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Disseminating Liberal Values for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan: A Case Study of English Language Reporting of the Honor Killing of Social Media Star Qandeel Baloch

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Disseminating Liberal Values for Women's Empowerment in Pakistan: A Case Study of English Language Reporting of the Honor Killing of Social Media Star Qandeel Baloch

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Abstract

The identities and rights of women are dismantled around the world especially in the Third-World countries such as Pakistan. Women's rights are abrogated by sociocultural values and customary practices which are constituted by the patriarchal politics of shame and honour (Baxi, Rai, & Ali, 2006). Media, as an industry and agent of socialization, has become a platform for value contestation and value promotion. This paper analyzes how news reports, articles, and editorials from the prestigious English language newspaper the daily Dawn (15 July 2016 to 20 October 2016) discussed and analyzed the murder of social media sensation Qandeel Baloch while constructing the liberal and traditional values about women's issues in Pakistan. The results suggest that as an English-language publication, the daily Dawn may be better positioned than traditional Pakistani press in advocating gendered notions of individualism, self-interest, freedom of expression, sexual freedom, free mobility and visibility, and liberal principles of justice. The daily Dawn constructs tradition, religion, piety, modesty, and submissiveness as oppressive and patriarchal constructs that have to be left behind on the way to modernity, liberation, and empowerment. Moreover, the sexual freedom and provocative activities of Qandeel Baloch are seen as an individualistic act and personal freedom and she is constructed as a woman of substance and honor by the selected publication.

Keywords: press, liberalism, honor killing, religion, tradition, women rights, women empowerment

Difusión de Valores Liberales para el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres en Pakistán: un Estudio de Caso de la Presentación en Inglés de la Matanza de Honor de la Estrella de los Medios Sociales Qandeel Baloch

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Abstract

Las identidades y los derechos de las mujeres se dismantelan en todo el mundo, especialmente en los países del Tercer Mundo, como Pakistán. Los derechos de las mujeres son derogados por valores socioculturales y prácticas consuetudinarias que están constituidas por la política patriarcal de la vergüenza y el honor (Baxi, Rai y Ali, 2006). Los medios, como industria y agente de la socialización, se han convertido en una plataforma para la impugnación de valores y para la promoción de valores. Este artículo analiza cómo los informes de noticias, artículos y editoriales del prestigioso periódico en inglés *The Dawn* (del 15 de julio de 2016 al 20 de octubre de 2016) discutieron y analizaron el asesinato de la estrella de las redes sociales Qandeel Baloch mientras construían los valores liberales y tradicionales sobre los problemas de las mujeres. en Pakistán. Los resultados sugieren que, como publicación en inglés, el diario *Daily Dawn* puede estar mejor posicionado que la prensa pakistaní tradicional para defender las nociones de género de individualismo, del interés propio, la libertad de expresión, la libertad sexual, la libre movilidad y la visibilidad, y los principios liberales de justicia. El *Daily Dawn* construye la tradición, la religión, la piedad, la modestia y la sumisión como construcciones opresivas y patriarcales que deben ser dejadas en el camino hacia la modernidad, la liberación y el empoderamiento. Además, la libertad sexual y las actividades provocativas de Qandeel Baloch son consideradas un acto individualista y como libertad personal, y la publicación mencionada la construye como una mujer de sustancia y honor.

Palabras clave: prensa, liberalismo, crímenes de honor, religión, tradición, derechos de las mujeres, empoderamiento de las mujeres

Qandeel Baloch, a Pakistani social media sensation, becoming a controversy for her videos on Facebook, was killed by her brother in the name of honor killing on 15 July 2016. The Pakistani mainstream media highlighted her murder and urged government to amend criminal laws or to pass a Bill for women protection and empowerment, hence it was passed several days after, against such crimes.

In the recent years, political and judicial amendments have been made in Pakistan to regulate honor killing and rape offences (Aftab & Taj, 2015). However, gaps remain at the level of implementation of laws and policies related to women. Women and girls are continually becoming victims of rape, torture, and honor killing. These incidents reflect the sociocultural traditions and collective conscious towards women. Violence against women has adopted new forms and higher degrees of extremity and brutality (HRCP, 2015). These crimes against women are outcome of existing gender ideology, gender socialization, misogynistic values, glorified masculinity, gender inequality, and intolerance of individual wishes. Several factors can be identified for these gender discriminatory practices in Pakistan. Social, cultural, economic, and legal factors are of institutional and structural nature. Other factors include women's status in families, attitudes toward women sexuality, interpersonal relations in domestic and public sphere, and personal resources (Sattar, 2015). In addition, cultural and religious values present obstacles in the successful formulation and implementation of laws protecting and promoting women's lives and status in Pakistan. The legal system in Pakistan is outdated and heavily influenced by colonial past, cultural norms, and various religious frameworks (Ali, 2000). In certain areas the social and marital order remains dependent on religious norms. Preservation of family system and control of women are the two specific areas where state legislation seeks guidance from religious knowledge (Jalal, 1991). Laws relating to economics, market, development, and administration have been accommodated according to capitalist system however; Islamic identity is preserved through personal laws and discriminatory teachings against women. Constitution of Pakistan (1973) is a mixture of liberalism, Islam, and socialism. Fundamental human rights have been guaranteed in the constitution. Article 9 guarantees right to life and liberty, article 25 guarantees equality before law, article 19 guarantees freedom of expression, article 17 guarantees freedom of association and article 20 grants religious

