternative workers have is to work in the informal sector.

Theoretical Framework

The objective of the study was to explore the experiences of women involved in piece work production, in order to examine how various gender related ideologies in the communities had relegated women to lower tiers of the paid economic activities. In order to comprehend the effect of this process on gender relations; it was imperative to focus our attention on the factors located in the household and sphere of reproduction. We have to analyze how the household structure and other socializing institutions provide the bases that channel women towards certain positions in the paid production arena (Beneria 1982).The theoretical paradigm adopted in the study is an historical materialist interpretation of social change affecting gender relations. The study has attempted to delineate the historical trajectory of changes in the mode of production and its impact on gender relations as Cholistani pastoralists are increasingly giving up their nomadic adaptation and becoming more involved in the marketing of livestock and livestock produce. At the same time it would be documented how the prevailing cultural norms and beliefs regarding the proper roles of men and women were transformed by dominant ideologies and were given religious connotation with changing socio-economic conditions.

In establishing the linkage between the comparatively more subsistence oriented pastoral economy of Cholistani pastoralists of the past and the socio-political and economic realities of the present, the study focused on the transition of pastoral society from pre-capitalist to more market-oriented forms of production[2]. While no explicit attempt is

made here to tailor a model of articulation to the empirical realities of transformation from subsistence production to the production for the market in Cholistani pastoral community, an interesting parallel may be drawn between the Meillassoux thesis and incorporation of Cholistani women into paid production for the market. Meillassoux[3] has argued that capitalism does not destroy the pre-capitalist mode of production it encounters in the developing world, but instead maintains it in articulation with the capitalist mode of production. He believes that the pre-capitalist modes of production are beneficial to capital as they provide capital with the cheap labor. This is possible for two reasons: first, because the food produced in the pre-capitalist sector covers part of the subsistence cost of the worker's household, and secondly, because the pre-capitalist sector also pays the cost of reproduction of the labor force. Both these benefits allow capitalists to pay workers lower wages because their wages do not have to cover the costs of reproduction of labor and cheap labor results in larger profits (Meillassoux 1981, cf. Moore 1988). It was argued that a progressive process of political economic incorporation of the Cholistani economy into a broader sphere of national capital has gained momentum over the past few decades. This incorporation has fostered an unprecedented rise in the accumulation of capital by a few nomadic and settled Cholistanis who had access to sufficient land and livestock. As a consequence the gulf between rich and poor households in Cholistani society has broadened with the consistent decline of the state support for the pastoral sector. Since, overall household income is related to the livestock herd, declines in nomadic pastoralism and related increases in the process of sedentarization result in impoverishment of the pastoral community in general and of pastoral women in particular. It was argued that women not only bear the cost of production for market but also for the reproduction of the labor force. The production system is beneficial for the jobbers, who do not have to invest in the infrastructure, i.e., buildings, machines or any other tools, as all costs of production and reproduction of the labor force are borne by workers, especially by women workers.

Methodology

Locale of the Study

Cholistan is a vast desert in the southern part of the Bahawalpur division of Punjab province in Pakistan. Lying between 27° 42‘ and 27° 45‘ north latitudes and 69° 52‘ and 73° 05‘ east longitudes (Arshad; Rao; & Akbar 1995), its total area of 26,000 km² (10,399sq miles, 6,400,000 acres) cover about two-thirds of the total land area of Bahawalpur Civil Division and about eight percent of the total land area of Punjab province (FAO 1993:10).The estimated total population of Cholistan in 1991 was 97,000 (FAO 1993), which is scattered over a large area. Settlement of the pastoral nomads selected for the fieldwork was about 45 miles south of Bahawalpur City at *Kakaranwalatoba*. This site was chosen because of its population size, ethnic

heterogeneity, and broad mix of pastoral and agro pastoral activities as well as its proximity to four other settlements.

Following a period of initial appraisal and rapport building exercises, case study households and key informants were selected in each of the selected settlements. A total of 40 home based women workers in the settlements were identified. Informal discussion on the topic was carried out with the key informants using the technique of case study method. Alongside, 10 home based workers, willing to participate in the research process, were selected for the in-depth interviews. One focus group discussion was also conducted to gather information on these topics through a process of iteration and triangulation. After a prolonged period of passionate interaction with sample households and their neighbors enabled the researcher to collect comprehensive data regarding the daily activities of women who were associated with handicraft and piecework production. Beside women home-based workers 2 representatives of the shopkeepers, who were involved in the business, were also interviewed.

