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Article:	Women Empowerment through the Lens of Pakistani Drama's
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ABSTRACT

People are connected through print and electronic media and other forms of modern media which has great impact on shaping people's opinion on daily matters. The main focus of dramas is idealizing characters and easiest way to know about new trends. In different forms of media, there are images of men and women, which are represented in different ways and with different characteristics. In different Pakistani dramas in last few years the way women are represented has affected the society in terms of women existence. Dramas which were shown on Pakistani channels during prime time, from Jan 2019- Jan 2021 were considered the population of the present research. Sampling frame was developed by content analysis through drama serials of ARY, GEO and HUM TV and three of the most frequently reported dramas were selected for analysis. The objective was to observe the representation of major characters and social roles. A qualitative content analysis of all the scenes of dramas Sabaat, Alif, Cheekh was conducted whereas women role was done to observe the women empowerment in the title of selected dramas. These dramas showing the strong side of woman being bold enough to fight against all the conflict and opposing conditions force by society.

Keywords: Women empowerment, patriarchy, masculinity, femininity, drama, representation

Introduction:

Dramas builds confidence, help concentration, help in develop language and communication skill, and help to understand the world around them. Currently there are 92 satellite private Pakistani television channels that broadcast news and entertainment including soaps operas, dramas, telenovelas. (Teoh, Chong, 2014)

Male dominated society is called a patriarchal society. This culture demanded that women were supposed to be oppressed to their brothers, fathers and sons (Delbaere et al., 2021).

Men are always represented as a powerful individual. In the past there are so many Pakistani dramas shows the content which indicates male dominancy for example Gumrah, Man Mayal and Alif Allah our Insan. The dramas gumrah indicate how man with money and power made everyone's life difficult (Tran, 2014). It indicates how man with dominancy destroyed three lives. Another dramas serial Alif Allah our Insan implicated the old culture and traditions of patriarchal society. In drama serial Man Mayal implicate how in the Pakistani society women are given with the least importance and considered as the burden on the husband. Men & women are equal in every respect both of them have their own contributions towards the society that no one can deny. (Singh, Nanda, 2018).

Pakistani feminists are usually concerned about depiction of women in Pakistani dramas. One UK based Pakistani Tasneem Ahmer where research central point on the women media relationship complaints 99.99% of TV dramas in Pakistani is misogynistic, patriarchal in its depiction of women issue (Wu, Song, 2019). There are so many outstanding dramas that focus serious and sensitive issues like sexual harassment, domestic violence, honor killing, rape and so on. Pakistani dramas now finally raising voice against violence on women and focusing on women empowerment that dramas successfully captured the absorption of its audience. For example, drama Akhari station in which issues faced by Pakistani women were drawn included depression, acid attack, drug abuse, prostitution, young marriage, refugee and other. This drama is an excellent step by our media to increase awareness amongst audience. One other drama is Bhaggi is based on the modal Qandeel Bloch, who killed by her own brother for honor. Yaqeen ka Safar is an outstanding story of women empowerment (Ahmed, Khalid, 2014). Story of a girl who decided to make her own life. She leaves her abusive household and complete her education without any support. She made herself financially and emotionally stable. Another drama is Khudgarz this drama is about individual freedom. The character of female broke the stereotypes and decided to pursue her dream even after getting married. She faced criticism from her in laws and society. Her character is true depiction of women empowerment she is a role model for thousands of women who want education and want to achieve financial independence even after marriage (Belwal et al., 2014).

Now in our dramas women are shown more optimistic, confident and setting high standards for themselves. They have their own aim and desire to be independent financially and emotionally, no more rely on men to support them and their children. There are so many positive female character in dramas. Undoubtedly women and men have so many physical, emotional and mental differences but this differences do not make women the weaker individual each gender should be taken as an individual. This study highly lights the women representation in the Pakistani drama.