freedom. Objectives Resolution is part of the preamble that dictates superiority of Quran and Sunnah (Prophet's traditions). The military regime General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) radically changed criminal laws by introducing Hudood Ordinance; related to theft, rape, adultery and extra-marital sex. The Ordinance brought all these crimes under the domain of Islamic teachings. Zia's Islamisation is still influencing Pakistani society in many toxic ways (Toor, 2014). These legal changes negatively affected women and ideologies of gender roles and relations in Pakistan. Within this background, Pakistan has also ratified The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 (CEDAW). Due to the commitment to CEDAW, Pakistan introduced several Acts and amendments in Pakistan Penal Code for women. However, these laws and amendments failed to bring any significant social change in Pakistan. The recent Protection of Women Bill 2006 also reflects the social mindset that emphasize culture and ideology of the State.

Socioeconomic Transition and Women

Globalization is changing the social, cultural, economic, and religious realities in the developing countries including Pakistan. The change in economic structures has changed political trends hence opening new opportunities for women as well as increasing the potential risk factors for them (Fulu & Miedema, 2015). Economic liberalization has created new forms of economic inequalities and hostility to women (Fulu & Miedema, 2016). A large number of Pakistani women still remain dependent on their families. Their sexuality is controlled and they are expected to remain obedient and subordinates to male. They are not considered as autonomous individuals, but their social status and roles are defined in terms of a mother, wife, and daughter (Fazalbhoy, 2006). Islamists emphasize control of women's roles as a strategy to resist modernization and liberalization. Women are envisioned as the guardians of the future generations and makers of Muslim personalities. This patriarchal tool is used to protect women's virginity and chastity (Imam & Akhtar, 2005). Changing economic structures though help women to enter labor market and gain economic independence (Weiss, 2014). However, women are expected to work in respectable professions such as teaching and nursing. Urbanization and migration also have opened new opportunities for women's movement and

independence. But these transitions cause erosion of protective spheres for women as the broader social fabric remains traditional and conservative. Women workers are not heartily tolerated because female independence is considered a challenge to male honor.

Gender and Culture

Gender is used to refer socially constructed identity of males and females. According to Judith Lorber ([Lorber, Paradoxes of Gender, 1994](#)), gender is a social institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society. Gender roles are based on religion, ethnicity, class, race, and economic structures. These social constructions of gender roles and expectations change with the change in other social and economic factors. The gender roles and attitudes about the status of women are expressed in the opportunities available to women, political and social movement, and socially constructed perceptions, and views. The assumed expectations give rise to generalized notions about men and women.

Cultural practices also affect women's lives through complex patterns of gender roles ([Goldin, 2006](#)). However, gender roles are liberalized due to social and structural transformations, women's labor participation, and egalitarian ideology. Economic and educational changes help to liberalize society ([Fischer & Hout, 2006](#)). Whereas social structures based on fundamentalist religious ideologies support traditional gender roles and ideologies ([Bolzendahl & Brooks, 2005](#)). Decline in religious affiliation supports liberalization of gender ideology and attitudes. Moreover, economic empowerment of women plays critical role in countering cultural traditions. Financial contributions by women make women independent and reduce the risks of violence ([Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011](#); [Vyas & Watts, 2009](#)). However, financial independence of women opens new ways of domestic violence when women adopt nontraditional household roles ([Hidrobo & Fernald, 2013](#)). Poverty is interlinked with domestic violence and domestic violence is considered as having negative effects on economic development of the country ([Hughes, Bolis, Fries, & Finigan, 2015](#)). Men use their economic independence to show control and power and commit violence against women ([Schuler, Hashemi, Riley, & Akhter, 1996](#)).