As the majority of female in the area were illiterate therefore I have to reevaluate my methodology due to frequent inquiries from the respondents regarding the benefits of the research to the community. Hence, instead of depending totally upon the technique of interviewing, I tried to utilize the technique of interpersonal dialogue (especially with women). In this case they used to ask the same questions to me which they were expected to answer. As a result instead of being mainly a subject of research they were also participants in the research. The women were as curious about my life as I was about theirs. This not only made the setting informal, but also helped me in my discussion with them about the intimate details of their family life. The interviews were informal, in fact, a form of “chat session” rather than formal question-and-answer session. During these informal interviews they used to talk about matters that were not very relevant to most of my questions but I never intervened and let them talk at their own pace. During the initial stages of the research respondents expressed their reservations regarding my note taking, and recording of their narrations therefore I used to limit my note taking to the salient points of their narrations. Later on, once they felt at ease with my presence and questioning it was easier for me to document their narrations. Conclusion was drawn based on the themes developed from respondents’ narratives. Furthermore, all the ethical procedures were followed while conducting this research.

Results &Discussion

Cholistani women have been involved in various home based economic activities, especially in the form of piece work production, mainly embroidered clothes, patchwork bedspread, and other handicrafts like crochet work and lace making. The economic crisis of 1980s, followed by various structural adjustment programs implemented by Pakistani

regimes resulted in extremely difficult times for the masses. Poor and under privileged groups, belonging to both urban and rural areas including pastoralists, who were at the periphery were the hardest hit, because of the drastic cutbacks. The cutbacks were made in the subsidies for daily consumption items, like food and fuel and in expenditure on social sector, like health and education. Poor women like Cholistani pastoralist, had to bear the brunt of these cutbacks in social sectors. They had to make trade-offs among different basic needs and had to intensify their labor input in various productive activities by extending their working day. This intensification of labor and work-time resulted in extra workload for Cholistani women. Other coping strategies that Cholistani women had to adopt include the reduction in the consumption of animal produce, and shift from dairy consumption to other sources of food. Due to commercialization of dairy and livestock produce, Cholistani women lost control of their income as well as their support network. Men, on the other hand gained more control of cash, which resulted in the reinforcement of their position as owners of family herd and decision-makers concerning various household related issues. With men gaining control over the income from the sale of milk, milk produce and livestock, women became increasingly dependent on men to provide them with necessary cash in order to fulfill the basic household related expenses.

In the research sample almost all women belonging to different economic and clan groupings were involved in some sort of handicraft production. Handicraft production, especially hand embroidery on clothing and crochet, is an old art and is being transmitted from mothers to daughters for generations and was done entirely by teenage girls and women of all ages. According to female respondents, the production of handicraft for the market started in the late 1980s by a woman named Jehan Bibi from Bahawalpur City. The process continued for a couple of years. Jehan Bibi used to supply material to women of the pastoral settlements and the remuneration used to be on piecework basis after she had collected the finished products. Jehan Bibi's role is particularly important because she was the one who initiated the marketing of local handicraft on a regular basis. By 1990s, the whole production process and the marketing was in the hands of women, the market link was between the women of urban middle class and poor women of rural areas and women were the intermediaries. Negotiations regarding deadlines, wages and other details about work were between women.

The increase in demand for embroidered clothes in urban centers of the country resulted in increased involvement of businessmen from Bahawalpur city. According to the representatives of the shopkeepers, the businessmen of the city, considering it a lucrative business with little investment of capital, also got involved in the activity. Unable to extract much profit from the labor of rural women in the areas around Bahawalpur City, they turned their attention towards irrigated areas of Lesser Cholistan. They further stated that their task was to simply supply material to rural/Cholistani women. They utilized the setup that was already in place. All the respondents believed that with the involvement of

businessmen (from Bahawalpur) in the process, there was a shift from small-scale production of embroidered clothes to comparatively large-scale commercial production. Earlier, each suit piece, head covering (*dopata*, or *Chadar)* tablecloth or bedspread used to have a different pattern as those items belonged to different patrons. In case of commercial production, there were more than 50 suits, head coverings or bedspreads of a single pattern involving particular stitch.

