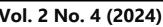# Global Influence, Local Impact: Education Shaping Pakistani Women

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Abstract

This article examines the critical role of girls' education in global policies aimed at empowering women. Education reform, positioning women as agents of change, has become a fundamental agenda for developing countries in embracing globalization and transnational neoliberal development. Despite acknowledging the importance of girls' education, patriarchal ideologies persist. Mothers are expected to create supportive educational environments at home and actively manage their daughters' educational affairs. Women who work and uphold traditional gender roles are often praised, reinforcing socio-cultural practices that limit women's opportunities. These dynamics highlight the complex interplay between education and gender within a patriarchal society. The motivation of girls to educate themselves and enter the workforce, securing their own income, aligns with globalized norms but also internalizes patriarchal concepts, equating true empowerment with financial independence. This paper explores how Pakistani women in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties have internalized the global narrative of empowerment through education and human rights discourses. By examining the discourse on education as a tool for empowerment, the paper depicts how Pakistani women have transformed into global citizens, viewing themselves as harbingers of change while remaining rooted in postcolonial and cultural ideals of womanhood. Utilizing mixed methods, the study engages in textual analysis and ethnographic research, including participation and observation, to develop an analytical comprehension of the interlocutors' perspectives. Data was primarily gathered during PhD field research from 2016 to 2020. The findings underscore the necessity of education for women's empowerment, highlighting both the progress and ongoing challenges in the context of global and local narratives.

Keywords: Girls' education, Women's empowerment, Patriarchal ideologies, Globalization, Gender roles, Socio-cultural practices, Pakistan, Postcolonial ideals.

Introduction

In the era of the (post) war on terror, issues revolving around gender in South Asia serve as a justification for a hegemonic discourse rooted in a colonial drive (Kunnummal, and Esack, 2015). The resonance of a call for attention in 2001 by the then first lady, Laura Bush, concerning the vulnerability of women in Afghanistan (allegedly also in Pakistan) to the Taliban is still dominating. This call has equated political war with the cultural conflict within societies of Muslim developing countries like Pakistan. Descriptions of gender inequality as a culture-specific trait of Pakistani society have conceptually introduced 'othering' in gender relations. The dichotomy of 'I versus other' has conceptually separated men and women of the same society, claiming girls are unequal recipients and beneficiaries of Human Rights. Moreover, a cultural framing of the anguish of Pakistani girls has differentiated womanhood into 'empowered Western-women versus oppressed Muslim-woman', in conjunction with the colonially framed conceptual segregation of the world into 'liberated West versus backward East (Abu-Laghood, 2002). Furthermore, the accessibility, or lack thereof, of neoliberal education to women has accentuated the existing binaries by demarcating the world into humane and barbaric halves; putting

an emphasis on the need of the culturally shackled to be liberated by the intellectually emancipated.

The visibility of girls receiving an education has become central to global policies (Monkman and Hoffman, 2013; Cornwall and Anyidoho, 2010) as a means of empowering them. The underlying assumption of empowerment discourse, especially in post 9/11 scenario, considers indigenous Muslim women of the Global South as helpless, meek, unable to speak up for their rights, and in need of rescue from their patriarchal societies through the infusion of Western values (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Mahmood, 2005; Khurshid and Pitts, 2017). The global discourse on Development classifies these threats to women and their defenselessness as disasters of Human Rights (McEwan, 2009), especially in the realm of education. Gender disparities in education propagate societal inequalities by constraining the prospects available to girls (Bakht Jamal et al., 2023). Consequently, educating girls not only helps them recognize their rights and the human rights violations occurring against them within society (Khoja-Moolji, 2014), but it also positions education for girls as a human right in itself. In essence, educating girls is perceived as foundational to creating a just society, as it ensures their inclusivity and gender equality in socio-economic development (Monkman and Hoffman, 2013; Bradley and Saigol, 2012; Ali et. al., 2024). These global narratives of empowerment deem the economic advantages succeeding from female education as much higher than those from male education (Minasyan et al., 2019; Sen et al., 2019; Ali et. al., 2024). Thus, education reform – where women are seen as the agents of change (Khoja-Moolji, 2014) – has become a crucial agenda for developing countries (Bajaj and Kidwai, 2016) for embracing the processes of Globalization and Transnational Neoliberal Development.