Subordination of women in traditional societies such as Pakistan is due to patriarchal religious teachings that promote sexual norms to control female body and sexuality (Hunt & Jung, 2009). Religion creates patriarchal hierarchy in which men are heads of the family and wives are subordinate and obedient to husbands (Rose, 1999). Religion and culture emphasize divinely-granted gender roles on the basis of physiological differences. Social and cultural practices transform these physiological differences into gender categories creating power relations (Lorber, 1993). The first priority for women is expected to be housewife but outside job is allowed if need arises. Women's development and empowerment is explicitly linked with practice of Islamic teachings (Ali M. Z., 2003). Pakistan was created for the purpose of free and full practice to the teachings of Islam (Ahmad A., 1982). This historical narrative has shaped the social, cultural, political, and gender norms of the country. Basic social functional unit of Pakistani society is extended family. This family includes dominant males, brothers with their spouses, sons, nephews and nieces. This family structure is fundamental source of security and social and economic unit. Authority and superiority is reserved for males particularly the elder ones. Sons are trained sensitive to the concept of honor that often leads to aggression. Sons are considered as an asset and family status and power is transferred to them. A daughter is not considered an asset but a responsibility of the family. She is regarded as a temporary member of the family (Ahmad A. S., 1986).

As part of the Indian sub-continent in the past, the Pakistani culture is a mixture of local Indian and Islamic culture (Singhal, 1972). The cultural concept of women veiling and seclusion is reinforced by Islamic teachings of women segregation and honor. Women face legal limitations and inequalities as the religious interpretations entail a number of inequalities regarding marriage, family matters, divorce, and movement. Local religious preachers, learned scholars, and spiritual leaders have profound control over the society, family matters, and gender issues. These religious authorities have strong beliefs that Islamic social order demands complete separation of men and women and submission of women (Baxter, 1985). Women's limited status by religious authorities gives way to separate standards of chastity and modesty for men and women (Hussain, 1987). Women's employment is tolerated in times of financial need but this activity reduces prestige of women because women's primary role is believed to be an

obedient daughter, responsible wife and sacrificing mother. Honor and respect are central to the notions of masculinity (Aslam, 2014). Honor is normative as well as cultural ideal and central component of manhood.

Media and Gender

Media disseminates human values and informs society about various subjects (Hazaea, Ibrahim, & Nor, 2014). Media communicates values and norms for the legitimization of particular social order (Giaccardi, Ward, Seabrook, Manago, & Lippman, 2016). On the subject of gender, media texts challenge or promote gender norms (Greenwood & Lippman, 2010) and define “codes of sexual conduct” (McRobbie, 2004). Media underrepresented women and portray them as submissive, subordinates, and sexualized (Collins, 2011). Men are depicted with traditional hegemonic masculine values and norms with characteristics of dominance, power, heterosexuality, and aggression (Levant, Hall, & Ranking, 2013). Media can also reinforce traditional gender roles (Cotter, Hermesen, & Vanneman, 2011). Such emphasis on traditional gender roles reinforces antifeminist cultural traditions (Hays, 1996) particularly in strict patriarchal societies like Pakistan. The emphasis on traditional gender roles along with family devotion justifies confinement of women to homes. But, on the other side, media serves as the major instrument to diffuse modern and liberal values as prerequisite for economic development of a country. Mass media helps in weakening traditional cultures and prepares society to adopt modern lifestyles (Madikiza & Bornman, 2007). Media campaigns are important in women empowerment and socialization. However, media’s role for gender transformation remains ineffective due to media’s reliance on dominant cultural traditions (Whitehead & Kurz, 2008). In the patriarchal society of Pakistan, media reinforces gender-based stereotypes, patriarchy, and reshapes and reconstructs gender identities (Qadir & Riaz, 2015).

Previous Research

Several studies have been conducted to identify values in media texts through thematic discourse analysis. Airil Haimi (2010) analyzed religious program excerpts through linguistic discourse analysis. Thematic analysis of

maxims in media texts to identify human values is used by Hazaea, Ibrahim and Nor (Hazaea, Ibrahim, & Nor, 2014). Discourse analysis of editorials of two English dailies; Dawn and The News was conducted by Raza & Akbar to explore the image of president of Pakistan (Raza & Akbar, 2012). Nalin Viboonchart & Chanika Gampper (2014) explored ideologies in the discourse of news articles through the study of direct quotations used in English newspapers.

Aims of the Study

This study aims to analyze how the selected publication, the daily Dawn, analyzes the current sociocultural, legal, and economic status of women in the context of social media star's murder. The focus is on how women's bodies, sexualities, and rights are aligned to liberal values and the need for social, cultural, and legal transformation is emphasized. For this purpose, a thematic analysis of the selected texts is conducted to discuss the case of social media star Qandeel Baloch's murder in social, cultural, and legal context of Pakistan.