Factors Motivating Middlemen from City to Work with Cholistani Women

When asked about the reasons for working with Cholistani women, the representatives of shopkeepers referred to some of the specific aspects that were common to all rural women, including Cholistani women. According to them,

1. Most of the rural women, especially Cholistani women, have no other source of cash income, apart from seasonal agricultural activities. Therefore, they cannot afford to lose these earnings as for many of them it maintains a continuous supply of cash throughout the year.
2. They were of the opinion that their counterparts in urban areas can earn cash through various activities, like providing personal services, engaging in petty trading or working as maids in hospitals or schools. Cholistani women, on the other hand, have no such option available to them.
3. The Cholistani women have no choice but to be more disciplined and patient. Therefore, unlike their counterparts in urban area, they follow orders without any objection or conditions and are less troublesome in the demand for wages and working conditions.
4. They usually deliver the finished product before the deadline.
5. They were of the opinion that as Cholistani women do not work in the fields like other rural women, except during cotton picking season, therefore, embroidery and handicraft production was their leisure time activity.

Though, these were the views of two representative, they very correctly reflect the stereotype opinion of the majority that regard women as “submissive and docile workers” (Benaria & Roldan 1987:49) who are “sitting in the house” (Mies 1982:11), and that their income as a supplementary income. In fact in many Cholistani households, women’s economic contributions are vital to the survival of their families. Especially, during the dry season when milk production is drastically reduced and market prices for the livestock are extremely low. Women’s income is a major source of cash for many households. It was also observed that among Cholistani pastoralists, the distinction between reproductive and productive activities is very vague and most of the productive activities fall in the realm of domestic chores. So it is fair to conclude that the new relations of productions used the pre-existing division of labor to its own advantage. This resulted not only in greater sex segregation and tasks, but also integrated Cholistani

women into lower echelons of market economy. When production for the market was introduced in the area the older forms of sexual division of labor were not abolished, rather were used, reinforced and reinterpreted. The interaction between workers and women, who were involved in the distribution and the marketing of the products enabled those workers to negotiate their wage rates and time needed to finish the product. On the other hand the involvement of businessmen in the activity reduces the role of women in the whole process to 'invisible producers' (Mies 1982). It also led to the involvement of male members, in the process, as they became the intermediaries in women's dealing with the male agents. They were the ones who negotiated the wage rates and deadlines.

Reasons for being dependent on Brokers from the City

- **Accessibility to Market**

All the respondents were of the opinion that for the Cholistani women who were involved in handicraft production, it is virtually impossible for them to market their product. Women cannot move beyond the confines of *rohi* and settled communities as a result of they have to rely on middleperson for the marketing of their products. According to one of the respondents

> I cannot market the products on my own or at a price what I propose. Personally, I tried to sell my products to the settled Punjabi population, but I had received very little in return than what I expected of my products. Accessibility to the market is also a major issue for me as I could not buy and sell the products on my own choices. Even my husband tried to sell my work at the main market of Bahawalpur but the prices the shop keepers offered were extremely low, so he refused to sell. As a result, I had to rely on the *Thakedar* (jobber), at least, it save us money and time from the frequent trips to the City. I used to work with Jehan Bibi, working with her was easy, as we were able to discuss the time line and wage rate with her. Now, my husband has to talk to him about the wages.

- **Restricted mobility**

Due to lack of exposure and restricted mobility, women also lack in appropriate communication and negotiation skills. About the societal norms on gender behavior and women role, one of the respondent narrated,

> The norms of our society restrict the physical mobility of women beyond the confines of *rohi* (local term for Cholistan) which restrict us to seek paid work outside the home. So only option available for us is to market our traditional crafts. We learn the skills of producing these crafts from our mothers, just like our

> folklores, these skills are transmitted to us from one generation to another. The socio-cultural values also limit our ability to develop skills required for dealing with *Thakedars* (or his men) and the marketing of our products.