Materials and methods

Sara, (2018) stated that the media playing important role regarding information and awareness towards society. Television is a medium that shows relationship portrayal, sexual content that influence the society differently. Rahman, (2019) revealed that dramas addresses the real problems faced by the society. Some of dramas are revolving around husband wives, mother in law daughter in law issues. This research highlighted that the media is portrayed societal problem and fantasy issues to grab the attention of audience and got more and more rating. According to Yasir, (2020) the relationship between married couple distinctly represented that relation are depicted in very cynical way. Married couple in dramas are not happy even decades of marriage but in recent dramas situation changes dramatically now the dramas are more informative.

Some dramas have the real ideology and context represent the ethical values through different character. Indecent content, vulgar songs, bold advertisement must be banned on media (Arifa, 2021).

Television dramas has been a popular medium of media but it depends on how reality depict in those dramas. Abbas, (2018) concluded from the islamization period a number of gender inequality issues are being discussed. He quoted submissive character in dramas always assigned to women, there duties are related to house hold work, and allegiances in their outfits. Author quoted drama named "Waris (the hair)" and "Mirat-ul-Uroos (The bridal mirror)" through the analyses of dramas context study the role of women in dramas he noticed dramas were reflection of gender based portrayals. It promotes misogynistic mindset and patriarchal mentality among audience. Pakistani dramas had a great impact on society and life style (Melissa et al., 2013).

Park et al., (2017) Pakistani dramas have power to change the beliefs, mindset, life style and preferences of audience to get clear understanding about this present study analyze under the media theory cultivation and Marxist theory.

Cultivation theory analyzes the contributions made by television is an effort to understand the conceptions viewers have concerning social reality (Gerbner, 1984). He differentiates television force to that of religion, and arguing that it defines social values standardizes behavior and homogenizes communities. Gerbener also coined different television viewer is known as the cultivation differential, a heavy viewer and a light viewer. Heavy viewer is more influenced by light viewer. Television caused mean world syndrome if viewing it more than four years (Teoh, Chong, 2014).

Marxist feminist is important in the present study because it's focused on content analyses of television dramas and representation of women and women empowerment in the selected dramas broadcasting during 2019 to 2021.

Social learning theory was developed by a Canadian psychologist named Albert Bandura. This theory basically describes the change a person encounters based on the interactions they have with others. People tend to develop similar behaviors when they expose themselves to a certain group or environment (Akers, Jennings, 2015). In essence this happens quite frequently as we tend to adopt habits of the people around us, especially those who have an influence on us (Rotter, 1982). This could be a result of inspiration, aspiration, or something as simple as acknowledgement. This is also due to positive or negative reinforcement especially if the outcome leads to a reward or a positive acknowledgement. Roles of women in different dramas is observed and then followed by people who consume and watch different prime time

dramas in TV. Any image of women depicted on the small screen will have great influence on the mind of the people Maisto et al., (1999). Albert Bandura's idea behind social learning theory and this study standpoint have some common ideas in between so for this purpose 'Social Learning Theory' applied in this paper.

Data for this study will be collected from content of television dramas and will be analyzed using qualitative analysis to examine the representation of women characters in different dramas (Gallagher, 2009). It will thus examine that how through an assessment of the representation of women in Pakistani dramas during prime time television hours. This study also will open new direction in drama research and women empowerment approach that challenge patriarchal ideology.

It will facilitate future media students and researchers to examine representation of women in dramas. This study educates the masses through dramas during this period when new stories are aired and diverse role are being played by women and indicates how drama industry is challenging strongly held ideology of patriarchy in Pakistan that is generally control male over female (Uimonen, 2013).

In this study population will be top rating dramas of Pakistani entertainment channel Hum, Geo, ARY during prime time television hours from Jan 2019 to Jan 2021. Simple random sampling will be used in this paper. In order to get perfect content analytical results, we will have considered different dramas of GEO, HUM, ARY prime time dramas of (Jan 2019- Jan 2021). We have selected GEO, HUM. ARY channels.