This article depicts the ways Pakistani women have assimilated the global narrative on women's empowerment through education. It is portrayed that middle-class Pakistani women view education as a salvational ideology and a guarantor of human rights. The paper further examines the adoption of global citizenship by Pakistani women, particularly those aged 25 to 45, by showing how these women are cognizant of global issues such as gender-based social inequalities, economic injustices, environmental and health disasters, yet are rooted in the cultural norms and values. They believe that by empowering themselves, they can be a better cultural model for people around them and will contribute to the eradication of broader societal inequalities. The paper is divided into two sections. The first section discusses education as a global ideology of salvation, viewing it as a source of empowerment through the lens of globalization. This section highlights the promotion of feminism and the manifestation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights. The second section employs the global discourse on women's education in post-colonial Pakistan to examine the Oriental and post-colonial roots of education and women empowerment. Thus, analyzing the ways Pakistani women are represented within the global discourse of empowerment through education.

Within these sections, I have incorporated the conversations of my interlocutors to explore how Pakistani women of middle-class society utilize

education for their empowerment. Furthermore, based on their unique experiences and perceptions of empowerment, how these women consider education as a means of maintaining their social capital and status. In this paper, I have utilized mixed methods to examine the above discussions. For comprehending the discourses on education as a source of empowerment, I have engaged textual analysis methods. To develop an analytical comprehension of my interlocutors' perspectives (Hammersley 2006), I have employed the ethnographic research method – a method that involves participation and observation method (Hymes, 1964) which focuses on the data from 'real life' (Pole and Morrison, 2003) - primarily gained while conducting my PhD field research in 2016 to 2020.

Education– a Savior Global Ideology

"I have observed my mother being assaulted by her family and in-laws after my father's passing. They did not let her have her share in property, got her to sign the papers mentioning that she had relinquished her rights, all because she was uneducated. I do not want to fall into the same trap. By getting educated, I will be able to comprehend what is happening in my life and of my loved-one's, and I will not let it unjustly prevail. I'll be the man of my family." (A female Respondent, A BS Student in Social Sciences, 25 years old, Urban Punjab).

The conversations with my interlocutors revealed a significant recognition of the importance of girls' education. The interlocutors agreed with the global discourse about women empowerment through education and employability. They perceive education as a means of bestowing wisdom upon their daughters, enabling them to resist exploitation within society and securing a position of power. Narrative of development projects considers girls' education a medium to ensure a civilized future society and a source of bringing betterment for the whole community and nation (Khoja-Moolji, 2014, UNESCO, 2002:13, Noreen and Khalid, 2012). Most importantly, girls' education is thought to be an expression of safeguarding their empowerment as they acquire the capacity to control their life and can independently make decisions (Gene B. Sperling, 2016, Khoja-Moolji, 2015). Within the paradigm of women and girls' education, the term empowerment has no clear or singular meaning (Monkman and Hoffman, 2013). However, the Global development narratives translate the empowerment of women through education dominantly in neoliberal and individualistic terms as an economic phenomenon (Cornwall and Anyidoho, 2010, Khurshid, 2017). Therefore, to be educated means that an individual has economically valued capacities which can help to survive in the transnational world (Khoja-Moolji, 2014). For this reason, educated empowered girls are considered a means of improving the socio-economic situation of any developing country, for they can be engaged in the development process at individual and societal levels (Monkman and Hoffman, 2013).

Education – A Project of Globalization

Globalization is a complex and contradictory phenomenon (Kellner, 2002; Singh, 2004), with an underlying ideology linked to capitalism (Appadurai 1999, 229).

Governed by principles of a restructured capitalism known as neoliberalism (Kellner 2002, 285), globalization is also shaped by political ideas and cultural practices. Thus, it is not a single theory, but rather a collection of theories constructed through the collaboration of various locales and cultural spheres (Appadurai, 1999, 230). In recent decades, global collaborations have accelerated through the technological revolution, resulting in the rapid spread of globalization (Kellner, 2002, 285). With contemporary tech advancements and political connectivity, globalization can engage with any society as a conceptual tool for analyzing its economic, technological, cultural, and social conditions. Consequently, it emerges as a discourse of multiplicity where ideas, services, people, technologies, and cultural forms flow across national boundaries, producing ambiguous global images (Appadurai, 1999, 230; Kellner, 2002, 285).

Economic globalization claims to ensure the empowerment and employability of citizens, especially women (Gray et.al, 297). Thus, adopting neoliberal policies determines the empowered position of a country and its individuals in a global context (Nagar et. al, 2002, 272). Furthermore, economic and media flows of globalization across national boundaries create images of well-being (Appadurai, 1999), assuring human rights in regions of violation (Richards and Gelleny, 2007, 855). Another condition to ensure human rights for women in a globalized world is the alteration of educational policies and research within a country (Singh, 2004, 104), and its capacity to collaborate for knowledge with others. Therefore, the status of women in any country is associated with its educational policies and economic development (Richards and Gelleny, 2007, 871).

Education – A Feminist and Neoliberal Policy

"I am getting educated because I do not want to be dependent on anyone. I wish to see myself independent who meets its demands on its own. Through education, I'll be able to get a suitable job that will bring me financial stability. This will assist me in supporting my father, he has done a lot, and I want to give him rest. Every time he has to listen from other male and female relatives that why is he educating us, we are all sisters." (A female Respondent, A Student of MS in Sciences, 26 years old, Urban Punjab)

While discussing the possibilities of attaining empowerment through education with my interlocutors, the middle-class Pakistani girls, it became evident that their paramount aspiration was independence. They sought to eschew reliance on their brothers or cousins for daily tasks, preferring self-sufficiency. While many expressed deep respect and affection for their fathers, they were acutely aware of the potential burden their dependence might impose. Independence, for these girls, symbolized the emergence of a new paradigm of womanhood—one that is unencumbered by societal perceptions and expectations. Moreover, this newfound autonomy empowered them to fulfill the unrealized aspirations of their mothers, further accentuating their drive for self-reliance.

Feminism from its onset as the first-wave recognized the importance of education. Mary Wollstonecraft (1981) had written in her book **'Vindication of the Rights of the Women'** about the importance of education. For her, a woman's or girls'

character is dependent upon the type of the received education. Similarly, the latter stages of feminism endorsed the idea of education for it opens the avenues for women to enter the public sphere where they can enjoy equal status as men. In the current scenario, feminism has merged with the development discourse, and it is considered an ideology that brings relief to women, especially, for the women of developing countries. The discourse of development argues that in the globalized world education is essential for the economic empowerment of women of developing countries (DIFID, 2005: Khoja-Moolji, 2015). Because modern education offers possibilities to women of developing countries in getting involved in economic endeavors (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). Thus, educated women and girls will bring advancement to developing nations (Khurshid 2017). Education provides ways to girls to enter the public sphere. Thus, allows women and girls to obtain empowered to take decisions for themselves because they are economically independent. Sending the girls to school is reasoned as one of the primary means to enter the public sphere, thus helping in the progress of a developing state (Bradley and Saigol, 2012). The feminist discourse argues that education in schools provides girls with public space exposure since it is a place to engage women (educated) ideologically to help them enter the formal labor force (Gene B. Sperling, 2016). In other words, it is a space where men and women are equally treated. Development discourse believes that the economic empowerment of women ensures a civilized future society (UNESCO 2002,13)

White Feminism has transformed itself into an ideology of globalization and discourse of development to modernize the women of developing countries. White feminism is different from the other types of feminism and deems itself as superior to any other kind because of its Western roots. It is best manifesting itself through globalized development schemes and the neoliberal projects of girls' empowerment. For the girls of regions where the war on terrorism and Taliban attack was prevalent. Together with neoliberalism, feminism is called neoliberal feminism. The focus of neoliberal feminism is on individual advancement instead of collective in form of 'sisterhood' which is used in previous versions of feminism. To ensure education reaches every on the globe as a form of feminism or as neoliberal agenda of empowerment, SDGs are constructed to reach every country of the world.

Education – A Sustainable Development Goal and Guarantor of Human Rights

My interlocutors within their conversations portrayed that the education for girls assures Human rights for girls, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. They agreed that the modern education provides the girls and women of developing countries with economic opportunities to participate in the market (Khoja-Moolji, 2015). They further agreed that they attain empowerment with the awareness of their rights gained through education (Malik and Courtney, 2011). Thus, education, for them is a crucial for the development of developing nations (Khurshid, 2017). By ensuring the education for girls from an underprivileged background, the SDGs empower these girls who can then empower other vulnerable and underprivileged girls by educating them (Lesko, Chako, and Khoja-Moolji, 2027).

"I belong to an unprivileged background, if I had not been well-qualified, I would have had been exploited by society. Our society exploits all the underprivileged women who are not educated, their rights are not given to them, and they are just used by the influentials… it is important to be street smart, but education makes us aware about how to utilize our smartness to make our living conditions and conditions of people around us better." (A female Respondent, Educated and Working at Hotel Industry, 35 years old, Urban Punjab).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the objectives presented by the United Nation to achieve the delineated goals for global development until the year 2030 (UNDP). It is a universal demand presented in the year 2015 to eradicate poverty at a global level. The Agenda of SDGs 2030 asks for creating economic opportunities, so that job opportunities can be ensured for all across the globe for people. These goals are indicators of development that attempt to bring betterment to people (Ferguson 2017, 55) through the eradication of poverty and by providing peace and prosperity to the citizens of all countries. United Nations claim that SDGs will ensure a civilized future for global society (UNESCO 2002, 13). These development goals permeate the cultural borders to allow them to flow across the countries as a form of ideology (Appadurai, 1999, 229-230). There are seventeen sustainable goals to help people sustain the globe, however, the three pertinent to education, gender, and social inequalities are considered key in shifting the process of governance.

Education – the fourth sustainable development goal (SDG-4), promises to eradicate gender discrimination in the field of education. Women belonging to different countries and communities have varied discriminatory social statuses within their societies because of their geographic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, (Shah, 2007, 53). Thus SDG- 4 ensures SDG-5 – Gender Equality, which provides status, rights and opportunities to the girls which are equal to the boys or men for improving their lives. The other gap that international development programs and representatives tend to overcome for ensuring better lives of females in the world is the urban-rural divide. Ensuring sufficient economic opportunities, women will be able to take part in the labor force to improve their life conditions (Jindhayala, 2003; Khurshid, 2017). It is claimed that all SDGs are connected with each other implementing one may lead to the execution of others. For example, girls' education confirms social change through gender equality for it is unequivocally associated to development effects (Subrahmanian, 2007; Somani, 2017; Wodon et al., 2018; Kopnina, 2020; Tajammal, Arun, and Pourmehdi, 2023) that guarantees other SDGs such as the elimination of poverty and inequalities.

Global Discourse on Women's Education in Postcolonial Pakistan.

Global Discourse about the Muslim World with respect to the war on terror has generated distressing images of Afghani and Pakistani women and girls. Even after 22 years of the evacuation of U.S. troops in 2022 and the Taliban's reestablishment, International Development Organizations are still arguing that the development of women and girls – especially in terms of education – is neglected or hindered by their male counterparts. The globally prevalent belief furthered by media portrayals that

education is out of Muslim girls' reach, such as the incident of Malala Yousafzai, while being accessible to Muslim boys conceptually validates the flawed dichotomy of feminine-private and masculine-public spheres, which is often used to indicate the backwardness of the Muslim world. The portrayal of an orientalist discourse in the media presents an overgeneralized comportment of Muslim men tyrannizing Muslim women who need saving from them through 'white' intervention (Spivak, 1988, Abu-Lughod, 2002.) The stigmatizing imagery of girls' inability to access schooling and education in Taliban-dominated areas encapsulates also all other Pakistani Muslim men. Along similar lines, the post-9/11 narrative suggests Muslim men as perpetrators and terrorists in the public space and actors of domestic violence in private space.

This opens the door for the human rights discourse and implementation of SDGs in countries like Pakistan, and education for girls' is considered a means of guaranteeing women rights. The respondents I interviewed, in their conversations depicted the consciousness they achieved through education is in cognizant with global debates about women empowerment. They interlocutors discussed Education as instrumental in raising awareness about their legal rights, while they viewed employment as essential for achieving both financial independence and a socially empowered status. Furthermore, Pakistani women deem education as a fundamental means of employability, enabling them to achieve social status and gain social honor. For instance, one of the respondents said,

"I was married young, even before appearing my BS final exams. My husband was least bothered about my needs and my mother-in-law masked his negligence, rather supported him. After divorce, they took away my two months old daughter and are not allowing me to meet her. I have to clear my competitive exams; I have to complete my education and be employed at a powerful position where I can achieve a social status to acquire my rights." (A female Respondent, Educated and Working at HR Department, 34 years old, Urban Punjab)

Pakistan and Colonial Roots of its Education System

The education system as seen today in Pakistan is not a simple construction. It has a long and complex history of interventions from the West since the age of colonization that altered the availability of education to its citizens (Walters, 2016,651). Despite the fact, there has been tension between the provision of education to girls since colonial times between the modern secular education system and the religious communities (Bradley and Saigol, 2012, 676). The education system of Pakistan encompasses both modern and religious interpretations that has emerged from its colonial past. The modern British education, introduced in colonial era, is construed by colonizers to control the colonized and the religious discourses of education are a result of resentment toward British Colonization. Moreover, it was based on patriarchalism adopted from colonial ideology. Similarly, the modern education system of Pakistan is built by the British colonizer which was resisted by the religious political authorities (Saigol, 1995, 23). In the post 9/11 era, the religious schools called 'madrassas' are depicted as breeders of terrorists in contemporary times, in similar ways these were portrayed mutineers in the era of colonialism (Angeles and Aijazi,

2019). For this reason, it is argued that the women emancipation in Pakistan invites resentment of religious classes reluctant to embrace modernization. Hence, it is argued that in the postcolonial era, the new knowledge formed are the continuations, interventions as well as undoing of the previous knowledge (Spivak, 2004, 525).

The Human rights and development discourses about girls' education displays girls as 'both a problem and a possibility' (Ringrose, cited in Bent, 2013; Walters 2016). It is, therefore, the recent global discourse of empowerment through education rests on colonial gender image of women as being oppressed within their societies. This justifies the reason for the contemporary trope of women emancipation in Pakistan to rest upon the colonial construction of women, and how they should conduct themselves in public and private. While (Bradley and Saigol, 2012, 676) argue that the national discourse on girls' education resists Western education and attempts to control women and girls; the global debates are welcomed if these have capacity to incorporate the cultural patriarchal norms. Girls' education as a construct of the colonial era, the modern era, or religious reflection, and the recent neoliberal and human rights discourse claims to bring homogenous prosperity to the girls of Pakistan (Khoja-Moolji, 2018). Analyzing the data provided by my interlocutors, I observed that they accept the discourse of women empowerment, yet patriarchal ideologies continue to prevail (Ashraf, 2018) in their understanding of women's empowerment. The interlocutors covertly preferred existing gender norms, patriarchal ideologies and socio-cultural practices (Tajammal, Arun, and Pourmehdi, 2023). This was the attempt of my female respondents to be known as modern, yet the culturally aware-cum-rooted individual. This conduct is acceptable in their society and preserves their social capital.

"I have observed, education is assisting a woman to know the difference between good and bad about our culture. An educated woman knows how to serve the refreshments and meals when the guests arrive, and if she works and earns then she can serve the guests even better, after all her husbands' honour, and in-laws respect is hers. The illiterate, nonworking women mostly do not have this knowledge." (A male Respondent, Educated and Working as a Manager, 30 years old, Urban Punjab)

This demonstrates that the idea of neoliberal education as a form of harbinger of human rights through economic development in postcolonial societies, especially of women, at times ignores the existing societal inequalities stemming from colonial past.

Oriental Depiction of Muslim Societies and Discourse of Development

"The woman who is educated, and a working lady, is better than an uneducated woman. She knows how to take care of her children and keep the house clean; she takes care of her husband; she knows how to meet the needs of her family and can take care of her health without becoming burden on her husband." (A female Respondent, Educated and School Teacher, 3 years old, Urban Punjab).

This patriarchal dominance is evident in the expectation placed on mothers to

create an educationally supportive environment at home and actively manage their daughters' educational affairs through engagement with teachers. The centrality of mothers (Ali et. al., 2024) in the educational attainment of their daughters is particularly notable. Concurrently, women who work, support their families, and uphold traditional and cultural gender roles are appreciated (Khurshid 2017). Such reinforcement of gender norms underscores the socio-cultural practices that persistently limit women's roles and opportunities. These dynamics reflect the complex interplay between education and gender within the broader context of patriarchal society. Primarily, this portrayal is based on established Orientalist depictions of Muslim societies (Said, 1985) that aim at showing supposedly inherent moral problems.

The revival of a barbaric picture of the Muslim man has led to an increasingly vulnerable image of Muslim Pakistani women (Hassan, 2002, 5). Both men and women are modeled as static identities of oppressor and victim, situated in a devastated culture where men gain, and women lose. The individual complexities and personalities of Muslim men and women are reduced to a single trait emanating from stereotypes rooted in colonial histories. These stereotypes are misrepresentations and oversimplifications of Muslim norms (Hussein 2016) and Pakistani culture. They legitimize discourses that sustain the superiority of non-Muslim values over Muslims', Global North's norms over customs of Global South, and Western culture over Eastern culture, in coherence with a colonial and postcolonial division of global society. For this reason, post-9/11 writing on gender in the Muslim world shaped in the global North portrays Muslim women in a socially subservient status, hence advocating for the urgent need to rescue them with the help of liberal democratic development policies (Kunnummal, and Esack, 2015).

The discourse of development in the Global South involves discussions of threat and defenselessness, especially of women and children which demonstrate violations of Human Rights (McEwan, 2009) in these regions. For this reason, the fight against terrorism has been politically equated to the fight for the rights of Muslim women. Bradley and Saigol (2012) have argued that in the era of the so-called 'war on terrorism', neoliberal education for girls, which views economic benefit as foremost, has become a substitute to advocacy for human rights in Pakistan. Therefore, it is believed to play double-tier social roles. On the one hand, International Development Organizations present neoliberal education as a rescue tool to empower purportedly marginalized Muslim girls against men, through the elevation of their socioeconomic status. On the other hand, the global discourse on education considers the schooling of girls central to the development of a nation-state (Bradley and Saigol, 2012). Human rights agencies and development organizations perceive Education reforms as evidence that a state can diffuse itself in a transnational neoliberal framework of development (Bajaj and Kidwai, 2016). Hence, these framings portray the inclusion of women in the global workforce as a social catalyst to remove the existing socio-economic difference and gender-based violence in a given society. Subsequently, the focus on education for girls has become a new agenda of Pakistan's nation-building process. To make women part of nation-state development, imparting them education

is deemed important to ensure politico-economic and socio-cultural opportunities as a form of universal human rights. In other words, the 'war on terror' narrative claimed to provide economic benefits to society, politically framing the shortcomings it intends to address on violent aspects of Muslim cultures. Emphasizing violence in Muslim societies has legitimized not only interventions such as the ones in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also social and economic influence that is more far-reaching than the mere media portrayal that accompanied them. Moreover, these representations have stripped the cultural richness of these societies to portray them in correspondence with the Global schema of Neoliberalism to restructure traditional societies.

Pakistani Woman: A Postcolonial Gender and a Global Citizen

A Pakistani woman is a construct of a postcolonial gender, which is devoid of simplicity because it is organized on intersectional complex concepts of gender, race, class, ethnicity, etc. The western hegemonic discourses of feminist ideology, development practice, and oriental dichotomies are not homogenous in their goals, resulting in the representation which is neither a direct identity of a postcolonial woman nor is it a singular identity (Mohanty 1984, 334). Similarly, postcolonial responses vary from resistance to adoption and imitation construct new forms of gender, for example, a 'new woman' as described by Partha Chatterjee (1993) in his book **'The Nation and its Fragments.***'* He discusses the construction of the identity of a modern woman as an image of nationalism who neither resemble a colonizer nor is similar to a colonized individual, reflecting colonial dichotomy in herself. This colonial dichotomy, as elaborated in the theories of Frantz Fanon, depicts the ways one of the groups – a group of haves – imitates the Westerner to act as a buffer between the colonial and neocolonial world.

Whereas the second group of have-nots is dissimilar from the previous group of haves yet want to be like them. Thus, the have-not group of people have multiple intersectional hybrid identities through adopting the process of mimicry (Bhabha). By attaining education, the women of developing countries like Pakistan bridge the gap of have and have-not. They construct their identity of being empowered against the discriminations offered by their cultures, regardless of being rooted in their cultural values. They are inspired by the west or upper local class, yet critical of it, by not essentially associating themselves with any of the identity (Chatterjee, 1993, 126) specific to any global or colonial narrative. Rather, these women, by being educated, shape their identities offered by global discourses to construct their representations as they desire.

"The educated women know how to handle the household and the outside world, even if her husband is illiterate and does not have social skills. Because of my education, I have started an online business, and I am a main breadwinner of the family without stepping out of home. I have been able to earn by staying intact to my home values. Afterall it is women who are responsible for a cultured and civilized home environment." (A female Respondent, Educated and Working from Home, 33 years old, Urban Punjab)

Interlocutors, both male and female, considered that educated women are adept at managing both household responsibilities and external affairs, even in cases where their husbands may lack social skills or education. It is commonly believed that women bear the responsibility for maintaining a cultured and civilized home environment. An educated and working woman is perceived as superior to her uneducated counterpart, as she is capable of taking care of her children, keeping the house clean, attending to her husband's needs, and managing her own health without becoming a burden. Additionally, an educated woman is skilled in hosting guests, and if she earns an income, she can enhance the hospitality she provides, thereby upholding her husband's honor and her in-laws' respect. In contrast, illiterate and non-working women are often viewed as lacking these capabilities. Consequently, raising awareness among mothers about the importance of girls' education is crucial to improving their engagement in educational activities and fostering a supportive environment for their daughters.

Conclusion

Globalization is a contested concept and process that brings uneven impacts of development across the globe (Steger 2013: Campbel et al., 2015). Despite the fact, the process of globalization, through the establishment of educational and economic global structures, tends to create a homogeneous society (Parlo 2004, 108). A global community that is a borderless world of flows (Nagar et. al, 2002) formed by restructuring varying cultural values of different societies. These structural changes legitimize the exchange of neoliberal ideologies and policies (Nagar et. al, 2002, 272). However, the outcomes often fall short of the demands of international organizations due to the uneven economic processes of globalization (Appadurai, 1999, 229). Additionally, the disparate and non-linear nature of global development between the Global South and Global North results in complex and diverse global experiences (Singh, 2004). The religious, cultural, social diversity, and historical conditions of any country ultimately determine the acceptability and absorbability of global ideas to produce the expected outcomes. Consequently, a fragmented society with unequal progress and epistemic diversity has emerged globally.

Based on above discussion, this paper explored the ways Pakistani women/girls in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties have internalized the global narrative of empowerment through education, along with the discourse human rights. I examined this internalization by deciphering how the discourse on education as a tool for empowering Pakistani women is deeply rooted in the global narrative of women's empowerment, emerging from the processes of globalization and post-colonial debates. Therefore, the paper depicts that Pakistani women through absorption of global discourses have transformed themselves as global citizens, who view themselves as harbinger of change. It is revealed that the motivation of girls to be educated, enter the workforce, and secure their own income, aligns with the norms of a globalized world. Consequently, they perceive women who do not work as lacking empowerment. Their ideas about empowerment are positioned within the global discourse on women empowerment. Hence for Pakistani girls, true empowerment is equated with financial independence, reinforcing the belief that having one's own

money is essential for women's empowerment.

Despite the recognition of the importance of girls' education, patriarchal ideologies remain dominant. The Pakistani girls have internalized patriarchal concepts that dominantly positions masculine personality attributes as a symbol of success. These women see themselves as rooted in the postcolonial and cultural ideals of womanhood. Mothers are expected to create an educationally supportive environment at home and actively manage their daughters' educational affairs through engagement with teachers. The pivotal role of mothers in the educational success of their daughters is particularly notable. Additionally, women who work, support their families, and uphold traditional and cultural gender roles are appreciated, reinforcing socio-cultural practices that limit women's roles and opportunities. These dynamics reflect the complex interplay between education and gender within the broader context of a patriarchal society. The motivation of girls to educate themselves and enter the workforce, thereby securing their own income, aligns with the norms of a globalized world but also internalizes patriarchal concepts, equating true empowerment with financial independence.

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