She further discussed the role of government and complained about the careless attitude of the government towards providing a forum for developing their skills as well as facilitating the marketing of their products.

> The government has not realized the importance of handicrafts as it has not taken any effective measures to facilitate women like us. It is the job of the government to formulate specific strategies to enable us to market our products so that we should not have to rely on *Thakedar*.

Table: 1

Gender Traits Acquired Socially	**Gender Traits Utilized By Jobbers**
Women's involvement in reproductive and domestic activities (private sphere) and that of men in income generating activities (public sphere) are viewed as natural.	The prevailing gender order and the division of roles based on sex also strengthen the belief that women's income is secondary while that of men is primary enable jobbers to pay lower wages.
The skills in embroidery and handicrafts passed on among women from generation to generation	Jobbers utilize these skills for their benefit without any expenditure of their own on training
These and other household activities are tedious and repetitive as a result women acquire the ability of patience	Jobbers are quick to use these traits of docility and patience for their work, which is not only repetitive and tedious but time consuming and laborious too.
Cultural norms like; *mahram* and*na-mahram* restrict women's ability to utilize job options available in urban areas. As a result these women are constrained to work at home	The restrictions due to cultural norms, lack of job option in the surrounding areas, the dispersed nature of the work, and their pressing need for income not only limits their bargaining ability but also enable jobbers to take advantage by making it one of the lowest paid activity.
Cholistanis put great emphasis on traits like, obedience and respect for elders, so over a period of time these traits become a part of their personality	These traits of respect and obedience among Cholistani women make them preferred workers as they follow orders and meet the deadlines better than their counterparts in urban or rural areas near urban centers.

In the responses the participants of the study very clearly demarcated the socially acquired gender traits and how these traits were helpful in the production process for the market. Table 1 indicates how the socially acquired gender traits are utilized by the entrepreneurs in order to have a cheap supply of labor and the product.

Because of the regulations concerning proper and modest female behavior vis-à-vis non-kin males, Cholistani women were unable to establish dyadic relationship with the male agents. In societies like Cholistan where women are restricted, by their reproductive tasks, by a linguistic barrier and moral codes that constrain female mobility, Cholistani women have to rely on their male relatives to sell their products, which in turn "reduces their control over earnings" (el-Bushra 1986 cf. Horowitz &Jowkar 1992, Little 1987). Women's inability to deal directly with the agents gave men the power to negotiate. In most cases men hesitate to negotiate on the deadlines or on wage rates because of fear of losing the incoming cash income. This results in greater exploitation of jobbers and their agents as they achieve maximum benefit in much less time and with very little investment.

This type of work is unstable and offers no security. Carr& Chen (2001) have termed it as 'informal economy', thus creating a precarious dependency of the Cholistani women on the jobbers who assigned them work, without any assurance that the work will be forthcoming once they hand over the completed product. The dependency is also reinforced by the fact that the supply of labor willing to work on lower wages is well above the existing demand. The ideology of "housewifization"/familialism and observance of purdah i.e. veiling) among Cholistanis centered on the extension of women's procreative functions to women's responsibility for the home. So when Cholistani women entered into the production for national market (through piecework), the value of their work and their position in the work force was determined by the prevailing dominant ideologies of women's proper place, their position in the social relations and their work responsibilities at home.Along with harsh working conditions, they were also subjected to severe rules. In some cases wages were deducted if the merchandise was damaged or soiled, whereas, in other cases women were liable to pay for the damaged merchandized or had to replace it with the new ones. The rules were imposed without the existence of any contract.

Conclusions

The sexual division of labor within the work force of Cholistani community was not created by market economy, but it did create a system in which pre-existing gender distinctions were reproduced in the wage labor system. Patterns of male authority at home were also extended to the area of wage labor relations. It manifested itself in the form of access to the urban market centers, contact with outsiders (in this case agents and jobbers from the city) and their perceived role as breadwinner and the head of the household in the eyes of jobbers.