The sample size of this study will consist of three dramas one dramas each channel (Whitley, Ball, 2002). Dialogue and character from those dramas will be analyzed to explore the role of media in construction and representation of ideologies in dramas. In this study, Misogynistic mind set of Pakistan's patriarchal society and role of media in woman empowerment is the unit of analysis.

3. Discussion

• ALIF

Alif came across as a refreshing subject, with very deep meaning and also portrayal of a strong woman and conveys the unrushed message of women progressive characters. Momina sultan is an actress who has won an Oscar for her debut film she is divided by her acting and her deeper desire to stay on a path to Allah she wanted to spend her life doing calligraphy but she also needs to earn to keep her ill brother alive she also supports her family as her parents Pratama, (2018). A makeup artist and mother being junior actress are both retired. She managed to find a balance beautifully there is this situation where her fiancé Faisal orders her to give up acting as he thinks that she is selling her face and body to earn, but she gives him up instead and continue to act honorably.

Her mother, Suraiyya who was junior artist who fell in love with sultan, but she soon recognizes that sultan is obsessed with a bright star of their time Husn e Jahan. Suraiyya showed a very strong character by not only accepting Husn e Jahan as a part of her life but also old her jewelry to aid sultan when he needs to help Husn e Jahan. Suraiyya showed a very comfortable character and is extremely progressive mostly these days' narratives pitch women against each other and finally there is this character of Husn e Jahan she is a woman who gave up her acting career for a man she loves and move to turkey to sped her life raising her son, she gave up the

fame, the career and the fortune she had she is still a loyal friend to sultan. She is very sensitive and a responsible mother. She sends her son to turkey to be raised by his grandfather where she believes he could do a better job Mahsud et al., (2005). She is portrayed as a tragic woman who loses her love and her son to circumstances created by Abdul Ala, her father in law. Abdul Ala a pious but an egotistical man sometimes a pious and a religious man can be flawed.

• **SABAAT**

Miraal is an arrogant women belonging to rich family who is controlling and egoistic. Her father Seth Fareed a rich businessman supports her even in her negative thinking on the other hand her mother and grandmother try and teach her the values of life. But she always misbehaves with them her younger brother Hasan is also influenced by her. Anaya is an ambitious, strong headed and women's rights activist she's also studying at the same university as of Hasan's. Anaya and Hassan had a clash when she defeated him in engineering model competition (Qamar et al., 2021). Hassan insulted her and in return she taunts Hassan that he is dependent on his father and has achieved nothing by himself. He starts liking Anaya because of her strong and independent thinking. Miraal seeing a change in her brother and not being able to influence or control him finds out about Anaya she reaches university and insults Anaya but Anaya responds calmly.

Miraal slaps her in anger. Hassan helps Anaya with a guy who was blackmailing her friend and got shot. As he recovers he proposes Anaya which she accepts (Melissa et al., 2015). Hassan send his parents to her house but his father humiliates her parents. Anaya and her parent's rejects Hassan proposal but finally she says yes and they got married. Miraal burns Hassan's room on wedding night Anaya joins company of Seth Fareed where Miraal is also a CEO Miraal degrades Anaya but she remains calm and collected. Miraal begins to see psychiatrist Dr. Harris who falls in love with her. One day Miraal slaps Anaya in front of all the employees, Anaya feels humiliated and left the office. Hassan came to know and about this and decided to leave the house. Hassan and Anaya get a home on rent and started finding jobs. On the other hand, Miraal and Dr. Harris got married Hassan, gets a job in Yasir Qureshi office where he is mistreated. On the other hand, Anaya gets promoted in her office. Hassan's friend Asif creates doubt in his mind about Anaya's boss (Qureshi, 2009).

Anaya realize Hassan's doubtful nature but does not reply to his accusation Hassan left Anaya and returned to his parents' house after some time Anaya's father died which completely breaks her she has a baby boy and name him after her father. Miraal decides to take divorce from Harris while Harris does not want to give it. After some time, Anaya resumes her office and she learns that her new boss is Yasir Qureshi when Hassan came to know that Yasir Qureshi is Anaya's new boss he decides to take divorce from Anaya. One day Yasir comes to Anaya's room and gives her promotion letter but she resigns from the job and throws the promotion letter on Yasirs face. On the same day Miraal goes through an accident and her spinal cord gets injured and is paralyzed but Dr. Harris takes care of her she realizes her mistakes and confesses everything to Hassan what she has done to Anaya. Hassan feels ashamed and went straight to Anaya's home and asks for forgiveness but Anaya refuses then Miraal goes to Anaya and asks her to forgive Hassan and also seeks forgiveness (Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018). Anaya forgives Hassan, but Miraal is still guilty. But Harris forgives her and live happily ever after.

- **CHEEKH**

Mannat a girl from a Middle class family is married to Shayan. Mannats in laws are shown as quite wealthy Shayan Mannat's husband has two brothers wajih and they have a sister Haya, Mannat Haya and Nayab are all close friends. Nayab is poor and she lives with her father as her mother is dead. Nayab gets murdered on the day of her friend Hayas engagement, as Nayab breathe her last she told Mannat that Wajih is responsible for her condition after hearing this, Mannat doesn't believe Nayab until wajih confesses to her face that he told her to come to terrace and indirectly asking her for physical favors. On refusal he pushed Nayab from rooftop. Mannat went straight to police station and files for FIR against wajih (Tabassum, Amin 2020).

Everyone breaks all ties with Mannat and told her to take the case back except for her husband Shayan. Mannat stood strong and hired a lawyer she also threatened the family to get wajih hung to death. Out of fear wajih told his brother about the sin he committed and Yawar being the elder brother promises to protect him. When wajih realize that case is getting out of his hand he uploaded a video to internet in which he lies saying Mannat asked him for physical favors and when he rejected her she blamed him killing her friend Nayab. Mannat was mocked publically for having such an intention but she stood tall and strong. One night wajih saw Mannat walking alone he drives his car after her. As she runs and falls on ground she suffered miscarriage. She got hopeless and decided to leave the case, but Shayan motivated her and she gets back to case wajih starts blackmailing Mannats mother and locked her telling her to stop Mannat else she will see her dead body Mannats mother appears in court and tells fake story of Mannat being mentally ill, this results in judges making a decision in favors of wajih and Mannat was sent to mental hospital after few days her husband took her out of hospital meanwhile Mannats mother died and she was heartbroken once again (Mahsud et al., 2005). One day Shayan confronts wajih and they started hitting one another, wajih pushed him hard, he fell on glass table because of intense bleeding Shayan died. Mannat chose not to tell police about all that instead she started to collect evidences on her own to present in court she showed all the proofs and lastly, in arguments with wajih where she twisted the situation and wajih spits the truth now no one can help him and is being sentenced to death. Mannat is seen smiling and telling herself if she would have kept quite like all others she would have lost dignity in her own eyes instead she stood firm and support the oppressed and against all odds she won on her own.

Media has an influencing power which create and reflects thinking and ideology of society. One of the most important source of drama which play a very important role to developed society. Dramas can affect people positivity and negatively. However, this research analysis role of dramas in educating women about their empowerment, indicated factors which challenge male patriarchy and how the femininity and masculinity build up through dramas (Zubair, 2016).

- **THEMES**

- **Male supporter**

Male character in Sabaat and Alif drama is portrayed as a strong supporter. In Sabaat, Miral's father's decisions along with his strong will to make her daughter financially stable and strong changed her life. The relationship between Anaya and her father was so friendly which was the most beautiful relation in this drama. She shared everything with her father,

from her daily life routine to her problems. She took advice from her father because he was so supportive. Both worked as a backbone to each other. In Alif, Momina's brother and father supported and appreciated Momina a lot. They always made a difference in her perspective of thinking and motivated her to pursue her professional career as an actress (Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018).

Alif came across refreshing for its subject matter, deeper meaning and portrayal of women as strong and progressive characters. In drama serial Cheekh the way Shayan is supporting Mannat is melting our hearts. It is the ideal way for any husband to support their wives against their society. Shayan talks to Wajih very openly about his retaliation, telling him how he needs to grow a backbone before he can attack Mannat.

○ **Freedom of decision making**

In drama serial Alif, Momina has great freedom in her decisions. On one hand, she is helping her family's financial condition and on the other hand she wants to spend her life doing calligraphy where she ends up choose both. In the drama serial Sabaat, Miral is a young, rich, beautiful, stylish, confident, intelligent rheostat everyone around her and make them do things according to her. Although she was portrayed as a negative character, she still has a great representation in this drama. Audience took inspiration from being independent, confident and how she helps her father in his business (Bhatti et al., 2020).

In drama serial Cheekh Saba Qamar has brilliantly portrayed the character and essence of Mannat. Mannat has a strong decision power she never has to beg her husband to believe her. She even tells him that it's okay if he leaves her because she understands the situation he's been put in. But she never backs down from trying to get justice for Nayab.

○ **Women's position**

In the drama Alif, Momina's character is portrayed as being a strong, independent and confident woman. She is able to make her own decisions and sees them through till the end. Although she faces many hardships throughout the drama serial, she still manages to come out on top in the end. In the drama Sabaat, Miraal is shows as a stronger figure than her own brother and this is shown through her father giving her more responsibilities and a bigger role in their family business. As far as to show her brother asking Miraals permission to take any decisions in their business. In the Cheekh, the character of Manaas is also shown as a strong woman. She goes against her in laws all alone just for the sake of finding justice for herself. Her family tries to file a case on her and despite her being all alone against her family members, she was still able to earn victory. This shows her resilience and confidence in herself and how strong women can be when all odds are faced against her (Latif et al., 2021).

○ **Women in a societal role**

Momina loves to do calligraphy and wants to have a career in it, however due to her brother she has to make a tough decision to go into the profession of acting. However, she still finds the time to do both things so that she can still follow her passion and also fulfill the wishes of her brother. Anaya in Sabaat always speaks for women empowerment even when her husband is constantly suspicious about her character. Yet, she fights for her aims in life and ends up victorious going as far as gaining the trust of her husband in the end (Saleem et al., 2021). In the drama series Cheekh, Manaas has the option to leave the case of Nayaab and spend an easy life knowing that if she does nothing she can have a peaceful life. However, she wants to see

change in her society and due to that she goes against her in-laws to fight for what's right. All this is done just to achieve one aim and that is empowering women and defining women's roles and rights in the society.

○ **Women's in an economic role**

All three women were portrayed as working women, yet they were always able to find time for their personal and family life. Although they wanted to follow what passions they had in their life, still they were able to become good wives, daughters and friends. They were all financially strong and didn't rely on their family members, husbands or friends to keep them afloat.

They were also contributing their earnings between themselves and their family's so that they could help out their families as best as they could (Sajida et al., 2021). All three characters wanted best for themselves and their families, they didn't want an indecent life however they did want their independence in taking decisions in their lives and also doing what passions they had. Whether be it, standing for what's right, supporting a friend or supporting their husbands?

○ **Self determination**

In all of three dramas women, we observed that women have a common strength of self-determination. Whether we talk about Miraal, Anaya, Momina & Mannat all were strongly stuck to their aims and tended to live a decent and successful life. Anaya character shows that how women can become strong in different circumstances whether facing harassment in her university life or work life and how she can achieve everything independently without the support of any man (Mushtaq et al., 2022).

○ **Independent working women**

In the modern society, whatever the barriers come in the way of life, if a woman is determined and give her 100% she can achieve whatever she wants for her family and for her country like Mannat, Anaya, Momina and Miraal. Mannat character is very bold and independent she become lawyer and fought for the truth. Anaya and Miraal both are working women.

○ **Use of language**

The language which is used in the dramas was very harsh and clear. There is not the purity of a language however it is the mixture of different languages. Language was decent but pitch of voice is very harsh and loud by the female characters. They know their rights and know how to take action in different situation.

Alif came across as refreshing for its subject matter, its deeper meaning and portrayal of women as strong and progressive characters.

Figure no: 3.1 Women empowerment
in Alif



The high-class facilities in their lives with the portrayal of elite class life style. There is a diversity of women roles presented by dramas in Pakistan. Television dramas now a days more informative, future oriented, educational, inspiring and rational as that could improve the status of women. Positive women projection on media will be equally beneficial to both women and society as well. Dramas now change the direction of women portrayal in different roles and represent women issues positively (Pratama, 2018).

Figure no: 3.2 Women empowerment
in Alif



Cheekh drama is giving everyone the courage, power, and determination to speak up for themselves and stand up against injustice. The drama serial cheekh isn't only particularly about misogyny, and doesn't just encourages women to stand up. There are different aspects to it misogyny being one. Cheekh so beautifully covers all the parallels of injustice that exists in the society and doesn't discriminate on the basis of gender or power.

Figure no: 3.3 Women empowerment in Cheekh



Figure no: 3.4 Women empowerment in Cheekh



Cheekh's plot focuses on the injustices faced by women, which are caused by certain men and women of our society. Also, Manaat character in Cheekh has stood up against injustice for both men and women, as injustice is an issue faced by both men and women of our society. There are many instances where people are forced to accept the injustice and not raise their voices against it. Manaat in Cheekh is fighting and striving for justice, she's fighting any person who stops her from doing what's right. When you watch drama, you will notice that her fight is not just with the men but also the women who chose to accept the injustice instead of fighting against it. All the characters of females in Cheekh are equally powerful and important, Manaat character is most intriguing. To go from a Hunsmukh larki and become an advocate for what's morally right is nothing short of a challenge.

Figure no: 3.5 Women empowerment in Alif



Entertainment industry of Pakistan is now expanding. Women are now portrayed both in positive and negative character positive portrayal of women affects the audience positively. Now in dramas women are not only shown as problem facer at domestic level in the role of being a mother, mother-in-law, sister, and daughter in law etc. (Qamar et al., 2021).

Figure no: 3.6 Women empowerment in Alif



Portrayal of dramas always makes it in a manner which enforces positive beliefs and ideologies about them. For example, the character of Anaya in Sabaat is portrayed as a strong girl she is very well aware about the world around her and also very smart and strong. Such actions represent women in a very positive way. It reinforces the aspects of smart and strong female characters, which is much fictionalized and would not be in the real world. Such as the character of Miraal is portrayed in the same way. (Qamar et al., 2021).

Results

Television has switch its viewpoint with the passage of time. Now a day by recognition of feminist's movements women have make some position in the society as now they are less likely to compact in the house chores only. Women's were being involved to be part of their decision making process in their nearby future as well. In the women are restricted to get their aims and goals women were only allowed to get education and not allowed to get in the profession of males. Now a day's Pakistani channels change their presentation which is also need of the present time (Bhatti et al., 2020). Audience connects with the dramas and think their values are same. This research paper elaborates that with the passage of time dramas are

transforming the culture with the passage of time. It explores the different measurements of women role and her struggle for achieving decent living standards.

Conclusions

TV dramas are biggest source of enhancing the culture values and norms for the society. Generally, dramas are meant for entertainment purposes. TV viewers spends two hours daily watching television. Pakistani dramas depicted women career oriented and family oriented both. Women of our society trying to practice what they see in dramas. Dramas portraying women strong and independent. The current research proved that how Pakistani dramas are educating our society by the characters they are presenting and by the strong image they are portraying of women (Abbas, 2018). Dramas strengthen women and empower them, this can leave positive impact on society. Now a day we can see sudden shift in Pakistani dramas women characters are now strong enough for speak up for their own rights and protection. There are so many dramas had a strong characters of women they are career oriented and full of feminine strength, these women are active members of society who, are presented a strong independent negotiator who continually combat misogynistic society and dig out space for themselves. Numerous dramas are now made in Pakistan that change our perspectives and persuade us to gain a knowledge that supports women in our society.

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