The rationale behind the selection of daily Dawn newspaper, as the sample for this study, lies in its largest selling (circulating 138,000 copies a week-day, Malik & Iqbal, 2011) and its status as a national newspaper (Fazila-Yacoobali, 1999). Dawn is considered as Pakistan's most influential English newspaper due to its credibility, coverage, wide distribution networks, extensive (total readership base in excess of 759,000, Malik & Iqbal, 2011) and elitist readership which mostly comprises of policy makers, foreign persons, and intellectuals (Khan & Safder, 2010). Moreover, Dawn is considered as a serious upholder of journalistic standards with liberal and balanced policy (Raza & Akbar, 2012). It has focused on gender issues through liberal outlook (Khan & Safder, 2010) and continuously constructs gender identities based on its controversial leftist social agenda (Malik & Iqbal, 2011). Being the country's only elitist English newspaper, the establishment also shows tolerance and resilience on Dawn's liberal coverage and criticism (Akhtar, 2000). For this reason, it is expected that this study will highlight dissemination of liberal values in a relatively conservative and religious society.

Data Sample

The data collection process started by identifying the fact when media shifted its attention to other issues and the murder of Qandeel Baloch faded away.

The key word “Qandeel” (from July 15, 2016 to October 20, 2016) was searched on the official website of daily Dawn for all the published texts about Qandeel Baloch. Original results showed 800 items. The results prior to July 15, 2016 were excluded and shrank to 77 items. Further refinement excluded repetitive items and final sample comprised of 14 news items, 3 editorials, 17 opinion articles and 9 reports, (43 in total) from the time line selected. All these items exclusively discussed the murder of Qandeel Baloch from various angles and perspectives providing analysis, information, opinion and critique on social, cultural, economic, sexual, legal, and religious norms and values of the society. This data corpus was analyzed and themes about value judgments were identified. Re-occurring instances were categorized into broader themes and central quotations, often blurbs and sub-headlines, were selected to represent these value judgments.

Method

This study explores the ideological stances and viewpoints expressed in the discourse beyond structure and grammatical level and unit of analysis is the whole text (Fairclough, 2001). The values were identified through wording, metaphors, and meanings of the words within the context of the whole text. Metaphors and meanings were not analyzed at the sentence level but at the level of whole text. For this purpose, words and sentences were contextualized in the whole media text to reach at the ideological stance and value preference of the author of the media text. Similarly, implied values were understood after reading the whole media text. Values are also embedded in particular ideology (Senthana, 2013). Values disseminated in media texts were ideologically labeled to explore the preference given to ideology and the ideology challenged through these values judgments.

Analysis

The study examines the discursive practices through which liberal values were constructed in the texts under analysis. Individualism, freedom, and equality were identified as major values within the text. It is further analyzed that how these texts constructed liberal values within the backdrop of traditional sociocultural milieu while discussing the murder of Qandeel Baloch. Moreover, the discursive constructions of liberal values within these texts is compared with reference to critique of traditional values existing in Pakistan.

Individualism

The texts of daily Dawn inherently emphasized individualism while analyzing the honor killing of Qandeel Baloch. Characteristics of individuality included free will of women, transgression of social codes by women, visibility in the public, adoption of modern dress codes, fulfilling individual ambitions, participation in workforce, late marriages, and increased trend of demanding divorces. Individualism was overwhelmingly projected providing rationalizations for the priority of individual rights over conception of any particular good.

Extract 1

She was a young woman who clearly didn't abide by the unspoken rule that in Pakistan, your private self and your public self ought to remain distinct from each other. (Report1, 16-Jul-16)

Extract 2

A woman protects her own honour; it is not the concern of any father or brother. What if women start killing men in the name of honour?" Mehrbano asked. (News1, 17-Jul-16)

Extract 3

...a woman has to be more than just a submissive orifice, a veiled and abused plaything: she needs to be the governor of her own sexual expression. (Article1, 18-Jul-16)

Extract 4

More women, it seems, are opting for individualistic ways, creating intergenerational unease. (Article1, 7-Aug-16)

The discursive construction of individualism is projected as appropriate progressive value for modern-day woman in a transitional society. This individualism is considered necessary pre-requisite for the protection and empowerment of women as well as progress of the country in global era. The individualistic outlook is presumed as blurring the lines between *your private self and your public self* (p. 11) justifying the liberal conception self. This merger of private and public indicates that no one has to interfere in the activities of any individual. Individual is considered autonomous. This is clearly explained in the second excerpt *it is not the concern of any father or brother* (p. 12). In other words, individual self-identity must not be influenced by moral values of the society. This rejection of morality and interference necessitates in principal that woman should be *the governor of her own sexual expression* (p. 12). Individual self-expressions must not be criticized on the grounds of divide between public and private spheres. Individualism is not only projected as value but as a counter-value to overcome the traditional values of the society in order to liberate women from chains of suppression. Individualism as constructed here could serve as the rationality of individual determination of conceptions of good. Women are encouraged to transgress existing social norms and codes if they want to achieve their individualistic aims. The consequence of individualistic way of life is seen as an *intergenerational unease* (p. 12) that can be seen as desired objective for women. The texts not only present individualism as an alternative choice but overwhelmingly emphasize it as the text states that *a woman has to be more than just a submissive orifice, a veiled and abused plaything* (p. 12). This discursive construction of women's bodies and identities indicates its position of judge of values and promoter of certain values while challenging the other ones. By constructing these values, the newspaper does not remain a reflection of reality but shifts to the position of a moral preacher. Women's existing traditional roles and identities are clearly constructed as oppressive and brutal. Veiling and submission are the two critical and fundamental values of the Pakistani social and cultural traditions that are often emanated from religious faiths. Constructing these values as oppressive for women, the newspaper negates

the individuality of those women who practice these values voluntarily. The overall construction of individualism for women expresses conflict with traditional monitoring of women thus encouraging them to willfully abandon the family. Honor is constructed as irrational idea that controls women's sexuality, body, and movement. Sexual expression is understood as one's personal matter where no one has to interfere in the name of honor or morality. Women are considered as the only legitimate agents for the determination of their honor, thus, autonomous and end-in-itself.

Personal Character

Individualism is exemplified through the construction of personal character of Qandeel Baloch. Her personality, throughout newspaper's texts, was constructed as a role model to a generation of young Pakistani women, social media celebrity, badly behaved woman, brave daughter, true female internet celebrity, flesh-and-blood woman, promiscuous, salacious woman, a very nice girl, one-woman army, and social media star. These constructed titles suggest the nature, qualities, and virtues of an individualistic personality. Following extracts reveal how Qandeel Baloch's personality was projected as an ideal woman against the judgments of society.

Extract 5

She was called an 'attention-seeker'. She was called 'nymphomaniacal'. She was called many words that aren't repeatable. (Article1, 19-Jul-16)

Extract 6

Qandeel was a woman of substance and 'honour'. (Article1, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 7

Qandeel Baloch is an inspiration to ladies. (Report1, 17-Jul-16)

Extract 8

She was the queen of first times... (Article1, 18-Jul-16)

These texts reveal how individualistic qualities of Qandeel Baloch were judged by society and how the newspaper constructed them. The newspaper's texts reported that *she was called an attention-seeker and also called nymphomaniacal* (p. 14) by certain non-liberal conservative groups of the society. The construction of her personality functions to convey the

message that negative labeling or negative judgments about one's sexual expressions is an irrational, intolerable, and orthodox attitude. One's body and sexuality are constructed as one's own domain. Hence, Qnadeel is called as *a woman of substance and honour* (p. 14). This construction justifies the individualistic values of self-expression and places honor in them. This simultaneously delegitimizes traditional and existing notion of honor and moral guidance. The texts encourage the readers to follow Qandeel's ways by constructing her as 'inspiration to ladies' (p. 14) and 'queen of first times' (p. 14). The discourse of personality idealizes the liberal way of life on the one hand and trivializes the traditional way of life lead by women on the other hand. The discourse of liberal personality is giving voice to liberal gender values while silencing the traditional ones.

Self-Interest

Self-interest is the second quality of individualism discourse that could serve as guidance. This discourse is constructed while directly addressing women. This self-interestedness is logical consequence of individualism and essential characteristic of liberal individualist personality. Following extracts capture these issues.

Extract 9

...to be able to stand on my own two feet, to do something for myself. (Report2, 16-Jul-16)

Extract 10

...women should come forward to claim their rights for themselves. (Report, 19-Jul-16)

Extract 11

...women have a right to be themselves even if they offend conventional sensibilities. (Editorial, 17-Jul-16).

Here we can see that the construction of women's identity is inherently linked with their self-interest. This discursive construction can serve as encouraging women to develop interest for their own selves. Extract 9 quotes Qandeel Baloch who is ambitious *to do something for myself* (p. 15). This reveals the intrinsic liberal conception of self that is not interested

in any class-based or virtue-based struggle. The construction that *women have a right to be themselves* (p. 15) can explicitly serve the projection of rights-based approach and the radical position that *even if they offend conventional sensibilities* (p. 15) constructs taken-for-granted legitimacy of this liberal value. This construction serves two functions: firstly, women are encouraged to challenge the conventional wisdom; secondly, conventional wisdom is constructed as irrational, obsolete and regressive. The discourse is emphatically advising women *to claim their rights for themselves* (p. 15). Again, this construction of rights detaches women from any traditional social collectivity and takes the position that women have no rights at all. Self-interest discourse here serves the function of preaching that women empowerment must be self-directed. This construction justifies women's rebellion against social norms and values that are projected as outdated and oppressive to women. Paradoxically, this construction assumes that women in fact are powerful and, in the position, to challenge existing norms and values. Self-interest discourse grants moral autonomy to women for the formation of self-identity while rejecting all other conceptions of good and virtue.

Freedom

Freedom discourse is the second major theme of the newspaper's texts with reference to gender transformation in Pakistan while discussing the issue of Qandeel Baloch murder. Constructions of freedom discourse involve sexual freedom from the discourse of piety, chastity, and modesty. Individuality and equality cannot be enjoyed unless freedom is achieved and practiced. Following extracts show how freedom (from) and freedom (for) is constructed within the context of Pakistani sociocultural environment, anchoring the constructions on the issue of Qandeel Baloch's murder.

Extract 12

...the modern woman, caught between tradition and modernity, repression and liberty... (Article1, 7-Aug-16)

Extract 13

Qandeel was staging a fight for her version of azadi. I am surprised that Pakistani feminists did not take her under their wings. (Article2, 19-Jul-16)

Extract 14

...she breezily pushed the boundaries of what in Pakistan is considered 'acceptable' behaviour by women. (Editorial, 17-Jul-16)

Extract 15

I began to see Qandeel as a burgeoning advocate for increasing women's visibility in Pakistan. (Report4, 16 July, 2016).

The above extracts show that women's freedom from all constraints is constructed as a legitimate duty and desired appreciated value which is necessary for women's empowerment in particular and for social change in general. The discourse of freedom is constructed as a clash between tradition and modernity as the extract claims that *the modern woman caught between tradition and modernity* (p. 17). Pakistani woman is constructed as entangled in the oppressive net of tradition and willing to set free like a freedom fighter as *Qandeel was staging a fight for her version of azadi [freedom]* (p. 17). The construction of her version can be said to legitimize every type of freedom of every individual. Since, individual's self is constructed as autonomous hence every version of freedom is equally legitimate. Construction of modern woman makes it explicit that tradition is hurdle in the way of modernity and liberation. Therefore, this construction delegitimizes tradition and traditional values. Qandeel is constructed as ideal value-holder of freedom because *she breezily pushed the boundaries of what in Pakistan is considered 'acceptable'* (p. 17). This discursive construction of freedom is the freedom from tradition for practicing this freedom. Here the construction of Qandeel's actions is directed to whole womenfolk because she was widening the sphere of acceptance of women's behavior that is for the sake of Pakistani *women's visibility* (p. 17). This construction encourages that Qandeel enjoyed certain degree of freedom and power to practice this freedom. Pakistani feminists are constructed as traditional as the extract, on p. 17, shows that they *did not take her under their wings*. Freedom is constructed as rational and a just value to be achieved and enjoyed by women.

In addition, 14 statements refer to the unconscious role of the interactor/collaborator, who interacts, collaborates and/or networks with colleagues, students and research partners on different levels. Women

leaders highlight their role as *mothers* (12 statements) in their organizations, 12 classify themselves as achievers and 11 statements refer to women leaders as professionals (responsible for actions, behavior and work). Ten statements refer balancing the roles of mother and professional, roles as daughters (eight statements) and women acting as women, not as men (two statements) (see Table 1). In the following, selected quotations are presented to provide insight into the experiences.

Sexual freedom

The discourse of freedom is further strengthened and established through the idealized constructions of sexuality and by appreciating the sexual openness. Sexual freedom is highlighted in order to construct the narrow-mindedness of illiberal social forces in Pakistan. Following extracts show what kind of visibility is to be achieved by women.

Extract 16

...she could be crass, loudmouthed and overtly sexual, yes she could literally be the ‘woman on top’ and she did it by ‘manning up’ in our putrid practices of patriarchy. (Article2, 18-Jul-16)

Extract 17

Through her photos and videos, she invited us into her bedroom, her bed. (Report1, 16-Jul-16)

Extract 18

Qandeel Baloch often bared parts of her body in videos posted on social media and she had a fan base of 750,000 followers on Facebook. (Article1, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 19

It is an era where the body of Qandeel is the body of Qandeel, to be concealed, or exposed at her own volition without affecting anyone's honour. (Article1, 19-Jul-16)

Sexuality is particularly constructed within the discourse of freedom so that readers can have an impression of limitless realm freedom in liberal discourse. Sexual freedom is constructed for the autonomous liberal individual in a global era “where the body of Qandeel is the body of Qandeel” (p. 19). The construction of body projects right to body which

legitimizes body use by the body-owner in any way she/he likes. This construction of body serves the function of legitimization of woman's body to "exposed at her own volition" (p. 19). The woman how "overtly sexual", "bares parts of her body" and invites into "her bedroom, her bed" (extract, p. 19) is constructed as liberal, individualistic, and free. This construction of sexual openness and woman on top could arguably be said to serve as negation of morality and reinforcement of an individual's self-autonomy. Through the construction of sexual freedom as a value, certain other values about female sexuality are condemned as the following extracts reveal.

Extract 20

She was very effectively holding up a mirror to society and mocking its spurious piety. (Article2, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 21

Virginity is highly prized in backward societies, and if there is any doubt about the matter, marriage becomes virtually impossible. (Article2, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 22

...we have become so tired of this assembly line of misplaced morality, exhausted by the controlled coitus between sanctity and shame, piety and perversity. (Article3, 18-Jul-16)

Extract 23

Another asked how I could come from a reputable family if I wore sleeveless shirts. For the same reason, another user said I was wearing 'dirty' and 'un-Islamic' clothing." (Article, 24-Jul-16)

Here traditional values and practices are constructed as hurdles to women's empowerment and mechanisms to control female sexuality. Qandeel is constructed as bold and brave girl who mirrored *spurious piety* of the society in *which virginity is highly prized* (extract, p. 20). The values of piety and virginity are constructed as bogus and as a characteristic of *backward societies* (p. 20) where coitus is controlled in the name of sanctity and piety. These constructions of piety, virginity, and sanctity serve the condemnation of these values against the idealization of sexual freedom and perversity. The construction of traditional values as controlling mechanisms of female sexuality could serve the function of encouraging the women to

seek freedom. The society in which *sleeveless shirts* are judged as *un-Islamic clothing* (p. 20) indicates the extreme notions about women's sexuality and body exposure. The negative construction of piety, shame, and virginity is aimed at tolerating sexual freedom and body exposure.

Secular Legislation

Legislation is another discourse through which the newspaper constructed liberal values while analyzing the murder of Qandeel Baloch. The legal discourse is constructed in secular tones emphasizing the separation between religion and state, criticizing religious shadings of laws, legal procedures and parallel traditional legal practices. The legal discourse is emphasized to protect women rights through state's legal structure and legislative institutions. Following extracts show how liberal values are disseminated through legal constructions in the first place, and then how tradition and religion is constructed as a hurdle in this ideal legislation.

Extract 24

...it would open up debate on the qisas and diyat (Q&D) ordinance which protects those who kill in the name of honour. (News, 20-Jul-16)

Extract 25

So if this bill is trying to completely take away that right from the family, then of course that is against Islamic teachings. (News1, 21-Jul-16)

Extract 26

According to Qisas and Diyat laws, the wali has the right to forgive the culprit. This practice needs to be ended. Our patriarchal society gives men the right to do whatever they like (Report, 19-Jul-16)

Extract 27

Voices must also rise to rein in village councils or jirgas, which propagate values that, in turn, endorse killings in the name of 'family honour'. (Article2, 7-Aug-16)

Here legal laws of the state are constructed as insufficient and one of the important causes of crimes against women. Consequently, amendments in criminal laws is emphasized. Qisas (equal punishment for the crime committed) and Diyat (monetary compensation paid to legal heirs of a

victim) are constructed as *practice needs to be ended* because this ordinance *protects those who kill in the name of honor* (p. 22). Since almost all the crimes of honor killing are committed by the members of the family and close relatives of the victim, heirs of the victim are also the heirs of the culprit, so they have the choice to pardon the culprit for the fear of losing another member of the family (read: male). These constructions of laws legitimize neutrality of the state regarding religion: the religion that is claimed as the official religion of the country. The extract (News1, 21-Jul-16 on p. 22) quoted a religious scholar who declared that if the government is planning to amend the said laws through a Bill *then of course that is against Islamic teachings*. Not only the religion is constructed as an obstacle in achieving liberal rights and practicing liberal values but also the *village councils or jirgas (tribal courts), which propagate values that endorse honor killings* (p. 22). Village councils function according to tribal, traditional, and religious ideologies and form a parallel legal system within the state. These constructions of legal discourse of honor killing endorse religious and traditional values as roots of patriarchy. The criticism of tradition and religion constructed here is for liberal justice in which religion is a private matter. Condemnation of tradition and religion is further analyzed. Firstly, how traditions are constructed as anti-women is emphasized.

Extract 28

...that the whole concept is a primitive tribal construct designed to control women. (Article1, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 29

The very first step is dismissing the dregs of traditions past and cultures best left forgotten. (Article1, 18-Jul-16)

Extract 30

Most girls are hidden away once they reach puberty, and many are married shortly afterward to a boy chosen by their parents. (News, 8-Aug-16).

Honor is constructed as a concept that *is a primitive tribal construct designed to control women* (p. 24). This construction of honor delegitimizes traditions in two ways: these traditions are outdated hence anti-women, and women must not be controlled by traditional values. Women's empowerment is only possible through modern liberal values for the

achievement of those *traditions past and cultures best left forgotten* (p. 24). Traditions must be left forgotten because they control women. The prevalence of such traditions most girls are confine to home once they reach puberty and married at an early age against their free choice. Hence these constructions of traditions reinforce women's autonomy, liberal justice, sexual freedom, free mobility, free choice for marriage, and overall liberation. Rejection of tradition and religion is constructed as a pre-requisite for modernity and liberalization of society in order to protect women. Following extracts show how religion is constructed in this regard.

Extract 35

Terming it a murder “most foul”, Mr. Rehman, blamed the “environment of religiosity, anti-woman biases of society, the mullah lobby and the incentive to killing women for ‘honour’ provided by the relevant laws” for the crime. (News, 20-Jul-16)

Extract 36

For the sake of tradition and religion, we permit — even encourage — the oppression of women. (Article2, 23-Jul-16)

Extract 37

Both religious parties have traditionally opposed legislation empowering women. (News1, 21-Jul-16)

Extract 38

We still have feudal and tribal systems which are creating problems for women and the state has brought religion into the mix, making life for women all the more difficult (Report, 19-Jul-16).

Finally, religion and religious groups are constructed as anti-women and against women empowerment. These religious elements include *environment of religiosity and the mullah lobby* (p. 24). These constructions make religion acceptable yet minus its religiosity and religious authorities because these two, along with other factors, are responsible for the crimes of honor killing. *Tradition and religion* not only tolerate but also encourage the *oppression of women* and *religious parties oppose legislation empowering women* (pp. 24, 25). Religion is constructed as the prime cause of women's oppression with the evidence that religious parties oppose women's empowerment. This construction serves as either the rejection of religion or

reform in religion because religion at the social and state level is *making life for women all the more difficult* (p. 25). These constructions of religion and women's empowerment indicate women empowerment demands liberal human rights, freedom, and equality and thus outright the rejection of religious notions of piety, hierarchy, and control.

Discussion

During analysis, the main values evident in the discursive constructions of the daily Dawn were individualism, self-interest, freedom of expression, sexual freedom, and secularized legislation. For the construction of these values, anti-religious and anti-tradition discourses were common. These discourses serve to project religion and tradition as oppressive and main causes of women's lack of empowerment and oppression. Religion and tradition promote and protect discrimination and violence against women through patriarchal tendencies. Society and cultural practices are deeply influenced by religion. Nevertheless, Dawn constructed that no one has the right to interfere in the lives of women. Women who do such daring activities, such as Qandeel Baloch, that are assumed as rebellion against tradition and religion are constructed as ideals and inspiration for modern women. The newspaper's texts disseminate the idea that women must need to struggle for themselves as self-autonomous and independent humans to achieve their freedom and ambitions. They should claim for their rights and challenge the conventional traditions that check their freedom and control their sexuality. They should promote a sense of self-interest and forget about morality and other traditional notions that impel them to sacrifice their own rights and ambitions. Piety, virginity, shame, and veiling are the outdated, discriminatory, and oppressive concepts that are just tools of patriarchal system to control and oppress women. They should demand freedom and it must be granted to them through legislation. State must adopt liberal principles of justice for the safety and empowerment of women. Legal, social, and structural changes are necessary for the freedom and empowerment of women. It is a good sign that women are adopting individualistic ways.

Hence, daily Dawn, taking Qandeel Baloch's murder as a point in case, is disseminating liberal values explicitly and contesting traditional

values. The traditionalists and the social consciousness in Pakistan perhaps see this construction as anti-religious and anti-traditional but Dawn's stance on such events is tolerated because of its status of the national newspaper who serve the elitist readership (including policy makers and government officials) by objective reporting.

Conclusion

While the daily Dawn's construction of liberal values for women is useful to evident the changing notions of tradition and modernity on the subject of women's empowerment in Pakistan, yet the data is limited to reflect the role of entire English language press in circulating liberal ideas for women. The results, which are deduced from the daily Dawn's excerpts, cannot claim generalizability as the data is limited to one newspaper whose policy is much liberal, as Khan & Safder (2010) mention, in comparison with the overall press in Pakistan. The skewness of the data highlights the need for future research on the status of women (in Pakistan) in the milieu of honor killing, tradition, modernity, religion, patriarchy, and sociocultural values. However, despite these shortcomings, the study highlights important findings.

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