The home-based women workers in Cholistan, like other areas of Pakistan (Shaheed & Mumtaz 1981; Bilquees & Hameed 1988), are the most exploited group of laborers among different labor classes[4] as they belong not only to lowest paid group but are also not regulated by any formal contractual agreement and legislation. The Cholistani women who are the actual producers have been reduced almost to an anonymous mass or *marginal mass* (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981) of fragmented labor force that can be tapped whenever the jobbers get orders, but are left to fend for themselves as the number of orders decline or jobbers were able to tap new sources of cheap labor. For Cholistani women, these changes have resulted in their increased responsibilities with no considerable change in men's attitude and responsibilities, as women continued to perform their domestic duties along with the production for the market, with no help from men in activities[5] related to the reproduction of labor force. There was a tremendous increase in women's workload, with consequent loss of their support network, and access to economic resources. Research has shown that mobility and access to market facilities has facilitated women's bargaining position within the household, and will have important significance for exposure to information, development of interactive skills and networks, and opportunities to take independent action. Salway, Jesmin & Rahman, (2005) have rightly pointed out that while discussing the relationship between women's economic contribution and their position in the family, we have to explore the ways in which gender norms are rooted in diverse and robust socio-cultural structures, both within and beyond the household. These socio-cultural norms act to constrain women's alternatives and reinforce their subservient status regardless of the work they perform. We also need to look at community-level restrictions on when and where women can move about in public in order to have a clear understanding about how these restrictions support intra-household gendered hierarchy. According to Kabeer (1997a) women in South Asia have to lead their lives according to the socio-cultural norms of the society and that they are aware of their reliance on familial networks (for support) and the prevalent customs, norms and values which prescribe that women should behave selflessly, making their own needs secondary to those of the wider family.

I have discussed in detail the impact of various socio-economic changes, including the incorporation of Cholistani pastoral society in the larger national economy, has not only initiated the process of female seclusion but has also transformed relations between men and women in the household. As in other communities (Mies 1982; 1987; Pastner 1972, 1974, 1978), in the Cholistani community too the adoption of ***purdah***and removal of women from labor outside the home is directly associated with the rise in class. For settled Cholistanis, religious ideologies of seclusion and veiling and dominant middle class urban ideology of "women as housewives have worked together with a particular set of productive relations to assure a cheap supply of female labor" (Moore 1988:85) to entrepreneurs in Bahawalpur city. From the above discussion it becomes evident that Cholistani women are not a homogenous group. Cholistani women are differentiated on

the basis of class, rank and education[6]. Therefore, all these above mentioned changes, both in the life and work situation of Cholistani women, take very different forms depending upon their class, age and marital status of women.

End Notes

1 Economic diversification is the adoption of economic activities, by the members of the households, other than maintaining their own herds, including farming, trading, and wage labor. It results in labor shortage for pastoral activities, overuse of natural resource and poor resource management. Social differentiation refers to growing economic inequality between herders and non-herders, and increasing stratification - by class & and by gender--within herding communities. Marginalization is relegation of livestock herding in the areas of low biological productivity, worsening terms of trade between pastoral and non-pastoral produce, and the political & spatial isolation of the herders.

2 For a detailed discussion on articulation between pre-capitalist and capitalist mode of production see Wolpe 1980. The Articulation of Mode of Production. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

3 Meillassoux was not alone in making this kind of argument as the same argument was also forwarded by Wolpe (1972) and Laclau (1971) for South Africa and Latin America, respectively. The mode of production approach proposed by Meillassoux and others is one set of theories among many others which try to account for capitalism and its affects on the changing world economy like: 'dependency theory' (Amin 1974) 'underdevelopment' and 'world system theory (Wallerstein 1974a) to name a few.

4 Here the term "different labor classes" include wage laborers, both male and female, in various informal sectors, agricultural wage laborers, those involved in personal services outside the home, and those who are engaged in petty manufacturing and produce variety of goods.

5 Although men, sometimes fetch water (from the well) and fuel wood for households, but it is usually very rare.

6 The main limitation of the study was the availability of a sample of literate women as there were only five females belonging to the age group of 12-17 years who had primary and secondary level of schooling. Therefore, the effect of education on Cholistani women was not explored in detail.

References

Agarwal, B. (1985), 'Work Participation of Rural Women in the Third World: Some Data and Conceptual Biases,' *Economic and Political Weekly* (Review of Agriculture), 20, pp.51-52.

Akhtar, S., & Vanek, J. (2013). Home- based workers in Pakistan: Statistics and trends. WIEGO statistical brief No. 9. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

Akinboade, OludeleAkinloye (2005). *A Review of Women, Poverty and Informal Trade Issues in East and Southern Africa*, UNESCO.

Anyidoho, Nana Akua, & William F. Steel. (2016), Perceptions of Costs and Benefits of Informal-Formal Linkages: Market and Street Vendors in Accra, Ghana. . WIEGO Working Paper No. 35. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO

Arshad, Muhammad; Rao, Altaf-ur-Rehman; and, Akbar, Ghulam (1995), 'Cholistan Desert in a State of Flux,' *Desertification Control Bulletin*, 25, pp. 55-58.

Barauh, Bipasha (2004), 'Earning their Keep and Keeping What they Earn: A Critique of Organizing Strategies for South Asian Women in the Informal Sector,' *Gender, Work and Organization*. 11 (6), pp. 605-626.

Bilquees, Faiz & Shahnaz Hameed (1988), 'Employment Situation and Economic Exploitation of Poor Earning Women in Rawalpindi,' *Pakistan Development Review* 27 (4), pp. 791-798.

Beneria, Lourdes (1981). Conceptualizing the Labor Force: The Underestimation of Women's Economic Activities, in N. Nelson, (ed.) *African Women in the Development Process*, London: Frank Cass.

Beneria, Lourdes (1982). 'Accounting for Women's Work,' in *Women and Development*, Lourdes Beneria, (ed.) New York: Praeger.

Beneria, Lourdes (1992). 'The Mexican Debt Crisis: Restructuring the Economy and the Household,' in L. Beneria& S Feldman (eds.), *Economic Crisis, Persistent Poverty, and Women's Work,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Beneria, Lourdes (1999). 'Globalization, Gender and the Dovas Man,' *Feminist Economics*. 5(3), pp. 61-84.

Beneria, Lourdes & Sen, Gita (1981). 'Accumulation, Reproduction and Women's Role in Economic Development: Boserup Revisited,' *Signs*, 7 (2), pp. 279-98.

Beneria, Lourdes & Sen, Gita (1982). 'Class and Gender Inequalities and Women's role in Economic Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications,' *FeministStudies*, 8(1).

Beneria, Lourdes & Sen, Gita (1986). 'Accumulation Reproduction, Women's Role in Economic Development, in Eleanor Leacock and Helen Safa (eds.), *Women's Work, Development and Division of LaborbyGender.* MA: Bergin and Garvey

Beneria, Lourdes & Roldan, M. (1987). *The Crossroads of Class and Gender: Industrial Homework, Subcontracting and Household Dynamics in Mexico City*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bennholdt-Thomsen, Veronika (1981), 'Subsistence Production and the Extended Reproduction,' inKate Young, Carol Walkowitz&Roslyn McCullagh (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market,* London: CSE, pp.16-29.

Bolnick, B. R. (1992), 'Money lenders and informal sector markets in Malawi,' *World Development,* 20 (1), pp. 57–68.

Boserup, Ester (1970), *Women's Role in Economic Development*, New York: St. Martins.

Carr, M., & Alter Chen, M. (May 2001), 'Globalization and the Informal Economy: How Global Trade and Investment Impact on the Working Poor'. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing.

Charmes, Jacques **(**1998a), *Informal Sector, Poverty and Gender: A Review of Empirical Evidence*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

Dahl, Gudrun (1987), 'The Realm of Pastoralist Women: An Introduction,' *Ethnos* 52(I-II), pp.5-7.

Deere, Carmen Diana (Dec.1983), 'Cooperative Development and Women's Participation in the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform,' *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

Dignard, L. and Havet, J. eds. (1995), *Women in Micro- and Small-Scale Enterprise Development*, London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Dixon, Ruth (1983), 'Land Labor and the Sex Composition of the Agricultural Labor Force: An International Comparison,' *Development and Change,* 14: 347:72

Dixon-Mueller, Ruth and Anker, Richard (1988), *Assessing Women's Economic Contribution to Development, Training in Population, Human Resources and Development Planning,* World Employment Program Paper # 6. Geneva: ILO.

Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2006-07, Govt. of Pakistan.

El-Bushra, Judy (July 1986), 'Programming for Women's Development in Sablaale, Somalia,' *Report of a Consultancy for EuroAction* London: Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development.

Elson, D. (1992). 'From Survival Strategies to Transformation Strategies: Women's Needs and Structural Adjustment,' in Lourdes Beneria and Shelly Feldman (eds.), *Unequal Burden: Economic Crises, Persistent Poverty, and Women's Work,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Elson, Diane & Pearson, Ruth (eds.) (1981). The Subordination of Women and the Internationalization of Factory Production, inKate Young et al., (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination Internationally and its Lessons,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 18-40.

Elson, Diane & Pearson, Ruth (eds.) (1988). *Women's Employment and Multinationals in Europe*, London: Macmillan Press.

FAO (1993), Pakistan: Cholistan Area Development Project, Report No. 59/53 ADB – PAK, Rome: Food and Agricultural Organization.

Feige, E. L. (1990), 'Defining and Estimating Underground and Informal Economies,' *World Development*, 18, pp. 989-1002.

Feldman, Shelley (1992), 'Crises, Poverty and Gender Inequality: Current Themes and Issues,' in Lourdes Beneria and Shelly Feldman, (eds.), *Unequal Burden: Economic Crises, Persistent Poverty, and Women's Work*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Folbre, N. (1986), 'Hearts and Spades: Paradigms of Household Economics,' *World Development*, 14, pp. 245–55.

Folbre, N (1989), 'Work and Women's Household: Gender Bias in the US Census,

Ghani, E; & Kanbur, R. 2013. *Urbanization and (in)formalization (English)*. Policy Research working paper; no. WPS 6374. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated. Retrieved on July 27, 2017

Grosh, B. & Somolekae, G. (1996), 'Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns: Can Micro-enterprises serve as the Seedbed of Industrialization?' *World Development,* 24 (12), pp.1879–1890.

Hart, G. (1997), 'From "Rotten Wives" to "Good Mothers": Household Models and the Limits of Economism,' *IDS Bulletin*, 28(3), pp. 14–25.

Hart, K (1973). *The Journal of Modern African Studies.* Vol. 11(1), pp. 61-89

Hassan & Farooq (2015) Gendered Perspective of Informal Sector of the Economy in Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences. Vol. 9 (1), 185-201

HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) (2014). [Online] Available: http://www.homenetsouthasia.net/Issues_of_Homebased_Workers. Retrieved on 20th June 2017

Horn , Z E (2010)The effects of the global economic crisis on women in the informal economy: research findings from WIEGO and the Inclusive Cities partners,Gender & Development,18:2,263-276,DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2010.491339. Retrieved on June 25th 2017.

Horowitz, Michael M. (1981). 'Research Priorities in Pastoral Studies: An Agenda for the 1980s,' in J. G. Galaty, D Aronson, P. C. Salzman and A. Chouinard, (eds.), *The Future of Pastoral Peoples,* Ottawa: International Development Research Center, pp. 61-88.

Horowitz, Michael M. (1987). 'Ideology, Policy and Praxis in Pastoral Livestock Development,' in M. M Horowitz and T. M Painter, (eds.), *Anthropology and Rural Development in West Africa,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Horowitz, Michael M. (1989). 'Victims of Development,' *Development Anthropology Network* 7(2), pp. 1-8.

Horowitz, Michael M; and Jowkar, Forouz (1992), *Pastoral Women and Change in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia*, a report from the Gender Relations of Pastoral and Agropastoral Production Project for UNIFEM and UNDP, IDA Working Paper No.91, New York: Binghamton.

International Labor Organization (ILO) (2002). Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture. Geneva: Employment Sector, ILO

Joekes, S. (1987), *Women and the World Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kabeer, N. (1997a), 'Women, Wages and Intra-Household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh,' *Development and Change*, 28(2), pp. 261–302.

Khattana, Ram Parshad (1992), *Tribal Migration in Himalayan Frontiers: Study of Gujjar Bakkarwal Transhumance Economy*, Vintage Books.

Lane, Charles (1991), *Alienation of Barabaig Pasture land: Policy Implication for Pastoral Development in Tanzania*, Sussex: International Institute for Environment and Development.

Leslie, J; &Buvinic, M. (1989), *Women, Work and Child Welfare in the Third World*, AAAS Selected Symposium 110, Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc.

Little, Peter. D. (1987). 'The Woman as OlPayian (Elder): The Status of Widows among the Il Chamus (Njemps) of Kenya,' *Ethnos,* 52 (I-II), pp. 81-102.

Meagher, K (2014) Disempowerment from below: informal enterprise networks and the limits of political voice in NigeriaOxford Development Studies, 42 (3). 419-438.

Meillassoux, Claude (1981) *Maidens Meal and Money,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mies, Maria (1982). *The Lace Makers of Narsapur*, London: Zed Press.

Mies, Maria (1987). Indian Women in Subsistence and Agricultural Labor, Geneva: International Labor Office.

Moore, Henrieta L (1988), *Feminism and Anthropology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mohantay, C.T. (1997) "Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination." In *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, by M. J. Talpade. New York: Routledge.

Momsen, J.H. (2004) *Gender and Development.* London: Routledge

Rehman, Khalil-ur & Khan, R (2016). Piecework at a Glance: Factors Affecting Home Based Women's Entrepreneurial Productivity: A Case Study of Katlong District Mardan. Biannual Journal of Gender and Social Issues. 15(1):21-35.

"Pakistan Employment Trends." 2013. http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/pakistan-employment-trends-2013. Retrieved on July 19, 2017.

Pastner, Carroll M (1972). A Social Structural and Historical Analysis of Honor, Shame and Purdah. *Anthropological Quarterly*45(4):248:61.

Pastner, Carroll M (1974). Accommodations to Purdah: The Female Perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family.* 36(2):408-14

Pastner, Carroll M (1978). The Status of Women and Property on a Baluchistan Oasis in Pakistan. In *Women in the Muslim World.* Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 434-450

Portes, A. (1994), 'The Informal Economy and its Paradoxes,' in Smelser, N.J. and Swedberg, R. (eds), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Safa, Helen (1981), 'Runaway Shops and Female Employment: The Search for Cheap Labor,' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 7 (2), pp. 418-33.

Saigol, R. (2010). The Informal Sector, Social Protection and the Budget. HomeNet Pakistan.

Salway, S.; Jesmin, S.; & Rahman, S. (2005), Development and Change, 36(2), pp. 317–349, Institute of Social Studies.

Sandford, Stephen (1983), *Management of Pastoral Development in the Third World*, Chichester: John Willey and Sons, in association with Overseas Development Institute, London.

Sharma, U. (1986), *Women's Work, Class and the Urban Household*, London: Tavistock Publications Ltd.

Shaheed, F; and Mumtaz K (1981), *Invisible workers- Piece Work Labor Amongst Women in Lahore*, Women's Division, Government of Pakistan.

Shimwaayi, M. &Blackden, C. M. (2001), 'Gender and Poverty in Africa,' in Belshaw, D., and Calderisi, R. (eds.), *Faith in Development: Possibilities for Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa*, A co-publication of Regnum Books.

Standing, H. (1991), *Dependence and Autonomy*, London: Routledge.

Staudt, K. (1998), *Free Trade? Informal Economies at the US-Mexico Border*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Sudarshan, Ratna & Sinha,S (2011) Making Home-based Work Visible: A Review of Evidence from South Asia.WIEGO Working Paper No. 19. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO

White, S. (1992), *Arguing with the Crocodile: Gender and Class in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: University Press Ltd.

Thomas, J. J. (1992), *Informal Economic Activity*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Tundui, H. P. (July 2002), 'The Growth and Involvement of Women in the Informal Sector in Tanzania: The Case of the Urban Informal Sector,' Paper presented at the 8th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Women's World 2002, Kampala, Uganda: Makerere University.

United Nations (1988), *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, New York. United Nations.

Wilson, Adrian (1985), *Family*. London: Tavistock.

Williams, C.C. and Windebank, J. (1998), *Informal Employment in the Advanced Economies: Implications for Work and Welfare*, London: Routledge.

Dr. Rukhsana Hasan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi.