

# The *squint* in the Eye

**Gender Bias in the Media: A Resource Book and Guide  
for Media Workers, Facilitators, and  
Resource Persons**

Simorgh Women's Resource and Publication Centre is a non-government, not for profit feminist activist organisation. Simorgh's main focus is on research, knowledge building and information dissemination to enable women and men to challenge the dominance of ideas that support social and economic divisions on the basis of gender, class, religion, race and nationality.

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The Squint in the Eye

Gender bias in the media: a resource book and guide for media workers, facilitators and resource persons.

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## Introduction

It is an accepted fact that the media plays a critical role in our lives. For most of us it is difficult to imagine a day that begins without a newspaper or an evening without television. We listen to the news, watch talk shows on television and relax with soap operas, television drama, film and theatre.

**Newspapers, television, radio, the cinema and theatre** and now, of course, **social media** are major channels of communication that connect us to the world.

- ▶ **News Reports** provide information on local, national and global affairs.
- ▶ **Advertisements** tell us about articles of daily use and luxury items. They provide information about what is available in the market and how these items will make our lives more comfortable. As the aim of the marketing industry is to sell the goods it promotes, advertisements are designed to titillate consumerist desire and create market demands.
- ▶ **Entertainment Channels**
- ▶ **Soap Opera ▶ Television ▶ Plays ▶ Cinema ▶ Theatre**

All these provide a break from the stress and tensions of everyday life by letting us enter other worlds. They let us participate - at second hand - in other people's lives; share their joys and sorrows; be shocked or delighted by their behaviour, and enjoy lifestyles that may be different from our own.

Most importantly, because these dramatic forms involve us as viewers, in the lives and problems of different people in similar and different contexts, they enlarge our experience by enabling us to see and understand life from different perspectives. Depending on content and the 'eye' of the camera, these points of view may reinforce the ways we already think, or challenge our preferred beliefs and ideas.

As art forms, soap opera, television plays and cinema have the potential to deepen our understanding of the complexity of human life and the society in which we live. By enabling us to see and engage with lifestyles and cultures that are different from our own, they extend the boundaries of our knowledge, experience and ideas. This can be thought provoking, disturbing and exciting. It can help us to think critically and review our own pet beliefs and ideas - or it can reinforce our existing ideas and practices.

Stories, poetry, songs and music are expressions of the ways in which a society (or people) dreams, imagines and expresses itself.

They tell us about the way things are - and how we would like them to be. Their importance cannot be underestimated.

Our access to news, information and entertainment has grown with the onset of information technolo-

gies. **Social Media** channels have made instant interactive communication and exchange of information, ideas and views possible between far flung places and people.

### **The Media:**

#### **1. Connects us to the world in which we live –**

- ▶ Locally, as members of a family, community, neighbourhood, workplace, city, town or village.
- ▶ Sub-nationally as members of the different provinces and ethnicities that make up the country viz as Baloch, Sindhi, Pashtun, Punjabi, Hazara, Kailash, etc.
- ▶ As members of particular religious and ideological groups that together make up communities, neighbourhoods, cities, nations and countries, e.g. as Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Budhists, Sikhs, Liberals, Communists, Socialists, fanatics, bigots and all the schisms and sects and squabbling groups that are generated by each belief system.
- ▶ Nationally as citizens of the state
- ▶ Globally as citizens and inhabitants of the wider world that is made up of different races, peoples and nation-states.

**2. Adds to our knowledge;** it shapes our opinions and influences the ways in which we see, understand and experience our lives and the world around us. It also has the potential of challenging and making us question the boundaries of our knowledge and ideas. As such, it is very important for us as readers and viewers to understand how the media works - and for media persons to understand and be aware of the significance and impact of their work.

### **What this Resource Book and Guide is about**

A component of the Fempower consortium project for women's political empowerment, *The Squint in the Eye* is a resource book and guide for media practitioners.

The basic premise of this Guide is that information is neither neutral nor objective. At the individual level our views and perceptions are filtered through the lens of our experience, the books we read, the films and plays we watch and the views and opinions of the company we keep. As the media is controlled by those in positions of power, such as governments and media houses, to a large extent the information provided in the media reflects the views and serves the interests of the ruling groups who are predominantly male.

This is borne out by the largely one-sided and often negative and stereotypical portrayal of women, trans people, religious minorities and other marginalised groups, or their being missed out altogether in the news and school texts as if they are too unimportant to merit mention.

### **The purpose of this Guide is to enable:**

- (i) media workers, mass communication students, resource persons, teachers and other readers to critically examine and address the gender bias that influences the ways in which women and other marginalised groups are represented or portrayed in the media.
- (ii) sift fact from biased representation
- (iii) discover how cultural myths, stereotypes, word combinations and images are used to create meaning

- (iv) understand the underlying politics and impact of image-making on the reading and viewing public and their role in influencing and building public opinion, and see for themselves:
  - How gender biased portrayals influence our views on the status, position and social-role of women, trans people and other marginalised groups and minorities.
  - How the media shapes public opinion on women who cross the boundaries of their traditionally assigned roles as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters and homemakers to take part in the economic and political life of their communities and country.
  - How cultural myths, stereotypes, word combinations and images are used to create meaning that either fixes women, men and marginalised groups in stereotypical roles, or enables them to extend the boundaries of their culturally and politically allocated roles and functions.
  - How the religious and ethnic biases of majority populations impact on the ways in which minority populations are portrayed in the media.

This will help media workers to critically assess their own work, and to read and assess other texts so as to understand:

- i. The underlying politics of meaning-making.
- ii. The role of gender-biased reporting in building public opinion.
- iii. The role of biased reporting in reinforcing social and cultural prejudices about women, transgender persons and religious and ethnic minorities.

As media professionals work with words and verbal and visual images, a major focus of this guide will be on the ways language, stereotypes, clichés and figures of speech, i.e., proverbs, sayings, terms of abuse and slogans are used to produce different kinds of meaning.

This guide is primarily about women's representation in the media. Therefore the information and exercises it contains are designed to show how the media can either trivialise and downplay women's role in society or highlight their contribution to the cultural, social, economic and political life of the societies in which they live. (A similar approach will be used in exercises pertaining to other marginalised groups and communities).

As part of this objective, we will be looking at the print and electronic media to see:

1. How the media produces these narratives.
2. The extent to which these narratives (i) actually reflect the realities of the lives and living conditions of women and other marginalised groups, and (ii) the degree to which they rely on received ideas and preconceived notions to tell their tale.
3. The ways in which clichés and stereotypes reinforce existing gender and other biases and impact on the lives of women and other marginalised groups, and how a break with preconceived notions can open up spaces for them.

Given this perspective, our examination of current media practices will draw on different theories of representation as well as on our experience of earlier workshops with journalists at selected sites in

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab, including our work experience with journalists and Mass Communication students since 1985.

## **Overall Aims of this Guide cum Resource Book**

The basic aim of this Guide is to enable media workers to develop a more objective and unbiased way of interpreting and producing news and other stories that acknowledge and promote the contribution of women and other marginalised groups to society, particularly their role in public and political life including the national economy.

Conceived and written from a feminist perspective, its point of departure from mainstream manuals lies in that it is not only about changing the ways in which mainstream media represents women and minority communities; it is also about understanding the ways in which verbal and visual texts and narratives use words, images, metaphors, sayings, etc., to produce biased meaning and reinforce prejudice.

As women and other marginalised groups do not exist in isolation, but are part of the relational world, this Guide also aims to enable media practitioners to recognise, question and challenge, through their work, the patriarchal-patrilineal hierarchies of gender, class, caste, sex, race, religion and other socially constructed differences and the ways in which they affect peoples' daily lives.

### **For this reason, this guide provides information on:**

- i. How language is used to produce meaning and create news and information.
- ii. The reasons, in the face of ground realities that are clearly at variance with them, for the acceptance and/or appeal of gender-biased verbal/visual narratives that reinforce traditional socially allocated gender roles, and show women and other marginalised people who transgress accepted social boundaries, in a negative light.

### **In this regard, this Resource Book will raise the following questions and enable users to find answers to:**

- ▶ Why, for example, does a news report, television play, soap opera or film that shows working women as home breakers and bad mothers or selfish wives and daughters-in-law, have instant appeal, even though in real life, those very readers/audiences rely on the income and services of working women for their material and emotional support?
- ▶ Why do soap operas and television plays glorify 'victimhood' – viz the self sacrificing wife/mother; the patient suffering sister/daughter and show women who resist violence or assert independence in a negative light?
- ▶ Why do news reports of women in public office focus on the way women dress rather than on the quality of their work, character and personality?
- ▶ What are the factors that lead to this form of gender blindness or squint in the eye when depicting women?
- ▶ What are the biases and frames of reference that result in news reports of sexual harassment and rape that imply complicity on part of the victim despite



- evidence to the contrary?
- ▶ Why do readers find it easier to uncritically accept such biased news, as evidenced in the recurrent fall back on the ‘she must have asked for it’ or ‘it was her fault’ response in cases of sexual abuse, domestic violence and rape? This may be exemplified by the Lahore CCPO’s statement on the September 2020 Motorway Gang Rape Case when, instead of expressing shame at the failure of the motorway police to ensure traveler safety, he shamelessly blamed the victim of engineering her own rape.

### **Conversely:**

Why do news reports, television plays or advertisements that break with normative gender roles, give rise to negative criticism or even outrage, despite the fact that they may be reflecting or portraying real life situations?

A case in point is Orya Jan Maqbool’s response to the Q Mobile advertisement based on the women’s cricket team, where by drawing prurient attention to the body movement of women cricketers, he turns the contents of an advertisement that uses women’s sports to promote its goods, into a dubious moral issue.

In order to answer these questions and build a critical understanding of the politics of meaning production, this Resource-cum Guide will enable users to critically examine news and entertainment and trace the gender biases in them to their underlying causes:

- ▶ from a mainstream perspective
- ▶ through a feminist lens

The purpose of this double perspective is to enable participants to identify and examine the limitations, gaps and contradictions in mainstream representations of women and other marginalised groups so as to develop skills for self-aware, responsible verbal/visual reportage and representation.

### **Why this is not a ‘Training Manual’**

There are a number of reasons why this is not a training manual.

To begin with, the word ‘training’ is patronising - and limiting. It presupposes a ‘trainer’ who alone has knowledge and a ‘trainee’ who has none. This sets up a one-way power relationship that rules out mutuality.

On the face of it, a oneway relationship may make the trainer’s work easier, but its disadvantage lies in that it:

- Reduces or cancels out the need for ‘trainers’ to review and/or modify their material in accordance with group needs and contexts.
- Reinforces the top down approach that reduces the possibility of direct participant engagement and automatically sets limits on debate and discussion.
- Narrows the space for interactive engagement between (i) the ‘trainer’ and ‘trainees’ and (ii) among the participants themselves. This results in loss of

space where issues can be thrashed out, understanding deepened and the capacity for critical thinking developed.

- The partnership between the ‘trainer’, whose position automatically testifies to expert knowledge of a given subject, and a manual, (dictionary meaning: a “book containing information *briefly*”) is misleading and counter productive as it creates a false relationship between ‘trainees’, who by virtue of their position, are seen to lack knowledge, and the ‘trainer,’ who is positioned as someone ‘who knows it all’ but in actual fact relies on a book with limited information.
- This can turn the training workshop into a mechanical exercise consisting of a fixed number of exercises and activities interspersed with (often infantile and pointless) ‘ice-breakers’.
- As such, (i) it fails to utilise participant knowledge and insights and leaves little or no time for in-depth discussion and, (ii) does not take account of the variables of participants’ geographical location, generational differences and contextual or situational constraints etc.

## **The Uses and Limitations of Training Manuals**

Designed initially to improve human resource efficiency in the business sector, Training Manuals are a useful tool for helping employees to develop job related skills, contribute to their organisation and be successful in their current positions. The success of the conventional training manual model lies in the shared employer/employee vision and interests viz. efficient organisational management on the one hand, and job satisfaction and career development on the other.

For the same reasons, but to a lesser degree, this model can also work for human resource and organisational development and management in not for profit civil society organisations, as in this case too, ‘trainers’ and ‘trainees’ are on the same page in terms of improved organisational and personal capacity building.

The problem arises when the same model is applied in rights based, awareness raising, critical thinking workshops with diverse groups from diverse backgrounds and contexts.

In such situations, group expectations are usually different from and/or resistant to workshop aims. This is especially so when the purpose of a workshop is to enable participants to question or challenge deeply embedded ideas that have acquired the status of ‘truth’ for them and are an integral part of the routines of their daily lives and conversations.

Such ideas and perceptions are the most difficult to challenge and the most resistant to change and alternative ways of looking at the world.

Customised solutions and quick fixes do not work here! Or if they appear to do so – their impact is short-lived. This has been evidenced in the low impact of countless gender-training and/or sensitisation workshops with bureaucrats, parliamentarians, duty bearers, grass roots communities, media workers and others, where familiarisation with the idea of gender equality and equity has failed to translate into bias-free gender equitable policies, reportage and representation.

As one journalist remarked after a workshop with media workers in Usta Mohammad, Balochistan,

“We have enjoyed this workshop; learnt new things about our craft and gender issues. You’ve convinced us for now. But come back after a few months and you will find us exactly where we were at the start of this workshop. You see we are part of a traditional and conservative society. It is difficult for us to change!”

**It is also necessary to remember that resistance to change is not limited to groups or communities for whom these workshops are designed.**

***We, as Resource Persons, are also part of the same culture and to a lesser or greater degree, own and have internalised the very values, prejudices and gender biases that we are expected to challenge professionally. This is especially so as these values are woven into the idioms, sayings and language of daily use.***

This adds to the difficulty of our work. If we ourselves do not believe in the causes we uphold professionally, we are not likely to convince others to question or change their perceptions and attitudes.

***This is why it is imperative for us to understand and be convinced of:***

- i. the concepts and ideas on which we base our thinking.***
- ii. the issues we aim to address.***
- iii. why we are trying to convince others that change is needed.***

Failure to do so will prevent us from positioning ourselves critically outside the frames of reference we aim to challenge. This will result in unclear and/or unconvincing arguments that can end up reinforcing or at best superficially addressing gender or other biases, that inform mainstream representations of women and minority groups including the customary practices, norms and behavioural attitudes that are unfair or harmful to them.

## **Received Ideas, Ground Realities and the Media**

Today, there is a wide gap between received notions of female and male roles in society and the ground realities of the world in which we live.

The spread of education, economic pressures, and changing lifestyles are visibly challenging and changing traditional female/male roles.

Large numbers of women are entering the public domain as college and university students, professionals, policy makers, business entrepreneurs, politicians, scientists, etc. Many of them are holding positions that make them economically independent and many are earning more money than the men in their families.

This lack of fit between women’s perceived and actual roles is a cause not only of social discomfort but also of media misrepresentation.

Given the media’s role as watch dogs and opinion makers, it is imperative that media professionals – journalists, copywriters, playwrights, etc., break away – or at least achieve a critical distance from gendered stereotypes and ideologies that reinforce women’s subordination, deny their human potential and negate their role as equal citizens of the state.

This would be the crucial first step towards developing alternative points of view and ways to present a picture that is more honestly reflective of the multiple roles women and marginalised groups play in

society including their daily and long term social, political and economic contribution.

## **Design and Content of this Guide/Resource Book**

This Guide cum Resource Book has been designed to enable **Teachers, Resource Persons, Facilitators, Media workers** and **Students**,

- to reflect on the biases that inform not just media representation of women, men and minority communities but also the ways in which these biases inform and impact our policies, laws and notions of what is good and bad, right and wrong, possible and not possible.
- Understand and examine the role and significance of ideologies and cultural factors in mainstream representations of women and minorities.
- Acknowledging the media's role in shaping public opinion, facilitate media practitioners to develop more gender-balanced and bias free ways of seeing and representing women and other vulnerable groups and communities.
- Run their own workshops for media workers and mass communication students.

### **The material provided will enable users to:**

1. Examine, analyse and critique verbal, visual texts for the ways in which they produce meaning:
2. Use the feminist perspective to:
  - i. See the limitations, gaps and contradictions in mainstream representation of women and social and religious minorities.
  - ii. Assess the impact of their message on readers and viewers both generally and specifically in the context of Pakistan's social, economic and cultural realities.
3. Develop skills for self-aware and responsible verbal/visual meaning-production.

### **For user convenience, this Guide is divided thematically into Modules comprising:**

- i. Topic specific information, exercises, case studies and samples of verbal visual texts for critical analysis
- ii. Notes and experience based TIPS for **Facilitators** and **Resource Persons** are provided in the running text. See appendices for additional information

**NOTE:** The material and exercises in this section and in the different Modules can be used by Facilitators and Resource Persons to design individual workshop modules.

## **How to use this Guide cum Resource book**

The success of a workshop depends on:

- i. The **relevance of the material** used to the issue under discussion.
- ii. The **Resource Person's** ability to assess the **group's** skill level, and select material accordingly. e.g., senior journalists do not need to be told of the difference between a 'News Report', 'Feature' or 'Article' but a group of media students or very young journalists may benefit from this information.
- iii. **Selection of material/exercises:** these should be based on the group's geographical and cultural location e.g., the exercises used for a group in a small town in South Punjab or KP should be different (a) from each other and (b) from those for groups in Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar or Lahore.
- iv. The **Resource Person's** ability to capture participant interest is of crucial importance.
  - ▶ The more interactive a session, the more impact it will have.
  - ▶ A top down lecture-based approach will send participants to sleep.
- v. The **Resource Person's** ability to enable participants to identify/recognise:
  - ▶ gender bias
  - ▶ look at and represent women from a gender-balanced perspective without putting participants on the defensive.
- vi. Management of time schedules.
- vii. Running tea/coffee if possible. This helps maintain participant energy and mitigates flagging interest. If running tea, etc., is not possible, strategically timed tea and lunch breaks will serve the same purpose.

### Selective use of material

**Resource Persons** and **Facilitators** should use the material/exercises provided in the activity modules selectively. Keeping group interests in mind, they should 'mix and match' the material to design their own workshop modules.

Benefits of the '**MIX and MATCH**' approach:

- It will enable the **Resource Person/Facilitator** to select material in accordance with participant needs, background and context(s).
- It is not necessary, advisable or even possible to use all the information and exercises in a given module, in the same workshop.
- Keep group interests and time schedules in mind and select exercises that make the best sense for a particular group.

Taken together, the different modules and the background information provided will equip the **Resource Person** with the information necessary for running a workshop and provide the space for informed responses to participants' questions.

**Resource Persons** MUST remember that they are there to communicate with and enable partici-

pants to develop their critical/analytical skills, etc.;

They are NOT there to display their own language skills and expertise.

**Resource Persons** must avoid the confrontational approach. They must keep in mind that an easy, open discussion will help to diffuse or counter resistance to what may be new and unfamiliar ideas and points of view for the group.

### **The Resource Person's role is to:**

Enable, facilitate and guide the discussion so that participants discover the gaps and contradictions in their views and arguments by themselves. This will be more effective than imposing your ideas on them. *Telling people what to think or say never works.*

**NOTE:** Additional information/reading material on personal law on marriage, divorce, forced marriage including right of choice in marriage, sexual harassment, with website links for full documents, is provided in the Section on Resource Material.

However, this information does not cover everything.

**Resource Persons** are expected to do some preparatory research on their own when designing a workshop module. Reference to factual information will add to the **Resource Person/Facilitator's** credibility with the group.

This is important as:

- △ an informed and knowledgeable **Resource Person** has more confidence and is more likely to convince participants, than one who is unsure or vague about what s/he is saying.
- △ a **Resource Person** who generates confidence in participants about her/his knowledge and capability will be in a stronger position to guide the discussion and diffuse tension and/or resistance to what may be seen as new and unfamiliar ideas by participants.

## **Preparing for and Planning a Media Workshop**

The following factors are necessary for an efficient and well run workshop:

### **1. Selection of Resource Persons/Facilitators:**

**The Resource Person/Facilitator's** views and ideological position should tally with the aims and objectives of the workshop.

For instance a person who believes that women are inferior or subordinate to men, or that discrimination on the basis of religion, class, caste, ethnicity and other differences is justified, is clearly NOT the kind of person you need for a workshop on gender equality and human rights.

► **The following qualifications/approach are necessary for an effective, efficient and well run workshop:**

**Resource persons/facilitators** should:

- ▶ Have the knowledge and understanding of the given subject.
- ▶ Be conversant and in agreement with the feminist position on gender relations and related issues.
- ▶ Be conversant with and believe in basic Human Rights.
- ▶ Be conversant with the norms of participatory learning.
- ▶ Be conceptually clear
- ▶ Be gender sensitive
- ▶ Be good communicators
- ▶ Be flexible and have the ability to modify the workshop plan or exercises to suit group needs.

This requires quick thinking as sometimes the need to change and/or modify the workshop plan/exercises can arise while work is in process.

## 2. Capacity building, brainstorming and planning meeting/s with **Resource Person/s**, etc.

Unless **Resource Persons** etc are already conversant with feminist ideas, basic Human Rights principles and concepts and participatory learning methodology, this should be a two-day exercise at the least.

### **This exercise should be designed to:**

- △ Ensure clarity of ideas and efficiency, especially if the **Facilitator/Resource Person** is not a member of your organisation or part of the **Project Team**.
- △ It is important that organisers and resource persons are on the same conceptual plane and have the same aims and objectives.
- △ Recap and if necessary, familiarise **Resource Persons/Facilitators** and **Workshop Team** with the feminist perspective on gender relations and gender equality.
- △ Sharing of field experience with **Resource Persons** will provide new/fresh insights and sharpen focus on the issues to be addressed and will facilitate selection of the material and exercises to be used.
- △ Generate ideas/develop techniques on how to approach a given exercise with better effect and/or help develop new exercises
- △ Build up pre-workshop energy

## 3. Sharing of workload: job allocation to **Research Team** for additional material such as information on a particular law; samples of news reports/advertisements, etc., as required by the **Facilitator**

#### 4. Keep the participants' or group's context and background in mind.

##### **This will include:**

- ▶ The Gender Factor: women and men are part of the same culture and may have similar views on the roles of women and men in society and other issues but, due to systemic inequalities and differences of status and position in society, *the way in which women and men live and experience life on a daily basis is different*. This will be reflected in their perceptions and responses.
- ▶ Gender and Religion Factor: non-Muslim women face two kinds of discrimination. These are:
  - gender based discrimination from their own men,
  - discrimination on the basis of religious difference from the majority population.

These differences will be reflected in participants' response to the workshop.

Therefore the following need to be factored in during the **Preparatory Phase** and also during the workshop, as they will provide insights to participants' social cultural contexts, experiences, attitudes and responses and deepen understanding of issues.

- ▶ Social location: class/caste affiliations.
- ▶ Geographical location, such as the province to which the group belongs viz Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, etc.
- ▶ Rural or urban background.
- ▶ Income level.
- ▶ Level of education.
- ▶ Religion – does the group consist of people from the same religion or does it represent more than one religion and/or school of thought. *It is important for the Resource Person to be aware of the group's constitution for sensitivity to different belief systems. At the same time, it is equally important not to centre stage religious difference or divide the group into religion-based categories*
- ▶ Employment/profession etc.

### **Workshop Design**

1. There are bound to be experiential and material differences between a journalist working in a metropolitan city like Karachi and those from Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Vehari, Punjab as well as between rural and urban communities from different parts of the country.
  - Design your workshop and select your material/exercises, etc., keeping the above in mind.



- It is a good idea not to limit yourself only to the modules / material you plan to use.

Always prepare additional material/exercises. This will prepare you for unexpected situations and also allow room for flexibility.

People and groups can be unpredictable: you may find that the material you have prepared will not work for a particular group.

If this happens, you will either have to modify your workshop plan or change it altogether. This is when the additional material will prove useful.

- Don't rely on any one medium of communication: Support your argument with a mix of visual images such as photographs, advertisements, clips from films or television plays and documentaries.

2. A mix of verbal and visual narratives:

- ⇒ prevents boredom
- ⇒ keeps participant interest alive
- ⇒ creates the space for discussion
- ⇒ helps with the learning process
- ⇒ mitigates resistance

3. Create the space for **participants** to freely comment/share their views on film clips and advertisements, etc.

This will help **participants** to clarify their ideas and provide the **Facilitator** with useful insights to the ways they think; especially their views and understanding of women's role and position in society including marginalised groups etc.

This will help the **Facilitator/Resource Person** in identifying areas that require special attention and to pitch her/his argument accordingly.

4. Read up on relevant background material before the workshop. This will refresh your memory and ensure conceptual clarity when you speak.

As mentioned earlier, some resource material is provided in the last section of the Resource Book. This should not prevent you from expanding your knowledge base and keeping abreast of relevant current affairs through further reading.

**NOTE:** As the focus is on the representation of women and minority communities in public and political spaces, it is necessary to have a working knowledge – or at least ready access to information on the local government system and laws including those pertaining to non-Muslim minority representation, the role and function of parliament, bureaucracy, law enforcement agencies as well as laws pertaining to women.

## **Approach and Medium of Expression and Instruction**

The **non-hierarchical participant-led approach** works best for community workshops as it allows **participants** to raise issues; engage in discussion; question and or disagree with the **Facilitator/Resource Person** and other group members. This approach requires:

A **Resource Person/Facilitator** who comes across as well informed but NOT superior to the participants.

This will add to group comfort level and responsiveness.

**NOTE:** Please remember that while as Resource Person you have knowledge and expertise in a particular area or field that the group lacks, this does not mean that the group knows nothing.

Every person, regardless of their level of education, gender identity, age, class, religion and geographical location, is (i) capable of thought, (ii) engages in some kind of intellectual activity and (iii) has her/his own perception of the world and society in which s/he lives.

This includes conscious notions of what is good and bad; what is taken for granted, such as received ideas and customs and what needs to be done to improve the quality of life individually and socially.

**That is how every person:**

- i. contributes to every day life and sustains the world in which s/he lives
- ii. can modify and change it if s/he desires.

Collectively, the **Group** is neither ignorant nor stupid. The **Group's collective and individual experience**, including background and context, has provided participants with information and knowledge. This may be different from that of the **Resource Person** but it does not have less value or validity. In fact there is a lot that **Resource Persons** and **project teams** can learn from the Group.

**Reasons why the top-down lecture mode should be avoided are:**

- ▶ It discourages/prevents **participant** engagement with the learning process.
- ▶ By bypassing the **group's** individual and collective knowledge and experience, the **Facilitator** will fail to:
  - i. Identify and deal with resistance.
  - ii. Tap participants' potential for change.
  - iii. Build her/his own knowledge base and develop an understanding of different socially contexted perceptions/attitudes/behavioural patterns.

Therefore, implement workshop agenda, maintain the necessary discipline and timelines but whatever you do, **DO NOT PATRONISE**.

Not only must the **Group's** knowledge and experience be respected – it must be seen to be respected.

**Medium of Communication**

Use the language spoken by the group, i.e., their mother tongue. This will set the group at ease and facilitate communication.

In case you don't speak the group's given language or are uneasy with it; use Urdu or the next commonly used language.

Use English *only* if it is the group's normal mode of communication.

In most cases a bi-lingual approach works; just make sure you don't rely too much on English as:

- i. The group will lose interest if participants do not understand what you are saying.
- ii. Feel excluded and take refuge in silence or resistance.
- iii. Experience loss of self-esteem.
- iv. Get bored and lose interest in the activity, lecture or discussion.

## Approach:

Where possible, cater to immediate group interests/needs:

- This generates interest and diffuses resistance. e.g. at a workshop in Vehari, journalists responded to news definition and analysis exercises because, according to them, they helped them build their journalistic skills.
- Use topical/current issues to illustrate your argument.

In Vehari we asked the group to provide the case study on which discussions and exercises could be based. It was a good strategy as the exercise (i) began with direct and active participant involvement, (ii) enabled participants to revisit and critically examine a known event, (iii) enabled them to examine different aspects of the problem and (iv) allowed them to find solutions to the problem on the basis of different points of view including their own biases.

**NOTE:** Most of the exercises in different Modules are based on reported news, advertisements.

It is recommended, where possible, include and/or replace them with current news, images etc., while following the design and focus of the original exercise.

This will ensure that all participants take part in the discussions/exercises.

- In every workshop there are some participants who want to dominate the discussion and others who prefer to sit there as passive onlookers. This may be because some of them have just come along to make up workshop numbers. But it could also be because they are shy and lack confidence.

A good **facilitator** will draw out passive/silent **participants** by asking simple questions; encouraging them to speak and showing that their ideas matter.

At the same time, care should be taken that the conversation is not taken over by the more vocal and aggressive participants.

- Use group exercise presentations to encourage active participation.
- Ask participants to assess each other's presentations and activities.
- Follow them up with your comments to fill in gaps especially on gender equality issues, BUT DO NOT INTERRUPT THEIR PRESENTATIONS.

### **This will:**

- ▶ Make the exercise more democratic and in line with participatory learning requirements
- ▶ Enhance participants' sense of involvement
- ▶ Encourage participants to pay attention to presentations by other groups
- ▶ Discourage private conversations
- ▶ Help participants discover/build their critical skills
- ▶ As everyone gets the chance to give their opinion, it helps participants to learn to take criticism without personalising it and/or taking offence
- ▶ Prepares participants for the facilitator's comments/criticism

### **Managing resistance**

Individual and/or collective group resistance is inevitable when faced with new and unfamiliar ideas, especially those that challenge received wisdom and traditional social norms and perceptions.

The most common response in such cases is rejection and/or anger. In such instances participants may ground their arguments on religion, tradition and/or nationalism such as:

- 'This is against what our religion says ...'.
- 'This is against our norms and customs...'
- 'If we allow women to mix with strange men, it will lead to immoral activity, etc.'
- 'This is not the way we do things in our community/village/town, etc'.
- 'We are Pakistanis/Baloch/Sindhi/Punjabi – these are Western ideas, etc'.

Please remember that this anger and resistance is normal and to be expected.

- ▶ People, as a rule, prefer the known and familiar world to one that is strange and unknown.
- ▶ Ideas that question or challenge established ways of life and behavioural norms can make them feel threatened and insecure.
- ▶ Information/discussions that focus on issues such as women's right to work, equal inheritance and choice in marriage can be especially disturbing, as they question not only a way of life and established authority thresholds, but also threaten male entitlement to property.

By arguing that a woman's right to choice in marriage is guaranteed in both Islam and under Pakistani law, you, as **Facilitator** or **Resource Person** are telling the men/women in the group that their daughters - and sons - no longer need their permission to marry.

Similarly by speaking about the woman's right to inheritance as guaranteed under Islam, you are telling them that their daughters/sisters can reject customary practice and speak up for their right to family property, etc.

When this happens, it is not surprising that the **Resource Person** or **Facilitator**, with whom the group may have relaxed, suddenly becomes an enemy-outsider with an alien agenda.

### **This is not the time for confrontation!**

As **Resource Person/Facilitator** you are faced with the difficult task of diffusing tension without ceding your position.

The best way to handle such situations is to:

- △ Remember that you are challenging beliefs/ideas and a way of life that participants see as 'normal' and 'natural'.
- △ Instead of imposing your ideas or point of view, support your argument with reference to authoritative documents viz. marriage laws, judicial precedents etc.
- △ Ask **Participants** to either solve the given problem or give their opinion on how to resolve the issue while ensuring that justice is done. This will create (i) space for further discussion and information sharing, (ii) diffuse tension, (iii) take the discussion a step further.
- △ You could also refer to an incident or case study that illustrates the point you are making.
- △ Let **Participants** take the lead in identifying the source of a given problem and finding solutions to it. This works better than a top down approach where the resource person tells them what to think.

**Participants** may still continue to disagree with you – or fail to come up with the solution you have in mind, but the exercise will diffuse tension, give them something to think about and open up space for further discussion.

**Example:** This is how this approach was applied in one workshop with journalists where one journalist furiously refused to acknowledge the fact that under Islam women have the right to choice in marriage.

Instead of getting into a futile argument, the resource person (i) accepted the journalist's claim to knowledge on the issue and (ii) asked him to write a feature on the absence of a women's right to a marriage of choice in Islam supported by documentary evidence.

The feature was to be presented at the workshop on the following day. This placated him and allowed the workshop to proceed. The 'feature' he presented the next day was a detailed narrative on marriage practices in the time of the Prophet Moses. This was duly appreciated.

Without a word being said by the Resource person, the 'feature' drew attention to the fact that the journalist had not been able to support his claim with reliable documentary evidence. Thus, while the issue remained open, Muslim women's right to marriage of choice was not rejected out of hand.

The entire discussion including the side-tracking of the issue: (i) gave extended attention to the issue of marriage of choice and may be seen as a step towards alternative viewpoints and (ii)

served as a reminder to the Resource Person and team that resistance and anger may be caused because the ideas/information provided have challenged the collective ideas and beliefs of the group.

### However –

- △ Don't expect miracles – ***attitudes and ideas take a long time to change.*** One workshop is not going to make much of a difference.
- △ STAY CALM - DON'T GET ANGRY OR IMPATIENT.

### Remember –

- △ That if a participant or group is angry or disturbed, it could be because your argument is making more sense to the participants than they like and they are finding it difficult to reject it on rational grounds.
- △ This is a good sign – but as suggested earlier – you need to handle the situation with sensitivity.
- △ Appreciate the **participants'** point of view, but also draw attention to the problem at hand and ask them for workable solutions to the issue.

**NOTE:** This highlights the importance of pre-workshop reading. It is also a good idea to keep on hand photocopies of references to issue-related laws, governance procedures etc. This will enable the **Resource Person** (i) to guide the discussion and respond intelligently and convincingly to questions asked and (ii) to counter resistance.

## Workshop Rules

Set the rules of the workshop at the outset jointly with the group, e.g., switching off mobile phones or putting them on 'silent' during workshop sessions; raising of hand to speak; not interrupting another speaker; listening to what others say and not holding private conversations in the middle of a group exercise or discussion, etc.

Once rules have been jointly established, adhere to them to maintain group discipline and avoid time wastage.

## Spatial Arrangements and Equipment

1. As far as possible, ensure that the workshop is held in an airy and well lit room that is large enough to allow for some freedom of movement as well as group work.
  - △ In the post-Covid world, group size and spatial arrangements must cater to relevant SOPs even if all participants have been vaccinated against the disease.
  - △ A room where people are crowded together or where there is no room for them to get up and stretch their legs, (i) interferes with group concentration and (ii) violates Covid-19 SOPs including other infections and is potentially unsafe.

- △ A U-type seating arrangement with space for the resource person, project team, plus multi-media equipment; flip chart stands, etc., on the open side of the U is best for interactive workshops.
- △ In the event of floor seating, the following should be provided:
  - i. table and chair arrangements on the side for group-work that entails writing, etc.
  - ii. a few low stools/chairs, bolster cushions (gao takiyas) for participants who find it difficult to sit on the floor.
- 2. Sound system: pre-test mics to ensure audibility and save time. Participants either lose interest or miss out on discussions and information if they can't hear what is being said.
- 3. Pre-test multi-media arrangements for power point presentations, animated clips and visual images.
- 4. Pre check Flip Chart Stands. Stands that wobble or collapse during a flip chart exercise, disrupt participant concentration and can effectively ruin an activity. This will also be seen as a sign of organisational inefficiency and slackness.

## **Time Management**

A major aim of a workshop is to undertake and complete all planned activities within a given time schedule. Therefore exercises/activities, etc., need to be planned carefully.

However, care must be taken that adherence to time schedules DOES NOT:

- Turn the workshop into a mechanical exercise
- Reduce discussion time to such an extent that the whole exercise becomes meaningless.
- Lose participant interest.

For sustained participant interest break up the information based lecture sessions with flip chart exercises, film/documentary clips; oral exercises, role play, etc., and group work.

## 2

### **Background information on the Media – what the term means and how it works**

The main purpose of this section is to provide Resource Persons and Facilitators with background information on the media including its different forms, purposes and functions.

**NOTE:** The material provided in this section is also for use in Workshop sessions and for exercises devised by Resource Persons and Facilitators.

### **The Media**

Originally the term **Media**, which is known as the **Fourth Estate** or **Power** or the **Fourth Arm of the State**, applied mainly to news reports, features and articles.

(The other three 'estates' or powers are the 'ruling classes'; the clergy or priests and the common people. In today's neo liberal world, multinational corporations are part of this category.)

The term 'Fourth Estate' was coined in 19th century in England and referred to the rising power of journalists, writers and political analysts as (i) providers of public interest news and information, (ii) 'watch dogs' of the public's interests, (iii) creators of an informed civil society and (iv) as opinion builders.

Later, with the development of new technologies it came to include documentary films and cinema and has now expanded to include social media: blogs, tweets, etc., that are referred to as the **Fifth Estate**.

Today the media plays an outstanding role in creating and shaping public opinion.

Known as the 'sword arm' of democracy and peoples' interests, its given role is to:

- Act as a Watchdog to protect public interest against malpractice by public and private institutions and individuals including the State.
- Create public awareness on issues that impact peoples' human and democratic rights locally as family and community members, nationally as citizens of the state and globally as members of the world community.
- Safeguard and serve peoples' Right to Information locally and globally

**Section 7 of the 1973 Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010, Article 19-A** whereby every citizen is granted "the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law."

**Article 19 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek,



receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of geographical and international frontiers.

Conversely, and like any other mode of communication, the media is open to misuse. This is borne out by the way (i) 'embedded' journalism misrepresented the war in Iraq in pursuit of super power interests and (ii) news reports, features, social media are used to denigrate women, other marginalised groups and political adversaries.

Technically entertainment does not fall in the category of news and information provision,

**BUT:**

- Entertainment channels and Advertisements play a critical role in shaping social attitudes, influencing life styles and promoting political and economic ideologies:
- Soap opera, television drama and cinema are sustained by and shaped around stories of people's lives in a variety of settings and timeframes. The ways in which stories are developed and presented can either reinforce harmful behavioural norms and gender biased attitudes or challenge them by raising questions about them.
- Advertisements depict fictional lifestyles to promote their goods. At the same time, they promote lifestyles and consumerist ideologies.

**How the Media Works**

In principle, as the Fourth Estate, the media is expected to provide news and fact based information to the public and make critical comment on the three estates viz the ruling classes, the clergy and the common people. In actual fact, the media's 'freedom' and objectivity is subject to the following:

- i. State interests, government policies and regulatory bodies such as PEMRA
- ii. The commercial, political and ideological interests of newspaper owners and corporations
- iii. Dominant group interests.
- iv. Viewer ratings.

**Media Categories**

**i. Print Media**

**News Reports** are found in newspapers and electronic media such as television news channels. Their purpose is to provide readers with news about what is taking place in the world, locally, nationally and globally. They are: i. brief and deal with daily events and occurrences deemed to be of public interest, ii. have a clearly defined structure that a News Reporter has to follow:

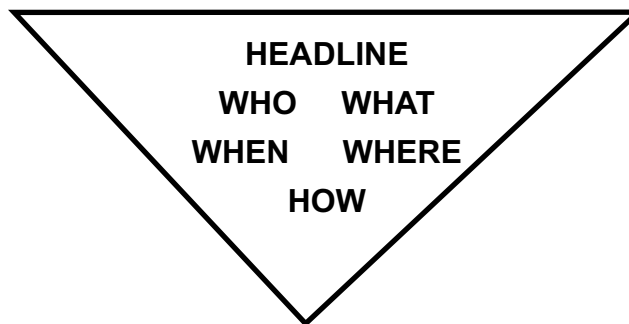
1. News Reports begin with a catchy HEADLINE
2. The LEAD PARAGRAPH tells the reader about the most important aspects of the story as quickly

and simply as possible. The LEAD PARAGRAPH is often the only part of the story that people read.

3. News reports are based on:

**The 5 'W' rule:**

- WHO is involved i.e., who is the story about?
- WHAT took place?
- WHEN did it take place?
- WHY did it take place?
- HOW did it take place? (this should be included only if there is space. Otherwise the first 4 Ws cover the requirements of a News Report.)



**HINTS**

- A News Report should be easy to understand. (Guiding rule: a 12 year old should be able to understand it).
- A News Report must be FAIR. It should give both sides of the story. The Reporter's personal opinion should not get in the way of facts.

**Features and Articles** are for leisurely reading i.e., when the reader has the time for relaxed reading.

**A Feature Writer:**

- has more time to write,
- is allowed more words,
- gives an overview of the situation or event e.g. the murder of Qandeel Baloch in the name of honour; incitement to violence in TLP's public protests.

**NOTE:** Facts are important, but stating them dryly won't do. Therefore -

- ⇒ A Feature writer uses material in a way that catches and keeps the attention of readers.
- ⇒ The introduction is of critical importance. Like any good story, it must capture the reader's interest and tempt her/him to read the rest of the Feature.

- ⇒ A Feature can be subjective i.e. it gives the writer's point of view on the reported event, including her/his views on what steps can be taken to prevent or promote the issues discussed.
- ⇒ However, the Feature writer must be careful not to overplay her/his hand. Merely airing her/his opinions won't do. Researched and verified information is important as the Feature must be credible or believable and add to the reader's knowledge.

The best writers are those who are well-informed and know how to organise and present their information clearly, systematically and in an interesting manner.

**NOTE:** The information on News Reports and Feature writing can be used:

- as a participant guide in exercises that entail writing news reports/features,
- for skill development exercises for media students and young journalists,
- as preliminary information for a news reporting exercise.

**SUGGESTION:** As a ready reference, make charts based on the News Reports and Feature writing formats/styles and paste them on a wall in the workshop room.

**PHOTOGRAPHS and Audio-VISUAL IMAGES** serve as *parallel narratives to the written text, i.e.*, in newspapers, magazines and academic journals. They are important because they give it an additional dimension to the written story or report.

## ii. Electronic Media

**News on Television** – is based on a combination of information, commentary and visual narratives. It performs the same function as news in the print media. TV news has greater immediacy as it is animated and combines visual, verbal and auditory messages supported by documentary evidence and background sound effects. When used intelligently, sound effects can enhance the message. If not, they act as an irritant and/or negate the message.

**Talk Shows** – are televised discussions on a given topic or issue. They comprise (i) an anchor person, who guides and controls the discussion and (ii) a discussant or subject specialist or (ii) a panel of discussants.

- Talk Shows provide the viewing public with information on and analysis of public events. As they are discussion-based, their purpose is to provide the public with indepth information/understanding based on different points of view on a given topic or issue. Although the majority of Talk Shows are about political matters, talk shows can be about books, organic gardening, the arts, music or any other issue of general interest.
- The hallmark of a Good Talk Show is when all the speakers get a chance to express their views and ideas on a chosen topic. In this way the discussion enhances the public's knowledge and understanding of a given topic or issue.
- A Bad Talk Show is one in which (i) the anchor person constantly interrupts panelists, and/or (ii) when panelists shout each other down without listening to what other speakers have to say, (iii) make personal remarks about each other either as an exercise in one-up-manship or, as in the case of Mubashar Lucman on a panel with Mukhtar Mai - in a display of active misogyny and desire for sensationalism.

**Entertainment - television drama and soap opera** – Television drama is designed for entertain-

ment and relaxation at home with the family and friends. It comprises the following:

**Television plays/serials** have a clear beginning, middle and an end. They normally have a single theme that is centred round one or two main characters. Television plays are of short duration and at most may consist of two or three episodes. Serials are longer and comprise more episodes. This allows room for greater narrative complexity as the story unfolds over a longer period of time before coming to a definitive end.

**Soap operas** are made up of different sets of interconnected characters and storylines. These characters are usually members of the same family or social group. As a rule, soap opera caters to audience comfort levels and relies heavily on **cliches, stereotypes** and **familiar tropes** e.g., **the conniving mother-in law, wife or girl friend; the honourable husband or son as the dupe of conniving women etc.** As such, it is a powerful ideological tool for maintaining the gender unequal status quo.

Soap opera does have a beginning but, because of the way it is constructed, the 'end' or ends, are usually inconclusive. The duration of a soap opera, depends on viewer ratings. These can prolong or arbitrarily end its life with an inconclusive and open ended story.

**Cinema/Films:** The term 'cinema' covers a wide range of activities that include the production, distribution and exhibition of different types of films. Films themselves can be divided into genres such as love stories, thrillers, fantasy, comedy, tragedy as well as documentary and docudrama, etc.

Films or movies are usually based on fictional stories, but documentaries and docudrama are mainly fact based, draw upon real life situations and are designed to provide information for educational, political and other purposes

Film allows space for a variety of cinematic techniques that shape and add meaning to stories that may be simple and predictable or complex and thought provoking.

Television plays, soap opera and film are part of the entertainment/information industry.

However, while their primary aim is to entertain and provide relaxation, the ways in which these genres approach a particular issue/s can reinforce existing biases or provoke serious thought that challenges established social norms and/or provides deeper insights into the complexity of human relations and character, situations and issues.

**Example**, television plays such as those written by Ashfaq Ahmad for the 'Tota Kahani' series produced by Saira Kazmi during General Zia ul Haq's stint in power, reinforced stereotypical gender roles and biases and naturalised gender-based violence.

On the other hand, Madiha Gauhar's 'Neelay Haath' series, the TV serial 'Udari' and films such as Bollywood's 'Mirch Masala' draw attention to the issue of sexual and gender based violence and raise serious questions about women's condition and position in South Asian societies in particular and under patriarchy in general.

**Advertisements: print and electronic media** – Advertisements serve public interest as they provide useful information on items of daily use and other goods available in the market.

On the downside, because they serve commercial rather than public interests, they are designed to:

- i. Create artificial demands for consumer goods by promoting competitive and expensive lifestyles.
- ii. Cater to a 'buying' public, viz those who have the money to spend on advertised

goods rather than to the basic needs of the larger public.

As a result they (a) exclude and devalue those who lack buying power such as the economically underprivileged, by rendering them invisible and/or unimportant, and (b) promote consumerism. Made up of verbal/visual narratives that tap consumerist desires, advertisements exert a powerful influence in reinforcing gender roles and stereotypes. However, if intelligently used, they can influence public perceptions positively by challenging negative gender roles.

The first category is evidenced in images of women as:

- economically unproductive consumers of luxury goods viz jewellery, upmarket cosmetics, clothes, etc.
- glamorous, relaxed and happy while performing household tasks. This not only reinforces gender roles, it also takes the labour out of household chores such as washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, etc. by presenting them as effortless and pleasurable activities.
- sex objects in advertisements for cars, tractors etc., where they are used as 'sexy' attachments. This may apply to men in certain advertisements too.

The second category is represented by advertisements that portray women positively in roles that do not conform to gender stereotypes.

These have the potential for challenging stereotypes, e.g., women in universities, science labs and as pilots, lawyers, sportswomen etc.

**NOTE:** Clips from the plays/film referred to can be used in exercises on alternate ways of looking at issues pertaining to different forms of discrimination including violence against women.

**TIP:** If you use this information in an exercise, ask participants to name different media categories and point out the differences between them. This will give them a sense of participation and perk up their interest.

### 3

## **The Production of Information, Ideas, Ideologies**

### **Media techniques and approaches**

Theoretically media approaches fall within two broad categories. These are:

- i. **The Mass Manipulative Model**
- ii. **The Commercial or Market Model**

The difference between the two is of approach, technique and politics.

### **The Mass Manipulative Model**

- is based on single power source of knowledge, information and authority.
- it positions the public as compliant 'receivers' of information and messages that originate from a single source of authority and power.

Operationalised under dictatorships or other forms of authoritarian rule, this Model is controlled by and serves the interests of the ruling group especially through state owned channels of communication such as TV, newspapers and censorship laws.

As part of the Mass Manipulative Model the media selects or is forced to select and present information in ways that serve an end or purpose that is in line with or reflects official interests and ideology. Information, and news reports on events that challenge official ideology are blacked out or presented in a negative light as seditious, immoral or unpatriotic.

As a result the public receives partial or incomplete information presented in a way that makes it look as if this is all there is to report.

**Example 1.** Under General Ayub Khan, media focus was on the state's development agenda that projected the ten years of Ayub Khan's rule as the 'Decade of Development'. The state-owned media highlighted the government's economic achievements but was silent about the widening gap between the rich and poor, limitations on labour rights, and ban on trade unions, etc.

**Example 2.** Under General Zia-ul-Haq's quest for a singular, religion-based nationalism, musical programmes featuring women singers were disallowed. There was a specific dress code for women news anchors and characters in television plays and advertisements. Alternative forms of dress were criminalised or denigrated as immoral.

### **The Commercial or Market Model**

**The Commercial Model** differs from the Mass Manipulative Model as it:

- does not emanate or spring from a single power source but comprises a mix of state and privately owned media channels.
- claims to serve public tastes and interests by “giving the public what it wants.”

The proponents of the Commercial Model argue that it caters to the peoples’ right to choose. As it does not emanate from a single power source the public, as consumers, can select what they want to view and/or read. Further, as people usually watch or read that which they are comfortable with, unlike the Mass Manipulative Model, it claims it does not aim to influence their opinions.

Our view is somewhat different. We find that the distinction between the Mass Manipulative and Commercial Model approach is not as sharp as it is made out to be. The former may be explicitly authoritarian and the latter geared to commercial ends and therefore appear to be more democratic, but both

- ▶ are subject to and operate within given social contexts and ideologies
- ▶ serve given vested interests - of the state in one case and of media owners in the other.
- ▶ need to engage the interest of their viewers and readers.

In order to achieve this end, both models use narratives or ‘stories’ in a variety of forms, that viewers enjoy watching or reading.

These stories, which may be fact based narratives or imaginary tales, draw upon a **shared pool of cultural and historical memory, idioms, imagery, metaphors, sayings, proverbs, stereotypes, cultural myths, etc.**

Our argument is that while the two Models may differ from each other in that the Mass Manipulative Model is authoritarian in its approach, and the Commercial Model is persuasive:

- ▶ both Models operate within given agendas and ideologies and both have a message to communicate. Therefore, in different ways and to varying degrees, both manipulate viewers and readers into thinking or acting in ways that suit the interests of those who control and/ or own media channels.
- ▶ both Models are dependant on the viewing reading public and need to convey their message in a way that will capture its interest.

However, the persuasive ‘Market Model’ has an edge over the Mass Manipulative Model for the simple reason that *people like to believe they are free to choose their ideas and lifestyles.*

Thus, under Zia ul Haq, when Pakistan Television single-mindedly promoted Sharia law and women newscasters came on air with covered heads, viewers recognised this as the Mass Manipulative Model at work (even though they may not have used the term). Consequently, while many may have agreed with the message of head-covered women in public places, it had less impact than intended because official policy generated resistance to the idea of being forced to endorse a particular ideology.

On the other hand, if we look at the Commercial or Market Model, we will find that though it aims to ‘give the public what it wants’ viz free access to news, information and entertainment, it is not as ‘free’ as it claims to be.

It may not be subject to the whims of a dictator, but given the immense political power of media barons, the Commercial Model is increasingly geared to serve the political and commercial ends of the

free market including a consumerist ideology.

This is evidenced in the presentation of news i.e. what is highlighted and what is ignored or downplayed, as well as through the lifestyles and ideologies that are promoted through television drama, soap opera and advertisements.

This illustrates that the 'freedom to choose' of the Commercial Model is less about free choice and more about what serves given vested interests and maintains the social, economic and gender-unequal status quo.

## How the Media Works

The media is a channel of communication between the:

**Source** (dictator or media baron)

Print Media, Radio, Television: → News Rooms/Editors/journalists,

Production Teams → Units of Information/Entertainment



**Audiences**

## Frames of Reference

**1. News and Entertainment channels operate within given social and cultural frames of reference and are designed to present/interpret events in ways that provide information/entertainment that:**

- i. makes sense to readers/viewers
- ii. is of interest to them.

**2. As viewers prefer the known to the unfamiliar world, as far as is possible the Media upholds and works within mainstream norms and values.**

**Examples** of this kind of ideology based news reporting, feature writing and talk shows are:

- i. the Saima Waheed case (1996). Issue marriage of choice by an adult Muslim woman. Response: A section of the media and the prosecuting lawyer diverted attention from the fact that Saima's marriage was valid under both secular and Shariah law by criminalising her marriage as an act of daughterly disobedience.
- ii. 8th March celebration of the International Women's day titled Aurat March: 2018. Large sections of the media misread the slogans and (i) vilified the marchers through allegations of 'non-seriousness', 'vulgarity', 'westernisation' etc. (ii) focussed visually only on educated, middle-upper middle class marchers, when in actual fact the march was representative of women from different classes, walks of life and professions. Interestingly, many among those who had been critical of the head covered TV anchors under Zia were now critical of the uncovered heads of women marchers.



**3. The media operates within given political contexts. News, views and entertainment are framed by given government policies and operationalised within given ideologies. Together, they shape public opinion and influence social norms and behaviour.**

This is evidenced in the difference between what was projected as 'normal' under the military governments of General Ayub, who envisioned Pakistan as a modern state, and General Zia who imagined it as a singular religion-based country. (for images and detailed reference, see pages 44-47)

**4. Not everything that happens makes its way to the newspapers and television news. The basis for this selection is:**

- ▶ Political (sometimes news is 'killed' on orders from concerned authorities)
- ▶ Public interest such as:
  - ▶ What the public wants to know.
  - ▶ What grabs its interest.
  - ▶ What would be useful for the public to know - or what it should know.

The last factor sees the media as 'public educators' and guardians of public morality..

While it is true that the media acts as public educator, what needs to be examined is:

- ▶ Who decides what is good for the public?
- ▶ What are the vested interests of these entities or groups?
- ▶ When does the selection process change into a mechanism for a censorship and control?

These questions merit further reflection.

## Production of Meaning

*“... language has an expressive power and capacity to intervene immediately in the social-political world and to change things.”*

*“... the narrative consists not in communicating what one has seen but in transmitting what one has heard, what someone else has said to you”*

*“Language operates as a kind of ‘hearsay’ or ... ‘indirect discourse’, moving and flowing through subjects, speaking through them, even helping them to order the world accordingly. ... The significance, indeed the efficacy of the cliché can become all too apparent here ... (it) can be a very useful ideological tool in ordering our world ... even freeze frame a world that has the potential to run away from us via thoughts that fly all over the place”.*

*“... the production of meaning is not ... something that just happens because the word is already fixed out in its meanings which don’t change. The production of meaning means that there is a kind of symbolic work, an activity, a practice, which has to go on in giving meaning to things and in communicating that meaning to someone else. ... the media (is) one of the most powerful and extensive systems for the circulation of meaning, although one ought to always remind oneself, ... that the media are, by no means the only means by which meaning is circulated in our society. ... the most obvious way is in actual talk and conversation with other people in personal communication. ... But , ... we are right in noticing ... what happens when systems - complicated, institutional systems with complicated technologies ... intervene and take the place of face to face, person to person communication and exchange. And the means of circulating these meanings becomes very widespread because, of course, the question of the circulation of meaning almost immediately involves the question of power. Who has the power, in what channels, to circulate which meanings to whom? Which is why the issue of power can never be bracketed out from the question of representation.”*

## Stereotyping as signifying practice

*“We routinely make sense of the world using types – broad categories of things with common characteristics. This allows us to categorise things in a meaningful way, and in turn draw conclusions and extrapolate information about something based on previous experience of things of the same, or similar, type. This is commonly done with people and is not by definition negative. For example, we assign certain traits to roles such as parent, business person, pensioner and so on. Stereotypes on the other hand, while classifying people in a similar manner, reduce the person to those simplified and exaggerated characteristics, admit no possibility of change, and insist that these characteristics are natural. Any complexity is ignored and denied, and it is implied that everything that is necessary to know about the person can be known by referring to the traits of the stereotype. In essence a stereotype declares “this is what you are, and this is all you are”.*

*“Stereotyping also deploys a strategy of splitting – where those who do not fit society’s norms are excluded, and their exclusion is copper-fastened by fitting them to a set of stereotypes deemed unacceptable. This denies the possibility of any meaningful discourse about them or with them, and ensures their continued exclusion. This proves most effective when gross inequalities of power allow the dominant group to employ the strategy without challenge.”*

This section provides a theoretical base and guidelines for media persons to look at language-use particularly stereotypes and clichés with fresh and critical eyes for an objective, analytical, bias free,

approach to news reportage and social comment.

## The building blocks of communication

Communication between the speaker/writer and reader/viewer depends on a shared Language and cultural vocabulary.

This Language is:

- ▶ **Verbal** - it is made up of words – what we say, hear, read or write.
- ▶ **Visual** - it is made of pictures and images; the use of colour, light and shade; the selection and arrangement of different images to form a picture. It includes facial expressions; body language; gestures; clothes - fashions and dress styles; hairstyles; cut and style of beard etc.
- ▶ **Symbolic** - the meaning assigned to words, images and objects in a given culture i.e. what certain images and words stand for or represent. For example, in Pakistani culture the 'PAGRI' is a symbol of male honour and power - the DUPATTA is a symbol of female honour and modesty, etc.

*Easy – if we know a language and are familiar with its cultural vocabulary.*

The problem is that words are 'tricksters' and can confuse.

Not because they are difficult to understand – but because the same word can mean different things in different contexts.

The meaning of a word depends on the sentence in which it is used and the context in which the sentence occurs.

For example, '**RED**' is a colour. If it stands alone - it is nothing more and nothing less than a colour.

Except that it never stands alone -

When we think RED we think about all the things that are **RED** and many different images and emotions come to mind -

### Different shades and meaning of Red...

- ▶ Roses
- ▶ Blood
- ▶ Brides
- ▶ Traffic lights
- ▶ Passion
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Danger
- ▶ Love
- ▶ Red Revolution

The meanings we grant to the word '**RED**' are associative and symbolic. What the colour RED says or stands for depends on

HOW?

WHEN?

WHY?

WHERE?

it is used.

For example, if we add roses to red we get 'RED ROSES'. Immediately the word red stops being a colour and becomes something else. Now add GARDEN to the RED ROSES and the roses acquire a context - a location. When placed together, the three words recall grass, trees, pleasure, romance, joy, sorrow, etc.

On the other hand, if we add the word 'SALUTE' to 'RED', it becomes the 'RED SALUTE' or 'LAL-SALAAM', which symbolises socialism, peoples' movements and dreams of economic justice and classless society.

Similarly, 'red' bangles on a girl's arms call up images of youth, brides, celebration, happiness, BUT the same 'bangles', (because women wear them), when given to a man become an insult to his 'manhood'. Thus with one symbolic gesture the man is insulted and the woman demeaned.

As we can see - each set or ensemble of words carries a story within it - and every story gives a new meaning to RED.

*Does this mean that the meaning of a word can never be fixed? That every word, every sentence means a thousand different things and these meanings float around in a dance of words that never settle anywhere?*

The answer to this is 'NO' and - 'YES'. If meaning was unfixable, we would not be able to communicate with each other or make sense of what we say. At the same time, if it were to be fixed permanently at one point, we would not be able to account for all the other meanings the same word contains.

*What this play of words and symbols shows is that Meaning can be fixed but, at the same time, it is open to change because it is generated by words as they comes into play in sentence, and sentences occur in different contexts, cultures and moments in history .*

- ▶ The process of meaning-making takes place all the time through the **figures of speech, cliches, stereotypes** and **slogans** that we use in our conversations, or when we pass on to others the things we have heard and read and what we were told as children and as adults by our parents, teachers, friends, colleagues and so many others with whom we interact on a daily basis.
- ▶ If we look closely at our conversations, etc., we will see that this process usually privileges one kind of meaning or set of meaning over others - the speaker's and/or of the dominant group over the listeners or those who are less powerful, e.g. 'rape is an exercise of power based on the male sense of entitlement' over women. It is justified by statements such as, "men are not robots - if girls dress immodestly they will get raped!"

(The joke of course is that this statement ends up presenting men exactly as as robots with push button responses incapable of conscious and responsible choice! But this voice is silenced by the clamour and noise of another cliché: "WOMEN WHO GET RAPED ASKED FOR IT!")

- ▶ What needs to be noted is that while all of us use language to privilege our preferred meaning in conversations and arguments, this happens within the larger framework of the hegemonic patriarchal discourse that constantly attempts to 'fix' meaning in accordance with its own terms of reference and preferred ideology.

- ▶ Power and ideology intervene by creating a relationship between the image and the meaning in ways that naturalise the meaning to make it seem as if this is the only way things can and should be.

**Let us see how this works.**

The stated aim of the advertisement given below is to promote a particular cooking oil.

The unstated ideological meaning is created, naturalised and fixed through the narrative which frames the advertisement.

- ▶ *Context:* Ramzan - Iftari.
- ▶ *Setting:* a dining room-kitchen in an open plan middle class home.
- ▶ The father, mother, and son are seated at the dining table waiting for the fast to end and food to be served.
- ▶ The daughters are serving the food.
- ▶ The setting defines the parameters of the relationship and highlights female/male roles and functions within the family and by inference in other male/female relationships.



**Clip 1.** shows a little girl wheeling in a laden trolley.

- ▶ The girl is overshadowed by size of the trolley and the dishes of food.
- ▶ Despite her age - she doesn't look more than 7 or 8 years old, a dupatta is draped over her shoulders and chest in a very adult manner
- ▶ The girl is fully focused on her task.
- ▶ Regardless of the size and weight of the trolley, she has a smile on her face.



**Clip 2.** Shows the family around the dining table. The roz-e-dar are hungry and thirsty. Judging by their facial expressions and body language, they are looking forward to their meal. This is indicated by: the father who is looking over his shoulder to see if the trolley is on its way to the table, and the way the adult brother (or brother-in-law) caught in the act of sitting down for iftar, is also looking at the trolley.

Where earlier the little girl has been over shadowed by the trolley, in this clip she is overshadowed by the family members all of whom are older, and in terms of size and strength, bigger than she is.

An older girl stands in the background. Barely visible among the pots and pans of a well appointed kitchen, she could be just another gadget - except that she is shown in the process of draping her dupatta on her head. This gesture distinguishes her from the pots and pans and draws attention to:

- ▶ her identity as a modest woman
- ▶ her role as service provider.

The table has been arranged for five as indicated by the table mats, plates and glasses of sherbet showing that places are reserved for the girls. However, their position as service providers is indicated by their distance from the dining table and the tasks they are employed in, showing that they will sit at the table only after food has been served to the rest of the family.



**Clip 3.** Shows the table laden with food and three adult hands reaching out across various dishes for the dates.

Noticeable by their absence are the hands of the little girl who wheeled in the trolley and the girl in the kitchen who prepared the food.

- ▶ *Facial expressions*: the little girl is focused on her job of bringing in the food. The older daughter is too far away for her facial expression to be seen. The three adults are self absorbed - there is no acknowledgement of the service the girls are providing.
- ▶ *Dress*: the father's white kurta and namazi topi plus the emphasis on the little girl's dupatta and the covered heads of the older women emphasise the Islamic/religious/moral frame of the narrative. This adds virtue to the social arrangements of the patriarchal family, with the additional message that good Muslim women serve men, and men are morally, socially and naturally entitled to this service.

### **As a whole, this advertisement draws upon and reinforces**

- i. the myth of male superiority,
- ii. affirms male entitlement to privilege,
- iii. naturalises/normalises the women's subordinate status as domestic service providers.

### **It also demonstrates how power and ideology use visual and verbal language to:**

- ▶ classify and order the world
- ▶ create and fix a particular meaning
- ▶ manipulate reality by making other family arrangements invisible, including the economic divide where the majority of Pakistan's population cannot afford a full meal a day, leave alone a lavish iftari in a well appointed house full of gadgets and other status symbols.

### **The message conveyed:**

- ▶ It is normal/natural for girls, regardless of age, to serve their family members
- ▶ Girls/women are happy in this role
- ▶ It sets up the well-off middleclass family as the ideal norm
- ▶ Invisibilises the economically underprivileged who cannot afford this lifestyle

However, if meaning can be fixed, it is also constantly undergoing change, whether routinely in response to changing historical circumstance or deliberately when challenged by different points of view stemming from differently located sources and forms of language use.

**NOTE:** Visual Representation based on stereotypes is one of the tools for fixing of ideological meaning. Others include figures of speech, stereotypes and cliches. ***The point to be noted is that these same tools can also be used to question, challenge and create different kinds of meaning.***

### **Figures of Speech, Sayings, Proverbs, Cliches, Myths and Legends**

...

**Sayings, Proverbs** (kahawatein), **figures of speech, cliches** or *ghissay pittay alfaaz* and verbal imagery, etc., encapsulate, express and illustrate the collective experience of a culture, a people and social milieu in a compact form.

As part of the common language of a society, they acquire the status of generally accepted 'truths' and operate as a cultural shorthand or taken for granted meaning.

It has been argued that narratives of communication are based, not so much on what we see, observe and even experience, but on what we *hear* - "what someone else has said to us." E.g. 'Boys don't cry!' (*Larkay Rotay Nahin*), 'A woman's place is in the home!' (*Aurat ka muqam ghar mein hai*) etc.

These cliches, proverbs, sayings flow through the hundreds of conversations that are taking place all the time and constantly reinforce mainstream norms and shape our thoughts, perceptions and actions e.g. "Men are not robots - if women dress immodestly they are asking to be raped!". Coming from a popular political leader, a statement that virtually exonerates the rapist is dangerous. It also illustrates the meaning of the citation given at the beginning of this section: "... *language has an expressive power and capacity to intervene immediately in the social-political world and to change things.*"

Let us see how this works: statements like 'boys don't cry' and 'a woman's place is in the home' are a part of everyday speech. We hear them all the time and accept them without stopping to think whether or not they reflect reality:

- ▶ Do boys really NEVER cry? Of course they do. So do men. In fact it would be unnatural and emotionally and psychologically damaging for them not to cry moments of pain or grief.
- ▶ Is the woman's place really ONLY in the home? Of course it isn't. Just as in reality, boys cry, women's lives are spent at home and in public spaces - they go out to work in fields and offices, to shop for groceries, to take the children to school, to visit neighbours and for countless other practical and impractical reasons.
- ▶ Both women and men live in their homes, and both step out into public spaces as when need arises and both, in a variety of ways, are socially and economically productive.

We know this, yet when we hear such statements, not only do we accept them uncritically, they raise expectations in us on how boys and women *should* behave, and we judge them accordingly.

These examples demonstrate how figures of speech - the cliches, slogans, maxims, sayings, etc. that make up our everyday conversations, stories, news reports, features, talk shows, etc., act as powerful ideological tools that order the social and political world.

### **The following are the major and most commonly used modes and figures of speech:**

- ▶ **Simile:** is a *direct comparison* between two or more things that are fundamentally different, but resemble each other in the one aspect in which they are compared. The comparison, which is explicit, is introduced by the use of 'like' or 'as', e.g., 'She sang *like* a nightingale'; 'S/he is *as* stubborn as a mule', 'the night was black as coal', 'The bedsheets were *as* white as snow', etc.

As we can see, a girl who belongs to the human species, has nothing in common with a nightingale, which is a bird. The quality which connects them is their singing. The simile compares the girl who sings beautifully to the nightingale who sings beautifully. Similarly with the girl or boy who shares the quality of stubbornness with a mule. In a simile the comparison enhances the message or meaning through the single attribute two different entities they have in common.

- ▶ **Metaphor:** is an *implied comparison* between two or more things that are fundamentally different, but are linked by a particular desirable - or undesirable - attribute or quality. For example, political party workers, especially in



the Punjab, say their political representative, whoever he may be, is 'the lion of Punjab'. The omission of the explicit comparison provided by the use of 'as' and 'like', strengthens the impact of the image of the leader attributed with the qualities of strength and power i.e. the leader is not *like* a lion; he *is* a lion. Instead of being explicit as in a simile, in a metaphor the comparison merges to different entities into one entity.

This form of language-use shows how two fundamentally different creatures i.e., a human, male politician and an animal known for its strength and ability to eat other animals – are linked to each other through the attribute of bravery associated with the lion and by inference, with the political leader. (What is strategically missed out in this equation is the predatory nature of the lion and perhaps the ruthlessness of real politik!)

As similes and metaphors are culture specific, these comparisons tell us something about the society that has given rise to them - what it values and what it disapproves of, as well as its definitions of gender roles and biases. E.g., a girl will be compared to a nightingale or bird for the quality of her song and a man to a lion. This does not mean that men can't sing and women can't be strong and powerful, but because culturally, we do not value men for their ability to sing and women for their strength and power.

- ▶ **Clichés** – which are both verbal and visual, are worn out, over used phrases or commonplace expressions. They comprise assemblages or clusters of verbal and visual images and statements that are part of people's daily speech and conversations. Though often dismissed as 'ghissay pittay alfaaz', they are highly effective and powerful ideological tools for the circulation of meaning.

The familiarity and repetitiveness of clichés turns them into 'order words' or slogans - e.g. '**A woman's place is in the home!**' '**Boys don't cry!**' '**My leader is a lion!**' '**Women connive!**'; '**Men are not robots!**'. These cliches are effective carriers of ideology - dominant or otherwise, with the power to shape behaviour, actions and social relations in public and private contexts and situations.

The danger in the unconsidered use of cliches, particularly by media workers, lies in that by association of ideas, they provide a kind of shorthand that may have little or nothing to do with the facts of the situation or person being described or spoken about with or even without the intent of the writer/producer.

**Examples:**

i. '*Hawa ki beti*' instead of 'woman' in cases of rape and domestic violence is a favourite with news reporters in cases of violent crime such as harassment and/or rape.

Worn out by overuse, this phrase generalises women and places all contexts and situations on the same plane. It (i) draws attention away from the specificity of the event or crime referred to, and (ii) naturalises and normalises women's role as blame-worthy victim. By definition and implication, '*Hawa ki beti*' of 'Daughter of Eve', makes the victim/survivor guilty of the sin of disobedience associated with Eve and therefore meriting rape, etc. The end result is that though readers may think it is sad that a woman was raped, at some level, there is also the perception that (a) she must 'have asked for it' and '(b) that it is the destiny of women to be at fault and therefore open to rape. This makes rape a logical outcome of being '*Hawa ki beti*'.

ii. '*Marriages are made in heaven*'. Other than in conversations, this cliché is often found on wedding cards. If we think about it seriously, it doesn't make much sense. Nor is it a verifiable

statement. At best, it is an expression of pious intent and wishful thinking; at worst it undermines choice in marriage and can be used to justify forced and underage marriage and inbreeding by indicating that the choice of marriage partners is preordained and beyond human control.

- ▶ **Slogans** - are brief statements of command or 'lightening flash' interventions. Their function is not so much to represent the social and political world as to materially shape and reformulate it. This is best illustrated by the Aurat March slogan: 'Mera Jissam Meri Marzi'. We all know this statement does *not* represent or reflect the ground realities of women's lives in Pakistan or in the rest of South Asia and beyond. Its power lies in that in one and the same breath it disrupts and challenges the ideological baggage contained in cliches such as 'the man is the woman's earthly god' (mard aurat ka majazi khuda hai) and opens up the possibility of a world where women have the right and agency to maintain their bodily integrity and safety.

At this point it is necessary to understand that slogans can be made to work both ways. This is borne out by the cliché '*mard aurat ka majazi khuda hai*', which can also be transformed into a slogan and used as a 'lightening flash' intervention. Indeed it is constantly used to exhort wifely obedience!

- ▶ **Adage** – a short statement that contains a general truth that has gained weight through long usage. As such adages are a medium or shorthand for communication and expression.

**Examples:** '*Naach na jaanay, aangan tehra*'; '*dhobi ka kutta, na ghar ka na ghaat ka*', '*pride goes before a fall.*'

- ▶ **Proverb** – a widely known simple and short saying, which expresses a basic truth or practical precept, based on common sense and/or cultural experience.

**Examples:** *Honesty is the best policy; Kawa challa hans ki chaal; Aasman se girra khajoor mein atka (English equivalent: Out of the frying pan into the fire.-).*

- ▶ **Aphorism:** a short, pithy statement containing a general truth e.g. 'Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely'; 'Jinnhan de ghar daanay unhaan de kamlay vi sayanay.'
- ▶ **Maxim** – a brief, to the point summing up of a fundamental principle, general truth, or rule of conduct.

**Examples:** (i) *Neither a borrower nor a lender be.*  
(ii) *Pehlay tolo phir bollo,*  
(iii) *Look before you leap, etc.*

- ▶ **Saying** – a short well-known expression — a generally accepted truth used to illustrate an occurrence, situation or action.

**Examples:** '*Khaan peen lai Nur Pari - dauhn pahnaun lai Jumma*'  
'*Jehra bolay oho bua kholay!*' '  
'*Rukhi sukki kha ke tu tthanda pani pi – dekh parai choprhi tu na tarsaeen jee*'  
'*Bojjay vich damri nahin te naa Fateh Khan*'

- ▶ **Myths** are stories of a people and culture that have become part of the common idiom and are often used to embellish an argument or story. They normally reinforce traditional customs, practices, behavioural norms and attitudes. Or conversely, they may be used to challenge them. They do not necessarily have a historical base but can get attached to stories of actual historical figures because of links between mythical attributes and power arrangements.
- ▶ **Legends** are stories or groups of stories handed down through popular oral/written tradition. They usually consist of over exaggerated, imagined accounts of historical figures e.g., saints, kings and popular heroes.

We have turned him into a 'Legend' by giving him the title of Quaid-e-Azam (Great Leader) and using his words as unquestionable truths. As a result, we have both reduced him to a cliché and magnified him as a slogan. In the process we have forgotten what he was like in real life and deprived ourselves of the possibility of learning from his strengths and weaknesses.

- ▶ **Shared historical memory:** people who belong to a country or a geographical location have a shared a memory of past historical events. This history may or may not be limited to political borders e.g. the people of South Asia have a shared historical memory based on events that took place prior to the formation of Pakistan, India and later Bangladesh as separate nation states. This memory includes religious, cultural and historical references etc.

**Visual Language** draws on all of the above, but instead of words it consists of

- ▶ images and pictures.
- ▶ body language viz facial expression, gestures, etc.

For example, the message conveyed by an angry face EMOJI is different from that conveyed by a laughing or weeping face EMOJI. In the same way, hand and eye movements; body posture or the way a person stands or sits carry a message about her/his mood etc. For example the message conveyed by someone flinging a book on the floor is different from that of someone placing the book carefully on a table.

- ▶ Clothes and dress codes, fashions and hairstyles: The way a person dresses tells us something about her/him, e.g. we automatically associate a man dressed in a tehmat with a traditional rural setting in the Punjab. Similarly a girl or boy wearing a tracksuit and joggers will convey a different message from a man wearing a suit and tie or a woman in a party dress and high heeled shoes.

## Types and Categories

We make sense of the world by dividing people and objects into types and categories. As a general rule, we draw on our knowledge and previous experience of people and objects with similar characteristics or functions and divide them into broad categories.

For example, a 'pan' a 'pot' a 'kettle' a 'bucket' a 'deg' and a 'lota' are all items of daily use in a kitchen, bathroom, mosque or temple. By placing them in the category of 'utensils' or 'bhanday bartan' we distinguish them from other items of daily use such as brooms, brushes, dusters, etc.

At the same time, the items, objects, etc., that belong to a particular group or category are not identi-

cal. E.g., if we want a utensil or container to boil milk, we will buy a cooking pot, 'degchi' or a saucepan - not a teapot. Just as we would use a frying pan to fry an egg and not a sugar pot - and take a 'lota' not a 'deg' for use in the toilet although both are water containers. In the same way, we assign certain group characteristics or traits to people on the basis of how they dress, where they live and what they do, and the age group to which they belong. For example a boy swerving through traffic at a great speed on his motorbike will evoke the stereotype of 'thoughtless youth'.

Typcasting is convenient because it helps us categorise the young man.

BUT

Typcasting can be misleading as it prevents us from considering that there may be some other reason for the boy's hurry, such as buying medicine for a sick person.

By placing people/things/behaviours in fixed categories, not only do we attempt to define their behaviour, role and function in daily life, we also predict and fix their behaviour in all times and situations. In the process we forget that human beings are not robots, and the situations that we find ourselves in are not identical.

### iii. Stereotype – the meaning of the term

#### ► As NOUN

- i. A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing, e.g., the stereotype of women as weak, as opposed to men as being strong. Women as unreliable and untrustworthy as opposed to men as reliable, responsible and trust worthy.
- ii. A standard/conventional image, received idea, cliché, formula, e.g., the stereotype of women as silly and talkative and men as strong and silent.
- iv. A person, group or nation that conforms to a widely held but oversimplified image of the class or type to which they belong, e.g. 'South Asian nations are deeply religious' as opposed to 'Western nations are irreligious'.

#### ► As VERB

- i. To view or represent behaviour and actions in stereotypical terms, e.g ' giggling girls', 'gossiping women', etc.
- ii. To typecast, pigeonhole, conventionalize, standardize, categorize, compartmentalize, label, tag, etc.

#### ► As ADJECTIVE

- i. To describe people in ways that typecast them, e.g. '**girls are shy**', '**girls are bad at maths**', '**boys are good at games**', '**boys are bold**' '**boy are good in science subjects**, '**girls prefer arts and social sciences**', '**good girls stay at home**' and '**good girls do as they are told**,' '**boys don't cry**', '**working women are bad mothers**', '**good women stay at home**' '**good girls don't talk back**' '**men are breadwinners**'; '**women are homemakers**' etc.

## **Stereotyping as signifying practice**

- ▶ Stereotypes classify people in a way that reduces individuals to the simplified and exaggerated characteristics associated with their gender and role in society.
- ▶ They (i) fix people in a particular mould (ii) admit no possibility of change and (iii) insist that these characteristics are natural, unchangeable and not socially constructed.
- ▶ They erase complexity and treat a break with the set pattern in a negative light or reject it as an impossibility.
- ▶ In essence, a stereotype declares this is what you are; this is what you will always be.

**Gendered Stereotypes:** we stereotype women, men and trans people on the basis of:

- i. Their assigned social roles.
- ii. The characteristics we attribute to women, men, trans people as part of these socially assigned roles and functions.

This kind of thinking creates problems when we come across women and men who don't fit into the given mould.

Stereotyping practice deals with this problem by using the strategy of **SPLITTING** or dividing women and men when they do not fit given stereotypes and placing them in subcategories of established stereotypes e.g. (i) the good woman-bad woman binary, or (ii) because stereotypically, 'men don't cry,' when a man cries, he is criticised for behaving like a woman.

This strategy is most effective when gross inequalities of power allow the dominant group to define without fear of challenge, those in subordinate positions in terms of gender, religious, ethnic and other differences, e.g., 'The poor are lazy,' etc.

**Stereotyping as Representational practice,** i.e. the way we represent/ re-present people as categories.

Stereotypes work in subtle ways to reinforce the status quo.

Stereotypical representation serves the interests of particular groups in specific social and historical contexts. However, stereotypical representation may be modified and deployed for similar reasons by another group/individual in (i) different contexts and historical moments or (ii) in the same social and historical context depending on the identity and social location and position of the speaking person.

For example during the British Raj, the British justified and maintained their power by repeated use of the stereotype of 'Indians as irrational and therefore unsuited to self-rule'. In post-independence Pakistan, General Ayub Khan modified and used the same argument to justify military rule by propagating the stereotype of the 'politically underdeveloped Pakistani who was unfit for democracy.'

The same strategy is evidenced in the ways in which patriarchy has historically enabled men to assert power over women by denying them the attributes of grown up responsible adults – for example:

- ▶ Women cannot look after themselves and need men to protect them.

- ▶ Men are rational – women are emotional and irrational – they need men to protect them for their own good.

Biased representation of the realities of women's (and men's) lives:

- ▶ Reinforces their conventional image and prevents us from seeing the real woman (or man on the basis of another gender base stereotype) who is being written or talked about in the media.
- ▶ Maintains existing gender and other biases.
- ▶ Can be dangerous because it masks facts, and prevents readers/viewers from making an accurate and bias free assessment of the situation.
- ▶ stereotypes are culture specific. As such, they reflect the values of the culture that produces them. In South Asian cultures this is evidenced in the stereotypes of what are defined as 'good' and 'bad' women - or men.

## **Stereotypical portrayals of women**

The following stereotypical images are drawn from PTV television serials and plays during the Zia years. Written by well-known writers such as Bano Qudsia and Ashfaq Ahmad among others, they divide women into categories of 'good' and 'bad'. Both categories have a given set of character traits.

The relevance of these stereotypes lies in that they are still operative in today's films, television drama, soaps, crime reports, news, features including advertisements. In almost all cases stereotypes of 'good' women as 'self sacrificing victims/good housekeepers' and 'bad' women as 'con-niving intriguers and home breakers' are used to drive the story and by so doing, reinforce gender biases and maintain the socially constructed status quo.

### **The Good Woman**

- ▶ **Mother** – Self-sacrificing; virtuous, obedient to requests/demands of adult sons; devoted to her children's interests, brings up sons to be hardworking and mindful of family honour/reputation. Brings up daughters to be good housekeepers and obedient wives and daughters in law who are mindful of family honour.
- ▶ **Wife** – Self-sacrificing; virtuous; obedient; faithful; brave for others viz husband/children; good housekeeper: careful with money; emotional, can be irrational but sees to the man's comforts and patiently and faithfully weeps over his infidelities and violence but never challenges his inherent superiority, entitlement or authority.
- ▶ **Sister** – Self-sacrificing; virtuous; obedient; devoted to her siblings especially brothers. She mends/irons their clothes, serves them food even when tired and/or hungry; waives her right to inheritance in her brothers' favour and is mindful of her brothers' father's, family's honour. The test of her goodness lies in her ability to set aside her own wishes, needs, desires and point of view for their good.

- ▶ **Daughter** – Self-sacrificing, virtuous, obedient, shy, modest, occasionally rebellious in that she wants to go to college or work or even wants to marry someone of her own choice. The test of her goodness lies in her capacity to set aside her own wishes, needs, desires and point of view in the interests of her family, father, brother, mother etc.
- ▶ **Widow** – Self-sacrificing, virtuous, modest, religious, brave for others viz her children. She has an air of perpetual sorrow. Often the mother of dependent children for whom she is compelled to earn a living or as non-earning and economically dependent on father, brothers, or other male kin.

The stereotypical image of a widow stitching clothes under the dim light of 40 watt bulb to support her children was a great favourite with film and television drama producers in the 1980s.

- ▶ **Deserted wife** – virtuous, modest, religious, long-suffering, devoted mother, suffers all forms of degradation including the blame for her inability to ‘keep’ the man as she patiently awaits for his return.
- ▶ **Working Woman** – works out of necessity not choice. Self-sacrificing, virtuous, obedient, shy, modest, ready to give up her job for marriage or in the interests of her family.

**The Bad Woman** – comes in the same roles as the good woman but lacks the qualities of submissiveness, obedience, virtue, modesty, shyness, obedience and is selfish and interested in self-promotion. She is also conniving, self-assertive and aggressive.

- ▶ If she is a working woman, she is hard and ambitious with an eye on other women’s husbands/ jobs.
- ▶ If married, She is a bad mother/wife who neglects her husband and children. She is also domineering, bossy and insensitive to her husband’s needs.
- ▶ If she is a socialite, she may or may not have a job but uses her husband’s money lavishly. She is party loving, dresses immodestly, i.e., in ‘western’ clothes.

## **The Politics of Representation and Changing Historical Contexts**

News, views and entertainment are shaped by historical and political contexts.

Where in earlier times queens, princesses and ladies of the nobility engaged with the social and political life of their times and working class women worked in the fields and as domestic labour, we are told that the lives of women from the middleclasses were spent in the *zanana*. In the 1930s and onwards however, regardless of religious affiliation, ordinary middle class Indian women stepped out of the home and entered the political mainstream. This was the time when they began to take part in public debate and political protests for their rights and against colonial rule.

The process continued in Post Independence Pakistan when they were visible and active in public spaces as citizens of the newly formed modern nation. This was reflected in the media.

The following images provide us with a glimpse of Pakistani society in the 1940s and beyond to the 1990s. These are mainstream media images that were propagated by the state and endorsed by society at large. They illustrate that societal expectations, customs, traditions and lifestyles are constantly changing and adapting themselves to changing times.



**Marchpast of the Sindh Women's National Guard 1947.** Margaret Bourke White courtesy Life Magazine



The Pakistan Army National Guard was established on 1 January 1948 as a reserve component of the Pakistan Army. First advertised as a volunteer corps, it later expanded as a Women's Guard. The Women's Guard included individuals trained in nursing, welfare, and clerical work. Some of the women were in the Janbaz Force, and a very small number of were recruited into the regular service to perform medical and educational work. The National Cadet Corps was disbanded some years later under pressure from right wing religious groups.

## Deconstructing visual images

This picture is of the Sindh Women's National Guard Marchpast, Karachi. Apart from capturing a moment in Pakistan's history, it sheds a light on Pakistani society of that time:

- ▶ It is led by a sari clad woman bearing a flag.
- ▶ The marching women are bareheaded and most of them have short hair.
- ▶ All of them are young.
- ▶ They look happy.
- ▶ Their body language is brisk and disciplined. They are marching in step with one another.
- ▶ The image conveys energy and a sense of commitment.
- ▶ They are at ease in their role and in the space they occupy.
- ▶ The uniform takes cultural dress variations into account and gives equal value to them.
- ▶ The white sari or white shalwar kamiz with the dupatta worn as a band across the right shoulder, is functional and does not impede movement or action.
- ▶ The flag held aloft by the leader indicates her status as standard bearer and communicates the message that the marching women are citizens of the newly formed state.

Taken as a composite whole, the message of this image is (i) that women are no longer confined to the *zanana* and have claimed their place in public space in the newly formed state, (ii) that public space belongs to women as much as it does to men.

Government policy was geared to the spirit and needs of the time and active steps were taken to encourage and facilitate women's entry into professional life.

This was the time when, approved by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, The Fatima Jinnah Medical College for Women was established on the premises of Balak Ram Medical College. The first batch of 39 students was admitted in 1948, followed by the formal inauguration of the college in 1949 by the then Prime Minister Khawaja Nazim-ud-din.

### **Images carry clear messages. The choice and selection of images is never entirely innocent.**

From **1947-1977** burka wearing women got low coverage in the media. The sari was the accepted formal - and informal dress for women along with the shalwar kameez, chooridar pajama and gharara depending on the mood, location and ethnic background of the wearer. The burka did not disappear, but the appearance of burka wearing women in the press, advertisements, etc., was incidental or context specific.

From **1977-1988** the bareheaded, sleeveless, sari clad women were replaced by head covered TV newscasters, dupatta wearing, head covered little school girls and bearded maulvis talking endlessly on women's dress, role and function in society.

*In both instances the society depicted in the media was located in Muslim majority Pakistan. The entry of women in public spaces didn't make it less Muslim and Zia ul Haq's chadar and chaar divari didn't make it more Muslim - only more intolerant.*

During Ayub Khan's military government (1958-69) the government's aim was to project Pakistan as a 'modern' state. Women were encouraged to enter public spaces and despite the centralising thrust of the One Unit policy, diversity and modernity were represented by different forms of dress worn by the peoples of Pakistan, and new professions and educational opportunities that were opening up for women.

These images and stories were projected by the media and in advertisements to encourage tourism and to promote Pakistan's place in the polity of modern nations.

- ▶ There was no 'Islamic' dress code for women and the 'Hinduisation' of the sari was still in the future.
- ▶ Working women were seen as a positive category and a lot of publicity was given to PIA airhostesses, who together with the national airline, represented modernity, development and progress.



This is illustrated by the confident, smiling image of a PIA airhostess against a blue sky. Dressed in a uniform that is designed as much for efficiency as for smartness, it highlights her identity as a working woman alongside men in a world full of possibility.

This image, which represents the NEW WORKING WOMAN, was part of PIA's promotional slogan: 'PIA - Great People to Fly With'.

- ▶ This message is conveyed by the way the advertisement has been designed.
- ▶ The image also demonstrates that form and meaning cannot be separated from one another,

### **Spatial Organisation of the Visual Frame**

- ▶ The image of the woman is framed by and set against an open blue sky
- ▶ The white of the clouds floating across the blue convey a sense of movement and freedom.
- ▶ The blue sky fills the frame and links the freedom of the skies with the woman, who not only represents PIA, but also the ethos of Pakistan as a young modern state ready to take its place in the polity of developed nations.

## Colour Palette

The dark green of the kameez and cap, which is offset by the crisp white of the collar and dupatta (a) make the figure stand out against the sky and dominate the frame, (b) conveys an impression of efficiency and competence, (c) the white of collar and dupatta repeats the white of the clouds and creates a link between the movement of the clouds and the efficiency and freedom of the airhostess.



'PIA Great People to Fly With' - Working women and men walking arm in arm

The shift from the idea of 'modern' Pakistan' to a tradition-based wahabi 'Islamic' Pakistan engineered by General Zia-ul-Haq led to a new set of images, exemplified by head covered TV women news casters and chadar wearing little school girls. This change in the construction of the national narrative was reflected in the content and themes of television drama, advertisements and school texts.



The News Caster and the Air Hostess

## Body language

- ▶ The news caster is well groomed.
- ▶ She wears a nose stud.
- ▶ Her eyes are downcast.
- ▶ Her face is expressionless.

## Spatial organisation of the visual frame

- ▶ The image is set in the PTV news room, which is a self-enclosed space
- ▶ The news room is not cut off from the outside world. It is the place from which the world is brought into viewers' homes. This is signified by the globe that forms part of the backdrop. But unlike the open skies that form the background for the PIA hostess, this is a controlled space
- ▶ The image of the woman newscaster is in the forefront - BUT - unlike the airhostess, who fills the frame, she occupies one corner in it. The rest of the space is taken up by the globe, lighted computer screens, the table at which she sits and the papers in front of her.
- ▶ She is looking down at the papers in front of her - there is no eye-contact between her and the viewers.
- ▶ The downcast eyes and the white dupatta that covers the newscaster's head and is draped demurely across her body, highlight and reinforce the limits of her physical and social space. The nature of her work, which is to convey news of the world to people in their homes is countered by her spatial location, dress and body language. Taken together this arrangement conveys the message that she is merely a cog in the machine - a conduit or channel for the news. She herself has no agency.
- ▶ Unlike the PIA airhostess, the news caster is not an active participant in what is taking place around her, she is a mere mouthpiece for those who control the channel.

## Common features

- ▶ Both present images of working women
- ▶ Both represent national institutions viz PIA, and Pakistan Television
- ▶ Both show women performing their assigned work efficiently

## Differences

- ▶ The image of the airhostess fills the frame.
- ▶ The newscaster occupies only one side of the frame.
- ▶ The airhostess is looking up at a limitless sky.
- ▶ The newscaster's eyes are downcast and fixed on the page in front of her.
- ▶ Both women are wearing dupattas, but the ways in which they wear them convey different messages:
- ▶ The airhostess' dupatta is a part of her uniform. It does not cover her head but is worn as a Vshaped band across her shoulders as part of her official uniform akin to the uniforms worn by male airline staff.
- ▶ The newscaster's dupatta covers her head and is draped conventionally to cover her body.

Taken together – the downcast eyes and the covered head – emphasise the newscaster's status/ position as a 'modest' Pakistani woman who occupies as little space as she can in the frame, while the 1960s PIA airhostess who fills the frame, represents the modern woman who is ready to take on the world.

As working women, both mark a break with the idea of the traditional 'housebound' woman. However, the image of the airhostess is full of energy. The open skies are her domain. She represents a break with the conventional professions for women. The newscaster, while also representing a new profession, affirms conventional femininity (i) by the covered head which was part of official requirements under Zia, (ii) by the down cast eyes and expressionless face, (iii) by the emphasis on conventional eye makeup, nose stud, etc., that belong to the stereotype of the 'eastern'/Pakistani woman who represents decorative passive femininity

This comparative assessment is useful in understanding how:

- i. state policies can shape gendered identity.
- ii. mainstream/national narratives are produced and influence our views of women's role and place in society.
- iii. notions of the feminine and masculine are neither fixed nor static but depend on historical and political contexts.
- iii. underlying politics and ideologies contribute to meaning-making.
- iv. ideas and attitudes are neither fixed nor permanent but open to change.

***The purpose of this section is to familiarise Resource Persons with the ways in which verbal/visual language i.e. written texts and images are used to produce different kinds of meaning and messages and how these can be deconstructed and analysed. It also demonstrates:***

***1. How politics and historical/political contexts impact and shape the ways in which women are perceived and spoken about.***

***ii. How power and ideology fix meaning.***

***iii. How meaning is constantly challenged and open to change.***

***2. How this material can be used by Resource Persons in exercise form in media training workshops.***

## The Infection in the Sentence

An excerpt from Maulana Muhammad Ashraf Ali Thanvi's 'Bahishti Zewar' will be used to demonstrate how patriarchal power and ideology intervene to produce meaning.

The purpose of this detailed analysis is to demonstrate:

- ▶ How the use of language, metaphor, imagery and gender-based stereotypes produce meaning.
- ▶ Illustrate the use of cliches as carriers of ideology.
- ▶ Enable **Resource Persons/media workers/students** to develop skills for textual analysis
- ▶ Apply this approach to the deconstruction and analysis of other verbal/visual texts.
- ▶ Develop exercises for use in Workshop Modules.

## History and Context

Maulana Muhammad Ashraf Ali Thanvi (August 19, 1863-July 4, 1943) was an Indian scholar and mentor of the Deobandi school. He lived at a time when the introduction of the British system of education saw women's entry into the formal education system, and changes in laws on under-age marriage, sati, widow remarriage were changing the social and political landscape of the country. This was around the time when women from the different religions of India began the movement for their right to vote. Questions were also being raised about the institution of purdah and many women - Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, were entering public life.

Although these changes had the support of men like Jinnah and Nehru, traditionalists from all religions saw them as a threat to conventional male/female roles and relationships. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's widely read book, 'Bahishti Zewar', reflects some of the concerns raised by these changes among the more conservative sections of society. Then, as now, men were afraid that education and new ideas would make women question or challenge traditional family norms including male authority.

Written in the late 19th or early 20th century, 'Bahishti Zewar' is representative of traditional mainstream perceptions of wifely duty and obedience.

The book received state patronage under Zia-ul-Haq's Islamisation policy, when it was widely publicised as essential reading for women and as wedding gift for newly wed wives.

## Bahishti Zewar - excerpt.

Speaking directly, i.e., in the first person voice to women, particularly wives, Maulana Sahib says:

Understand this! The relationship between a husband and wife is for life. No joy can be greater than that which lies in conjugal harmony, and no misery can be greater than in marital discord. It is your moral duty, therefore, that you should hold the man's heart in your hand by obeying his slightest behest. (emphasis added) If he asks you to stand all night with folded hands, you must do so, as in that alone lies your salvation ... if he says it is night when it is day, you too shall call night day ... on no account must you lose his trust ... or let his heart turn away from you'

## **Deconstructing the text**

- i. to show how meaning is produced.
- ii. draw attention to the gaps and contradictions in textual logic.

### Textual/contextual parameters:

The first thing to be noted is that:

- i. The speaker is a man.
- ii. The person he is speaking to is a woman.
- iii. The man speaks from a position of authority. This is indicated by the use of the first person voice, i.e., He speaks directly to the woman.

The text is a monologue, i.e., a speech by one person addressed to a silent audience or person. It is NOT a conversation or a dialogue. There is no exchange of views or opinions.

The writer's position of authority is conferred upon him by his title of 'Maulana' and his position as a Man and as 'religious scholar.

This position is further affirmed by the silence of the listener who is a woman.

This writer/speaker's authority is encapsulated in the Imperative Mode of speech as evidenced in the uncompromising:

"Understand this!"

There is no room for question and answer here.

### **Explicit Message and paraphrase of the text -**

- ▶ The relationship of marriage is for life. There is no joy greater than that of conjugal or marital harmony.
- ▶ There is no greater misery than that of marital discord.
- ▶ This harmony is based on the man's trust in the wife.
- ▶ If the wife gains this trust, she will 'hold the man's heart in her hand'.
- ▶ If she loses this trust, she will lose his heart. This will result in marital discord.
- ▶ Once lost, it will not be easy to win back this trust.
- ▶ To gain the man's trust and ensure marital happiness, the wife must give singleminded, unquestioning obedience to the husband, i.e., she must do as he says and think as he does.

## The Unsaid Message and its Deeper Implications

- ▶ The authorial/speaking voice, which is male, is NOT addressed to the man. It speaks directly and *only* to the woman. The woman could be a wife or general female reader who may one day become a wife.
- ▶ Whatever the woman's position, socially and in terms of status, her identity is 'relational' i.e. defined according to her relationship with a man e.g. husband, father, brother, son etc.
- ▶ As both the speaker – and husband – whose heart the woman must hold in her hand, if she wants happiness in marriage – are men, the text establishes a one-way relationship between the two and sets up the male as the object of desire (represented by his heart, which the woman should aspire to hold in her hand). This places the woman in a supplicant position as the desiring, needy and dependent subject.
- ▶ The Maulana places the entire burden/responsibility of the relationship and of maintaining "conjugal harmony" on the woman.
- ▶ The condition of *unquestioning obedience and compliance as moral duty* denies and takes away the woman's right to exercise her judgment as an independent, thinking human being - "*if he asks you to stand all night with folded hands, you must do so, as in that alone lies your salvation ... if he says it is night when it is day, you too must call the day night...*"
- ▶ The use of the word 'salvation' in this context is interesting as it links obedience to the husband to the woman/wife's well-being in the 'afterlife' i.e. as a moral duty and pathway to heaven.
- ▶ As marriage 'is for life' (and continues to be seen as the only accepted destiny/aim in life for a woman), the text *warns/threatens* the woman that if she can't find happiness in marriage, she won't find it anywhere else and will be condemned to a lifetime of misery. (The man of course can leave her or take another wife or may be two or three or four, if he wants).
- ▶ The woman can find happiness in marriage only if she gains the man's full trust and holds his heart in her hand.

### Gaps and inner contradictions in the text

The Maulana makes 'Trust' i.e. the man's confidence in the wife to do and think as he says, the basis conjugal harmony.

- ▶ According to the terms set up by the text, to meet the condition of doing and thinking exactly as he says, the woman must either give up her capacity to think for herself or lie to the husband: "*if he says it is night when it is day, you too should call day night.*"

IS this possible?

**The Question to be Asked:** If the woman gives up her capacity to think or use her brain, she will lose her capacity of being 'trustworthy'. If she *pretends* to agree with the husband even when she knows he is wrong, i.e. calls the night day if he so wishes - she will be lying to him - which undermines the very condition of trust the Maulana demands.



## Discussion Points

1. What does the Maulana really want - Trust or Blind Obedience?

- ▶ If the latter, why bring Trust into the equation?
- ▶ Could it be because he wants to bind her to his will psychologically and emotionally to his will?
- ▶ Because he fears her agency and knows that unquestioning obedience and total compliance are difficult to achieve?
- ▶ Because *he* doesn't trust *his own ability to gain her confidence*?

or

- ▶ Because he is insecure and does not want his wisdom and demands to be questioned?
- ▶ Because he doesn't want to appear to be a dictator?
- ▶ Because he wants blind compliance?

2. Despite being full of glaring contradictions, '*Bahishti Zevar*' continues to be a widely read and respected text. Why?

To answer these questions, we need to make a distinction between MALE POWER and the IDEA of MALE SUPERIORITY.

MALE POWER is a fact of history.

As a general rule, in patriarchal societies men have control over resources and decision-making. This places them in a position of power not just over women, children, etc., but also over the world of ideas and over the production of meaning.

MALE SUPERIORITY is a socially constructed myth that has been fostered so assiduously over centuries and across societies that men - and women have come to believe in it and accept it as a fundamental 'truth'

Thus when a man speaks - especially if he holds a position of authority as 'Maulana' or Judge or Teacher, Father, Husband, readers and listeners will either accept what he says as 'wisdom', or in case they don't, will be too scared to challenge him - especially if they happen to be his wife, daughter, sister, mother and by inference any other woman who is told by those in positions of authority around her, that to question the Maulana's wisdom is to invite hell fire.

### Constructing the myth of male superiority

The myth making process is enabled by

- I. the selection and manipulation of evidence from the thousands of different meanings that are generated by words and images, signs and symbols sayings proverbs idioms etc.
- II. the way the message is constructed to highlight and privilege one kind of meaning over others so as to show that men are superior to women.
- iii. established patriarchal social arrangements, roles and behaviours being seen as 'normal' 'natural' and unchanging.

Let us take another look at the "Bahishti Zevar" excerpt to see how it works ...

- ▶ The speaker positions himself as the 'superior' male, with the added weight of his status as Scholar, Maulana and Husband to state the terms of the husband /wife (male/female) relationship.

- ▶ He frames his lecture/advice by drawing on gendered stereotypes and clichés about normative male-female roles and clichés including allusions to folk lore and homilies about wifely obedience.
- ▶ These are expressed through the use of an authoritative, empowered male voice characterised by firmness of tone and use of the imperative voice.
- ▶ This authority is affirmed by the voiceless, passive, invisible female listener to whom the message is addressed.
- ▶ The text performs a sleight of hand that simultaneously affirms and denies mutuality in the same breath: (i), there is no joy greater than in conjugal harmony and (ii), makes the woman solely responsible for maintaining the relationship while taking away her voice, agency and rights, all of which he appropriates for himself and other men/male speakers.
- ▶ Makes use of the rhetoric and terminology of love - she holds the man's heart in her hand. This masks the unilateral and utilitarian nature of the relationship in which the woman is dutybound to provide all services to the man including unconditional obedience.
- ▶ Illustrates his argument with the allusion to the familiar story of the mythical 'good' wife who was granted a place in heaven because she stood all night by her husband's bed with a glass of milk he had asked for but forgotten about and fallen asleep.
- ▶ This gives moral weight to his argument and guarantees acceptability by the mainstream reader - including women who have internalised this logic.
- ▶ At the same time it implicitly condones domestic tyranny.
- ▶ By making the woman's compliance a moral duty, the man removes himself from the equation and cancels the need or requirement of reciprocity on his part. E.g. if she stands all night with folded hands because he orders her to do so, she is simply doing her duty for which she is owed no thanks or appreciation.

By equating obedience to the man/husband with morality, the text:

- I. draws away attention from the unreasonable nature of the demand which has no use value except to pander to the man's ego
- II. deprives the woman of her right to question the man's command.

Taken as a whole, the rhetoric masks the textual omissions and inner contradictions in the argument and presents what is read as a seamless piece of scholarly wisdom.

This maintains the comfort zone of mainstream readers especially men, and tells women that as this arrangement is 'normal', 'natural' and 'forever' they had better do as the man says.

## **Note for Resource Persons**

The purpose of the exercises based on the excerpt from 'Bahishti Zevar' is twofold:

- i. to familiarise Resource Persons with ways of unpacking a given text to highlight its inner contradictions and distinguish between its stated and unstated messages.
- ii. to demonstrate how cliches and stereotypes can be unpacked to draw attention to the 'unsaid' meaning of the text and to problematise its inner contradictions

i. for use as an exercise by Resource Persons in workshops with media workers and mass communication students.

For Resource Person facilitation and for use as a workshop group exercise, the following section, is given in the question answer format.

In some cases answers have been provided but it is strongly recommended that participants be allowed to work out their own answers with the Resource person making necessary inputs as and when required.

For the first reading of the text, DO NOT give the name of the author. Let participants assess the passage on its own merits. The name may be provided later especially where relevant to the given exercise and or discussion.

## **Exercise 1. Questions and Answers**

**Q. i.** Would your response/reaction to this passage have been different had you known the name of the concerned book and its writer at the outset?

**Q.ii.** What are the factors that make the reader blind to the contradictions in the passage and where does its appeal lie?

**Q.iii.** If this advice was given by a woman - a mother, sister or friend - to another woman, would its meaning and implications still be the same? If yes. Why? If not. Why?

**Q.iv.** Is the message culturally acceptable? If so why?

**A.** The appeal as well as the blindness lies in the familiarity of the cliches and stereotypes around which the narrative is built. The message is culturally accepted because it is familiar.

► It does not disturb the readers' comfort levels. Men are socially conditioned to assert authority – and women are socially conditioned to accept their subservient/dependent position.

► Maintains gender based authority thresholds.

► It is in keeping with the norms and practices of female/male relationships. Men's needs are given priority over the needs of women. Further, women are socialised from childhood onwards that they must obey the husband who is the 'majazi khuda'.

► Even if women readers are uncomfortable or dismayed by this advice, the message is too deeply ingrained and ever present in daily conversations to be questioned comfortably. This includes the familiar threat of loss of trust by the man in the woman with all its negative implications.

**Q.v.** How have cultural myths, stereotypes, word combinations, cliches and images been used to produce meaning in this message?

**A.v.** The message uses:

- ▶ The cultural myth/stereotype of male superiority and entitlement to authoritative/ moral right to state the terms of the husband/wife relationship
- ▶ Draws upon the gendered stereotype of the authoritative empowered male as evidenced in the firmness of tone, and use of passive/absent female listener who conforms to the stereotype of the dependent, obedient, silent female
- ▶ Uses cliches that:
  - a. highlight the wisdom and importance of the woman of 'holding the husband's heart'
  - b. makes 'trust' conditional on obedience
  - c. use threats of loss of trust and its negative impact on the marital relationship in general and the woman's life in particular.
  - d. balances trust and loss of trust to give strength to the Maulana's argument while drawing attention to the woman's subordinate/dependent status.

**Q.vi.** What cliches and stereotypes does this message rely on and reaffirm?

**A.vi. (a)** Women are incapable of independent thought and responsible action therefore should not argue with their husbands and must obey the man regardless of what he says or asks the wife to do, (b) uses the time-honoured story the obedient wife standing all night by the husband's bedside with a glass of milk in her hand, (c) it's always the woman's fault if something goes wrong in a marriage, (d) once lost, it is hard for a woman to regain a man's trust.

**Q.vii.** Is marital harmony, as defined by the Maulana possible - even desirable considering that it is based on lies?

**Q.viii.** Would this kind of compliance - agreeing with a man even when he is clearly wrong - fool the man into thinking that the woman is not lying?

Or is the real issue one of obedience - as long as she does as he says and agrees with him - the lie is acceptable?

**Q.xi.** Having made telling lies a necessary part of marital happiness, hasn't the Maulana/man himself (a) created the conditions of mistrust, (b) fed into the stereotype of women as untrustworthy and untruthful?

### Points for reflection

- ▶ The Maulana's technique i.e. the reliance on gendered stereotypes, etc., is also applied by media workers and other writers in news reports and features.
- ▶ *The question to be asked is - should the media, in the interests of its own professional integrity, sacrifice 'truth' or facts to viewer ratings and popular appeal? Given that the media's task is to bring news to the public, should it uncritically allow the information it gives to be deflected or watered down by cliches and social biases?*

*This exercise will provide the space for an 'objective' reading of the text.*

*Reveal the name of the author and the book after the participants have discussed the passage on the basis of the given questions.*

*Note participant reactions to this information and ask them to comment on whether, how and why this information has affected their first reading.*

*The discussion should provide interesting insights into the politics of reading and meaning making.*

## **From Cliches and Stereotypes to Slogans**

The aim of the following exercises is (i) to show how slogans, as 'order words' or 'lightening flash interventions' can challenge and subvert patriarchal ideologies that are carried and circulated by cliches as in the excerpt from *Bahishti Zewar*. (ii) Enable us to see the internal relation between speech and action and (iii) understand the reasons for the ways in which the media reported the following two events.

It will be useful to directly involve participants in this discussion through open ended questions. But first a bit of background on two events that took place in 2019.

### **Background and Context:**

Two events occurred in 2019 that took the country by storm. One was the country-wide Dharna and violent protest against the blasphemy charge acquittal by the Supreme Court of Asiya bibi, a Christian daily wage labourer. The other was the 8th March Aurat March rally for women's rights and against multiple forms of gender based violence.

The protest against Asiya bibi's acquittal brought the major cities of the Punjab to a standstill for atleast three if not more days. Roads were blocked and cities held hostage by violent mobs consisting largely of jobless youth and school dropouts, many of them in their early teens, led by members of a religious party. Apart from the financial loss nationally as businesses came to a halt, public property was destroyed, passersby beaten up and assaulted including some deaths.

Undertaken ostensibly to uphold the honour of the Prophet of Islam, (peace be upon him), what characterised this protest was the sloganisation of filthy and abusive language that targeted women's bodies and spoke in graphic detail about how the protesters, particularly the leadership and the general public exhorted by them, would do sexual violence to Asiya bibi and the wives, mothers and daughters of the concerned Supreme Court judges, the civil administration and the army high command.

This protest was dispersed by the State after more than a week of mayhem and violence. The leaders and some of the identified culprits were charged with the disruption of law and order. Some were arrested and then released after a short spell in jail.

The Aurat March 2019, on the other hands, was a celebratory protest by younger generation feminists, working class women, trade unionists, women from rights based NGO's and members of the older generation women's movement, with some in wheelchairs, and children accompanying their parents. It included a significant number of young men and a sprinkling of progressive older male academics and professionals. The March was peaceful and joyous. The marchers did not overstep the decided upon route and assembly point set by the Punjab government viz from the Press Club at Simla Pahari to the link road between Egerton Road and the Mall. Though small compared to the mob that comprised the rightwing protest, it was numerically impressive.

No damage was done to public property, traffic inconvenience was time bound and limited to the concerned roads.

The women expressed their demands through songs, street theatre, placards and an installation on violence against women. The slogans, which were verbal and visual, were catchy, provocative and ranged from demands for workers rights, better pay, job security. and right to safety from gender based violence and rape. The participants dispersed peacefully at the end of the stipulated time after having removed their stage from the road.

## **News Reports and Public Response**

There was a marked difference between the news reports that covered these events as well as the general public response. In the case of the religious right protest, while news reports condemned the break down of law and order, loss of life and damage to public property, barring passing references to it, not much was made of the slogans and language use at the dharna. Indeed even condemnation was undercut by a touch of amusement. A kind of 'boy's speech' indulgence about the language of abuse.

With regards the Aurat March, the entire focus was on the slogans, of which the following three led to the greatest outrage:

- ▶ "Mujhe Kia Patta Tumhara Mauza Kidhar Hai!" ("How do I know where your socks are!")
- ▶ "Apna Khaana Khud Garram Karo!" ("Warm your own food!")
- ▶ "Mera Jissam Meri Marzi!" ("My Body My Right!")

The first two slogans were based on the demand for shared household responsibilities. Not only was there nothing objectionable here - the reference to homely tasks such as putting away ones clothes or warming ones food emphasised the warmth and safety of the family unit and, in a light-hearted way, drew attention to the issue of equal division of labour. The third, which was used by Aurat March 2018 in Karachi, was a straightforward demand for women's bodily integrity, safety and protection against harassment, rape, underage marriage, right to mobility, education, etc.

There is nothing sensational about them. They are certainly not offensive like the religious party slogans that not only threatened rape and violence to women but named their body parts and described in graphic detail what should be done to them. Yet the Aurat March slogans outraged society when no shock was registered - or expressed at the fact that filthy abuse was used by the religions Party in the same sentence as the name of the Prophet of Islam, (peace be upon him), to protect whose honour these acts of sexual violence were to be committed!

## **The questions to be asked are:**

- ⊗ Why were the Aurat March slogans sensationalised by both media and the general public to the extent that parents threatened to lock up their daughters for taking part in the March, and 'eminent' maulanas threatened rape on social media in response to the 'Mera Jissam Meri Marzi' slogan? And why was no shock registered by the public and the media at this threat?
- ⊗ What was it that prompted even the 'progressive', 'liberal' lobby to shake its head over what they saw as the trivialisation of rights issues and to condemn the slogans for their tone of voice and 'impropriety' of language use?
- ⊗ Considering society's concern with women's modesty and sexual safety, why was the straight forward demand for bodily integrity and sexual safety expressed in the ordinary language of daily use interpreted as demand for unregulated sexual freedom, when nobody turned a hair at the scurrilous obscenities that stripped the woman's body naked at the maulana led dharna?

- ⊗ What was it about the Aurat March and its slogans that created such a sensation, when for the past 50 years the public had been exposed to the sight and sound of women marching down city streets raising their voices for justice, national and regional peace, democracy, the rights of landless peasants, against unjust laws, against rape and child abuse, against violence against women; against violence and torture of child domestic workers, against the violence of laissez faire development, against war...?

**Some answers to these questions and why the Aurat March created such a stir in the country, lie in:**

- i. Its visibility. The Aurat March protests are numerically impressive and comprise women and a sprinkling of young male supporters.
  - ⊗ They are organised by younger generation feminists as an annual theme-based event
  - ⊗ They are celebratory in tone and use multiple communication techniques such as banners, placards, installations and street theatre.
  - ⊗ Instead of bewailing the condition of women, the protests use humour to draw attention to women's issues, not as victims but as resistance.
  - ⊗ The tone is cheeky and defiant - it laughed at authority!
- ii. Its point of departure from the slogans of earlier protests.
  - ⊗ Where earlier protests had focused on retrogressive and unjust laws, violence against women and children and democratic and human rights, the Aurat March slogans visibility-linked the private to the political, and focused on Gender-based Violence and unequal/unjust gender-based relations in the family and by family members.
  - ▶ The slogans: 'Apna Khaana Khud Garam Karro' and 'Mujhe Kia Patta Tumhara Mauza Khidar Hai' questioned the fairness of the domestic division of labour and male female gender based roles. They rejected the stereotype of the ideal woman as cook and housekeeper and draw attention to the infantilised male unable to look after himself.

**The shock value of these, and other slogans like them, lie in the fact that they:**

- ▶ highlight the link between unjust laws and the gender-based inequalities of patriarchal norms and practices
- ▶ place gender based violence and gender inequality/inequity issues and firmly at the heart of the home and family.

This not only challenged the stereotype of the home as a place of love and security, it took the lid off the myth of the family as an 'altruistic unit' where everybody loves everybody equally and watches out for each other's interests.

The following exercises are base on the above discussion/information. Their purpose is to build participants' critical and analytical skills.

**Exercise 1. Tracking Stereotypes**

Time: 1 hour - 30 minutes for the written work and 30 minutes for group presentation and discussion

Group Exercise.

Material: Chart paper and markers

Divide participants into equal groups, provide each group with Chart papers and markers; distribute copies of the passage from *Bahishti Zevar*.

i. Ask participants to read the given excerpt and identify and note down the cliches and stereotypes in the passage.

ii. Group presentations and discussion on:

- ⊗ the cliches and stereotypes
- ⊗ impact of the cliches and stereotypes on readers/listeners
- ⊗ what happens when someone challenges these cliches and stereotypes?

## **Exercise 2. Examining Slogans**

Time: 1 hour

Discussion based exercise.

**Note for Resource persons.** The slogan, “Mera Jissam Meri Marzi”, which is a direct translation of ‘My Body My Right is based on the **Right to Bodily Integrity** or **Bodily Rights**.

It is not about unregulated sexual freedom but about a woman’s claim to freedom from: sexual harassment in private and public spaces - at home, by family members and outside the home, on the street, in schools and colleges; offices and factories, in the fields and at village wells where women go to draw water. The slogan also refers to rape and sexual violence including marital rape, incest and underage and forced marriage.

This right is protected by two key international documents: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These are: Right to life, security of one’s person against torture and inhumane, cruel or degrading treatment or punishment; slavery and forced labor etc.

Though everyone has the right bodily integrity women are more often affected by sex-based violence including unwanted pregnancy, domestic abuse, violent assault, rape, incest, marital rape, underage and forced marriage. Bodily Integrity has also been defined to include freedom of movement, security of person, reproductive and general health, education, privacy.

As you can see, this is very different from the way the general public understood it. The purpose of this exercise is to enable participants to (i) understand the concept of ‘Bodily Integrity’ or ‘Bodily Rights’ and (ii) analyse the negative public response to the slogan ‘Mera Jissam Meri Marzi’ including that of the media.

It would be a good idea to (i) ask participants to explain what they think this slogan means, (ii) give them its ‘official’ meaning with reference to the UDHR, etc., and (iii) give them the meaning and intent of the Aurat March slogan:

The principle of bodily integrity sums up the right of each human being, including children and men, to autonomy and self-determination over their own body. It considers an unconsented physical intrusion as a human rights violation

### Questions for discussion

1. Is there anything wrong with this demand?
2. What women are asking for is exactly what families - mothers, fathers, brothers want for them. So why the objections? Is it because women are claiming responsibility for their own safety and taking it away from male family members?



3. If there is nothing wrong with the demand for safety from violence and sexual abuse, why the anger?
4. Why was there so much outrage at 'Mera Jissam Meri Marzi' and so very little about the language of abuse used routinely by men from all classes? Is it because it is unacceptable for women to claim their right over their own bodies but when men use sexist abuse they are merely expressing their entitlement over women's bodies? If this is so, is it right?
5. 'Apna Khana Khud Garram Karo': 'Warm your own food' addresses the issue of gendered division of labour where women are made solely responsible for all household chores including serving and looking after the man. The slogan is a demand for shared work responsibility. What makes it disturbing?

***This is an important discussion as both female and male participants need to understand the implications of the Aurat March slogans in order to clear their views on them before they sit down to write their news reports and features.***

## Module 1

### The Squint in the Eye and the Infection in the Sentence

This and the following Sections consist of thematically arranged exercises and material for use in Workshop Modules. The exercises are based on the information given in the preceding section, which provides a useful reference point.

Specific Workshop Modules are to be designed by Resource Persons who are advised to pick and choose exercises from this and other Modules including material provided in the 'Production of Meaning' section, on the basis of their suitability to the issues discussed and in keeping with group needs.

Please remember -

- ▶ When designing your module, keep the cultural context and geographical location of the group in mind.
- ▶ Select your case studies and exercises on the basis of those that would be most effective/useful for the group.

#### **Reporting News - Writing Features and Articles**

Start this Session with definitions of News Reports, Features and Articles. Use the material on pages 21-23 for this.

A quick overview of definitions and key concepts etc will be sufficient for experienced journalists. Younger journalists and media students will need more time. Allocate the time for this preliminary exercise according to participant needs/skills.

The following exercises have been designed to facilitate participants in identifying and addressing gender and other biases in their own work. Use any *one* of these exercises for the session on reporting news.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following items will be required for the exercises in this Module:

**Material:** writing paper, pens, flip chart stand and flip chart, thick tipped coloured markers.

#### **Exercise 1. News Reports and Features - Tracking the Gender Bias.**

**Time:** 1 hour 20 minutes. (20 minutes for writing and 30 minutes for presentations and 30 minute for critical feedback)

Purpose: The aim of this exercise is to enable participants to identify and understand their own:

- i. gender biases
- ii. cultural biases

- iii. critically assess their language-use including reliance on stereotypes
- iv. familiarise media workers with the requirements of bias free reporting

### **School Mela**

A girls' school organizes a mela or funfair where students from other educational institutions are invited along with their parents and/or siblings.

It is a fun event where boys and girls are seen talking and laughing, having snacks, looking at the items on display at different stalls and generally enjoying themselves.

**Activity 1:** Write a News Report on the 'School Mela' including an assessment of the event as a non-segregated extra curricular activity.

**Activity 2:** Presentation of News Reports followed by critique of each presentation by participants

As facilitator the **Resource Person** should (i) explain the task to participants including the format of a News Report and terms of its assessment, (ii) ensure that participants' critiques of each others work and subsequent discussions are based on the assessment guidelines but include space for opening up and expanding issues (iv) give her/his feed back *after* participant input and analysis.

**The following list comprises some aspects of the News Report and critique that may need further highlightin and/or discussion:**

- a. gender biases
- b. use and impact of stereotypical language and perspectives
- d. the value of bias free writing
- e. make the distinction between 'facts' and 'suppositions' and discuss their implications for news production and the making of public opinion.

### **Exercise 2. Writing Features and Articles - Tracking the Gender Bias**

Time: 2 hours

Component 1 – 30 minutes

Topic/Issue: A reported increase in national divorce rates sparks debates as to why so many couples are getting divorced.

Discussion

1. Ask each participant to identify what s/he thinks are the possible causes of rising divorce rates
2. Note down causes for divorce on a flip chart using different colours for women's and men's comments.

This will highlight the different ways, if any, in which women and men understand (i) the causes of divorce (ii) situations that lead to divorce (iii) how divorce could have been avoided or is unavailable.

3. Based on the above, open up the issue for discussion. As far as possible this should be a participant led discussion.

4. The **Resource Person** should step in only to enable participants to:
- ▶ Identify and critique gender biases/prejudices as revealed in the discussion
  - ▶ Identify use of stereotypes and clichés to track gender bias.
  - ▶ Use the intersectional approach to account for the impact of factors such as poverty, women’s economic and social dependency and low access to decision making and resources; the role of custom, culture and family norms including women’s growing access to education and paid work etc to deepen the analysis

Component 2 – 1hour 30 minutes

- i. Writing of a Feature or Article on Rising Divorce Rates - 30 minutes
- ii. Presentations - 30 minutes
- iii. Assessment of News Reports/Features by **participants** with concluding remarks by the **Resource Person** - 30 minutes

**Exercise 3. The Squint in the Eye - the J.M, Case 1983**

Time: 1 hour

Oral exercise

Material: Copies of the J.M Case and main points of the Zina Ordinance 1979 (given below) for distribution among participants

**The J. M. Case 1983**

- *15 year old J.M. was an orphan*
- *She did household chores at her aunt’s house for her keep.*
- *She was raped by her uncle and cousin and became pregnant.*
- *She remained silent about the rape because she was afraid of her uncle and cousin and did not know who to turn to for help.*
- *Another uncle noticed her state of depression and asked her the reason for her unhappiness.*
- *She told him what had happened and he reported the case to the police.*
- *Instead of getting the justice she deserved by law including protection and reparation for the crime committed against her, this made matters worse for J.M. because of the evidentiary requirements of the 1979 Zina Ordinance*

Under the **Zina Ordinance**, a rape allegation must be backed by the testimony of 4 adult ‘Sadiq and Ameen’ Muslim men, who have witnessed the act. Without the testimony of 4 Muslim men, the accusation simply corroborates that extra-marital sex has taken place and can be interpreted as an admission of guilt on part of the victim as party to the act.

**As normally rape is:**

- Not committed in public places in front of responsible witnesses, it is difficult to find witnesses to the crime.
- J.M’s rape took place in the privacy of her aunt’s house. There were no witnesses to the act.
- J. M’s own evidence was not considered sufficient under the Zina law to convict the rapists.
- Set against this lack of mandatory evidence to prove that rape had taken place, J.M’s

- pregnancy was seen as evidence of her complicity in extra marital sex or zina.
- Instead of being tried and convicted for rape, the terms of the Zina Ordinance led to the acquittal of J.M's rapist uncle and cousin.
- At the same time, the terms of the Zina Ordinance converted the act of rape into one of zina or adultery, i.e., extra marital sex based on the presumption of J.M's consent
- The court declared J. M guilty of zina and awarded her a punishment of a 100 lashes and a term in prison under Tazeer i.e. based on the discretion of the judge
- J. M went into Appeal against this ruling and her sentence was reduced to 15 lashes and 3 years in prison. According to the Shariat Court judge, this was an act of mercy given her young age.

**Comment: Because of the Zina Ordinance thousands of women victims of rape ended up in prison (i) for a crime committed against them and (ii) under false allegations of zina.**

**After many years of pressure from the women's movement and human rights organisations, changes in the Pakistan Penal Code brought some reprieve to rape victims as well as to women wrongfully accused of zina. But this was many years after the ruling on the J.M. Case**

Give participants 10 minutes to read the case before opening it up for discussion.

What do the law and judgment reveal about the gender bias or squint in the eye of (i) the Zina Law and (ii) in the eye of the judge?

Discussion Points

Ask participants to give their views on:

- The terms of the law
- The gender bias in the judgment
- Patriarchy and J.M's vulnerability and her uncle and cousin's impunity
- Gender justice and the significance of women in public office especially the judiciary and law enforcement institutions such as the police
- Gender justice and the silence of men
- The vulnerability to sexual abuse especially of minor children as domestic workers
- Other factors that contributed to J.M's plight, e.g., economic dependency on relations for a roof over her head.

Concluding comments

## **Reporting news**

**Exercise 4. Violence on the school campus.**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

**Write a news report on the following incident:**

In Vehari, a 15 year old Christian school student drank water out of the common drinking mug. Some Muslim students objected on the grounds that as a non-Muslim he had polluted their mug. Tempers flared and the boy was badly beaten by the students. The teacher who witnessed this violence did nothing to stop it or to protect the boy.

Activity: discussion followed by writing of News Report and presentations.

### Exercise 5. Motorway Rape Case

Write a news report on the following case. Give your views on the woman's actions and the attitudes and behaviour of the police and police-chief.

A woman with her two children were driving from city x to city y at night. While on the city x - city y stretch of the motorway, her car ran out of fuel. There was no rest stop or petrol pump at hand for refueling. The woman called her family in City and asked them to send someone to fetch her. Family members told her that help was on the way but in the meantime she should get assistance from the Motorway police. The woman did so but there was no response from the police. Before her relatives could reach her, the woman was raped and robbed by two men who suddenly appeared on the scene.

- The motorway police excused their lack of response to the call on the grounds that this motorway stretch was not in their jurisdiction.
- Instead of taking action against the police, the senior-most police officer appeared before the media and blamed the woman for:
  - i. travelling alone at night
  - ii. not taking the busier highway
  - iii. not checking the car fuel before leaving her home
  - iv. thinking that Pakistan was as safe for women as any European country

He also wanted to know if she had her husband's permission to travel on her own. Nation-wide outrage and protests against the police and the police officer resulted in the arrest and conviction of the rapists. However, the police chief stuck to his position and offered a weak apology under pressure.

## Module 2

### The Squint in the Eye

#### Performing/Reporting News

**The Guidelines in this section are applicable to all dramatic performance exercises. Please refer to them for dramatisation of individual Case Studies.**

This section contains a number of case studies for assessment and analysis. These case studies are for selective use in the Modules designed by **Resource Persons**.

Depending on the mood of the group, they can be used as dramatic performances or as Focus Group Discussions and presentations.

**Note:** A dramatic performance - especially when used as a start up exercise, has the following advantages:

- ▶ It acts as an icebreaker.
- ▶ It plunges participants into the activity and compels them to engage directly with the given issue/s.
- ▶ It highlights the importance of context: the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.
- ▶ The process of selecting roles, planning the plot, layout, etc., is energising and creates a lighthearted mood among participants. It also deepens understanding of the issue in context.
- ▶ In devising the script etc. participants are compelled to go deeper into the details of the casestudy and become familiar with the complexity of the situation. This creates space for reflection.
- ▶ Different character roles enable participants to look at the given issue from different perspectives and points of view depending on the status and position of each character. Actors can base their character on given roles and stereotypes or portray them differently.
- ▶ Engages participants in active debate that can highlight social, economic and cultural factors that shape the case study.

Keeping in mind the context and geographical location of the group, **Resource Persons** can use the Case Study to (i) devise new exercises and (ii) use the dramatic performance to raise questions

on: (a) gender bias and discrimination (b) gender violence, (c) other rights issues in different social contexts and (d) the ways in which women are perceived and represented in society and the media.

### **Activity in Process:**

Preparation: choose a Case Study from the selection given below and get copies made for distribution among participants.

### **Activity 1 - Jirga Justice as Dramatic Performance**

#### *Example Case Study 1 - 'Sakina's Story'*

- ▶ Distribute copies of the case study among participants. Make sure that everyone gets a copy.
- ▶ Share the details of the case with participants.
- ▶ Give them time to read the text or get one of them to read out the text to the group.
- ▶ Ask participants, turn by turn, to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed.
- ▶ Tell participants that they have to create and take part in a dramatic performance of a Jirga in action including its final decision based on the Case Study.
- ▶ Divide participants in to separate groups with each group forming a Jirga. If needed, merge two groups to make up the numbers for the required Jirga
- ▶ Ask each group to: discuss the case study and:
  - i. plot out the play.
  - ii. allocate/take on different roles of various Jirga members such as: local chaudhry or wadera; village elders, father/mother/brother and biradari members, local MPA, main protagonists, any other.
  - iii. Prepare the script keeping the identities, positions and interests of the different characters in mind.
- ▶ Enact the role of the Jirga and its decisions in a 5-7 minute performance.

**TIP for Actors and Script Writers - participants will find it easier to get their scripts going if they think, act and speak like the characters whose role they are performing.**

**In case the group does not want to take part in a dramatic performance, ask them to perform the Case Study as Discussion.**

### **Activity 2. Case Study as Presentation or Discussion**

1. As in Dramatic Performance, divide the participants in separate groups and ask them.
  - ⊗ to take on different roles and give their arguments regarding concerned issue from the point of view of the character they are representing
  - ⊗ Judge the case and give the best possible solution of the problem
2. Group critique followed by discussion on issues/arguments raised in the presentations.

### **Activity 3. Case Study as News Report, Feature or Article**

Ask participants to write a News Report or Feature on the judgement enacted by the Jirga in the dramatic performance. The writeup should be presented as an eye witness report on the dramatised event.



**Resource Person's Role:** (i) guide the activity in a way that it allows participants to take the lead in the discussion, (ii) see that each group gets a chance to speak, (iii) observe norms of critical assessment without getting personal etc. (iv) identify gender biases in discussions and solutions so as to enable participants to assess the situation critically and as objectively as possible. *Start this session with definitions of News Reports, Features and Articles. Use the information given on page 21-25. A quick overview will be sufficient for experienced journalists. Younger journalists and media students will need more time. Allocate the time for this preliminary exercise according to participant needs/skills*

### Case Study 1 - Sakina's Story

- Sakina belongs to a small peri urban town in the Punjab.
- She is 19 years old.
- She has done her FA and is a teacher in a local school.
- She is the only child of a small farmer
- Sakina's mother died when she was 16 years old. Her father died two years late when she was 18.
- Knowing that as he had no sons, in accordance with Shariat law, at his death his property would go to his next male kin and not to his daughter, Sakina's father safeguarded her interests by gifting her the 5 killas of land he owns in his lifetime.
- As a young, unmarried girl it was not possible for Sakina to live alone, so when her uncle (chacha) asked her to move in with his family, she accepted the offer.
- Sakina's Chacha was keen to secure his niece's inherited 5 killas for himself and he and his wife (Sakina's chachi) began to pressurise her to marry their son.
- They argued she could not stay single forever and marriage to her cousin would maintain caste, cement family relations and secure her future.
- Sakina refused the proposal. She said her cousin was a school dropout and a wastral and she had nothing in common with him.
- The pressure continued, but was now accompanied by taunts and jibes. Her cousin also began to get familiar with her. Sakina complained to her chachi about him but got no support from her.
- Her uncle turned a blind eye to the situation.
- Around this time, a fellow teacher, Abdul proposed marriage to Sakina. She had known him for a few years and she liked him. She saw his proposal as a way out of a difficult situation and told him to send a formal marriage proposal for her to her chacha.
- Sakina's chacha turned down the proposal on the grounds that Abdul was from a different caste and the marriage would be unacceptable to the biradari. He also told Sakina to give up her job and stay at home.
- Seeing no way out of their predicament, Sakina and Abdul took matters in their own hands. Sakina slipped away from school with Abdul and went to his parents house. A nikahkwan was called and the two were married and the nikah was registered with the Union Council.
- After the nikah, Sakina informed her chacha about her nikah. She also asked him to put a good face on it and in the interests of the family's good name, accept her decision and arrange her formal 'rukhsati.
- Sakina's chacha, chachi and cousin were furious and refused to accept Sakina's nikah. They ordered Abdul's father to send her back to them if he valued his life.
- Abdul's father refused to comply because:
  - i. as a man who had exercised his right to choice in marriage, Abdul had not brought dishonour on his family.

- ii. he was not willing to let go of Sakina's 5 killas of land that would come to his family.
- iii. He said the marriage had his blessings and Sakina was a welcome addition to the family.
- Sakina's chacha said the marriage was invalid because:
  - i. it had taken place without the permission and blessings of Sakina's family. As her guardian/wali he, and not Sakina, had the right to decide her marriage.
  - ii. He also said Sakina had 'dishonoured' her family and biradari by (i) making a marriage of choice, (ii) marrying out of caste and (iii) violating traditional norms etc.
  - iii. However, because she was his dead brother's only child, he was willing to make a sacrifice for her sake and would accept the marriage if the 5 killas in Sakina's name were transferred to him. If not, Sakina should be sent back to her natal family to restore the family's/biradari's honour
- Abdul's father was unwilling to forgo the 5 killas and argued that the marriage was valid because it was solemnised according to religious requirements and registered with the Union Council in accordance with the law of the land.
- Abdul's father called for a Jirga to settle the issue.

Jirga outcomes: ask participants to come up with a fair and realistic decision that would ensure Sakina's safety and right to her property and satisfy Sakina's chacha and father-in-law.

**Exercise 2.** Using the same format as in Sakina's Story, ask the group to undertake same exercises as above for Jamila's Case.

### **Case Study 2. Jamila's Story**

- 16 year-old Jamila, who lives with her family in village in Sindh, was abducted on her way to school. She was raped and left in a nearby field, from where she made her way home.
- Her school mates, who had been with her when she was kidnapped and knew who the abductors were, had already raised a hue and cry. The news had spread like wild fire in the village.
- Her family had reported the matter to the police.
- The culprit, who was the son of a local community leader was arrested along with the local thugs who had assisted him.
- Under pressure from the rapist's father, the police refused to file an FIR.
- As the matter was now public, the rapist's family offered that the boy, who had committed rape, would make reparation by marrying Jamila and giving her the protection of his name and a future as the mother of his children.
- Traumatized by the rape and terrified of the man, Jamila rejected the offer.
- Her family/biradari were divided in its opinion. Some supported Jamila's decision, but others argued that as she was no longer a virgin no man, other than the rapist, would marry her and this was the only option she had.
- A jirga/panchayat was called to settle the matter.

### **Investigative Journalism**

The participants are presented with the barebones of the story. Their task is to track the clues and solve the mystery - or discover the reasons for Gulmina's death.

### Case Study 3 Who Killed Gulmina?

Facts of the Case: Gulmina has appendicitis and needs hospitalisation and surgery. Gulmina is not taken to hospital and dies of a perforated appendix.

#### Case Study 3. Gulmina's Story

Gulmina was 15 years old. She lived in a village on the outskirts of a small town (*this could be in KP, Sindh, Balochistan or Punjab depending on the location of the workshop*).

One morning Gulmina woke up crying with pain and told her mother that she had a very bad stomach and back ache. It was an attack of appendicitis for which she needed urgent surgery and hospital care. Her family members didn't know this and tried home remedies. Her mother, sister and brother wanted to take her to hospital but her father, chacha and dadi were against the idea. As a result of neglect Gulmina died.

#### The family had the following choices:

- Home remedies
- Local Hakim
- Local Pir for dumm
- Hospital for diagnosis and treatment

#### Why was Gulmina not taken to hospital?

The reasons could be social, economic, cultural and institutional related to poor public health service governance and

poor policy implementation such as:

- dysfunctional Basic Health Unit
- non-availability of a woman doctor at the BHU
- poor public transport
- high cost of private transport to the hospital
- Lack of female technical staff for x-ray/ultra sound, blood tests, etc., at the hospital
- Lack of money for hospital treatment
- Reluctance to spend money on a daughter for hospital treatment
- Unwillingness to take her to a male doctor
- Fear of village gossip if Gulmina is taken to the hospital or a private clinic (research findings show there is a reluctance to take young unmarried girls to a doctor or a hospital for medical care for fear of gossip based on the assumption that a hospital visit could only be for an abortion or some other problem related to pre-marital sexual relations)

Gulmina's mother, sister and younger brother wanted to take her to hospital. Why?

Her father, chacha and dadi were against the idea of a hospital. Why?

Who among the above had the power to make the final decision? Why?

Who among the above had no access to decision making? Why?

Discussion questions:

- ▶ Who killed Gulmina and what can we do to change this state of affairs?

- ▶ Why would there be gossip if Gulmina is taken to hospital?
- ▶ Fear of gossip as to the reasons for a trip to a doctor or hospital is a major factor that prevents young girl's access to medical care. What is more important – a human life or the fear of what neighbours will say? Why?
- ▶ Why is an unmarried girl's reputation more important than her life?
- ▶ Why do neighbours and family members assume that a visit to a doctor is a sign of the girl's promiscuous behaviour?
- ▶ Why do women need access to resources and decision-making (i) at home and (ii) in local bodies viz Union Councils, etc.?

**Exercise 3.** Present Gulmina's story as a dramatic performance.

Both the news report and dramatic performance must (i) take account of the various factors that could be the indirect causes of her death viz. poverty, lack of transport, patriarchal norms and values, son preference and the daughter's low status that makes her health care unimportant, fear of gossip, ignorance, reluctance to spend money on hospital care, belief and reliance on faith healers and local pirs, any other and (ii) provide solutions including actions viz. the role of the media, to be taken to prevent such deaths.

**Exercise 3.1.** Gulmina's story as discussion

**Exercise 3.2.** Gulmina's story as New Feature.

### **Case Study 4 - Shirin's Story**

#### **Shirin's Family**

- Shirin is 8 years old. She has 2 brothers aged 12 and 14 years and one sister, who is 15 years old. Shirin calls her 'Apa'.
- The other people in the house are her:
  - Mother, Father
  - Dada, Dadi
  - Chacha, Chachi their 6 month old daughter and an 8 year old son.

#### **Situation and Context**

- Among visitors to their home is Shirin's Chachi's older brother. He usually calls in the evening when all family members are at home.
  - He is very kind to the children and often brings sweets for them.
  - All the children call him Mama. He calls Shirin his little 'gurriya'.
  - One day, when the elders are not in the room, he makes her sit on his lap and squeezes her and pinches her cheek.
- ⊗ Shirin doesn't like it. It makes her feel uncomfortable.
  - ⊗ She tells her mother and dadi that she does not like Mama.
  - ⊗ Her mother scolds and tells her not to be rude.
  - ⊗ Dadi asks her why she doesn't like Mama.
  - ⊗ Shirin tells her he made her sit on his lap and squeezed her and pinched her cheek. She says it made her feel uncomfortable.

- ⊗ Amma looks stern and looks at Dadi; Dadi looks worried and tells her to stay in the inner rooms with Apa when Mama comes to visit. She also tells her to say nothing about this to anyone, especially her Chachi as it is a shameful matter and it will hurt her.
- ⊗ Shirin thinks she must have done something shameful to be told to stay in the inner room with Apa when Mama comes to visit. The secrecy confuses and makes her feel guilty.
- ⊗ It is not always easy for Shirin to stay in the inner rooms when Mama comes, especially when he tells Chachi to call all the children to come and get the sweets.
- ⊗ One day Mama comes to visit in the afternoon. Shirin's Father and Chacha at work; Apa and the boys are at school; Shirin's mother and chachi have stepped out to visit a sick neighbour and Dadi is asleep in her room.
- ⊗ Shirin is at home because she has not been well.
- ⊗ Mama calls her out and tells her that he has a surprise for her in the shed outside.
- ⊗ Shirin doesn't know what to do. She can't say "No" to him because Dadi has told her to keep quiet about not liking him and say nothing about why she should stay in the inner room when Mama visits them. If she says "No" to him, he will tell Chachi, and Chachi will be angry and scold her and call her "rude". So she goes with him.
- ⊗ Mama takes her to the shed, rapes her and leaves.

#### **Exercise 4. What happens then?**

Group Discussion based on the following questions:

##### **1. The family's immediate response to what had happened?**

- a. **As a group** - what is their main concern? Shirin's well being or fear that the news will leak out and make a scandal?
- b. **As individuals** i.e. mother, father, dadi, dada, chacha, chachi, apa.
- c. What do they say to Shirin? (individual responses)
- d. How do they treat her? (individual responses)
- e. Do they take Shirin to a doctor – or do they decide to deal with the matter quietly at home?
- f. Do they blame Shirin for going out with Mama after being told to stay in the inner room when he came to visit?
- h. Tell her she is to blame for shaming her family?
- i. Tell her what has happened is a shameful thing and she must not talk about it or tell anyone?
- j. Tell her that what has happened is a shameful thing and if people find out no one will speak to her. People will say she's a 'bad girl' and no one will want to marry her when she grows up?

**Or** - do they ...

- a. Tell her that Mama is a bad man and she is not to blame for what happened?
- b. That they will make sure that Mama never comes to their house again?
- c. Take her to a doctor and a councillor?
- d. Give her a lot of love and comfort?
- e. Report the rape to the police?

##### **2. Would Shirin's story have had a different ending if:**

- a. her mother and dadi had: (i) told Shirin that it was wrong of Mama to behave in this way and she should say "No!" to him next time he tells her to sit in his lap, (ii) told her father, dada, chacha and chachi about Mama's behaviour?
- b. Politely but firmly told Mama not to fondle and touch the children?
- c. Not allowed him to be alone with the children?

- d. Providing Shirin and her siblings with basic information/life skills on child safety especially their RIGHT TO SAY NO?

**The Final and most Important question to be asked: what is more important – (i) maintaining family relations and avoiding gossip, (ii) a child’s safety?, (iii) family honour.**

Ask participants to fill in the details of the story through group discussion. This will enable them to explore different aspects of the case for a more holistic understanding of the situation. These aspects or factors could include: taboo on life skill learning for children; the dangers of silence regarding child safety; social and cultural norms regarding women’s virginity etc

**Exercise 5.** Using the above information, rewrite Shirin’s Story with a different ending

### Case Study 5

Ratna was the 13 year old daughter of a low caste Hindu mazara (tenant farmer) in a village in Sindh. Dependent for their livelihood on the favour of the wadera on whose land he worked, and the munshi who represented him, the family’s position was little better that that of slaves. One day, the munshi’s eye fell on Ratna. He waylaid her in the field and raped her. He took Ratna to his dera and informed her family, that she had become a Muslim and had agreed to marry him. He refuses to let Ratna see her family because as a Muslim she should have no dealings with non-Muslims.  
What happens then ....?

**Exercise 5.1** Divide participants into groups and ask them to complete Ratna’s story.

**Exercise 5.2** Write a feature on the issue of abduction, rape and forced marriage and conversion to Islam of Hindu girls in Pakistan.

## Module 3

### The Infection in the Sentence

#### Word Games

The exercises in this section are based on 'Word Games' that will enable participants to see:

- How language-use, cliches, stereotypes define gender roles and male and female behaviour.
- The gap between stereotypes, representation and ground realities
- The part played by social norms and economic arrangements in maintaining established gender roles

**The aim of these exercises is to enable participants to see, assess and critique how gendered stereotypes shape our perceptions of women's and men's capacities and roles in society.**

#### Exercise 1

##### Oral exercise

Time: 1 hour max. (Divide the time equally between the word game and discussion session)

Materials: 3 Flip chart stands, sheets of chart paper, scotch tape, Red, Green, Blue and Black thick tipped board markers; typed lists of words naming the qualities and characteristics that people have. (make sure you have enough copies of this list to go around)

List the words in Urdu unless English is the preferred language of the group.

- i. Draw two vertical lines down the Flip Chart. Write **Men** on top of one section, **Women** on top of the second and **Transgender/Khwaja Sara** on top of the third section.
- ii. Turn by turn, ask each participant to pick out and name one quality that men have and one job they can do, but which women and Trans can't do, and one quality that women have and one job they can do that men and Trans cannot do.
- iii. Ask each participant if the quality they have identified for a man is missing entirely in the woman and trans and vice a versa. E.g. if a participant identifies 'bravery' as a male quality, ask whether women and or trans are incapable of bravery? If participants say that women and trans too can be brave, write 'bravery' in all women's. Similarly, if a participant says women can cook, ask whether this is something men and/or trans can or cannot do? If they say men and trans can cook, write 'cooking' in all male and trans columns.

Once all participants have contributed to the list, ask them if anyone wants to add to the list. Following the same procedure, add their suggestions to the list.

**Note:** Participants are being asked to note down ‘capacities’ or qualities that women and men have and the kinds of work they are capable of doing. *This is not to be confused with their socially allocated roles and functions.*

As you go down the list provided by participants, you will find that, with the exception of reproductive functions/capacities, women, men and trans have the same capacities.

Participant responses open up space cum discussion for a critical examination of socially allocated gender-based characteristics and qualities and biases.

## **Exercise 2. Cliches and Stereotypes vs Ground Realities**

Time: 1 hour

Oral exercise

Approach: participatory/interactive

Material: Flip chart stand, flip charts, thick tipped coloured markers.

**Purpose:** this exercise enables participants to (i) check out the ‘truth’ of clichés, stereotypes and popular sayings against ground realities so as to move towards an objective and critical perception of received ideas, (ii) to question and review popular claims/statements that are used as arguments against women’s equal access to rights, decision-making, agency and resources and male entitlement to them.

**Preparation:** Resource Persons will need to have on hand data/news reports, etc., on incidents of domestic violence, rape, child abuse, women headed households including those where women are the main breadwinners.

**Special Focus** on language use/abuse that either debases women or denies them agency. This will be necessary to highlight the ground realities that lie hidden behind these sayings.

Beti Allah ki Rahmat Hai  
Humara taalūq behaya muashra se nahin hai  
Aurat ka asli zaivar shauhar hai  
We are a traditional culture  
Aurat ghar ki zeenat hai  
Aurat ghar ki rani hai  
Aurat ghar ki izzat hai  
Aurat ki kammai mein barkat nahin hoti  
Meri biwi kaam nahin karti  
Boy’s don’t Cry!

**Method and preparation:** Allocating one ‘saying’ per sheet of chart paper, write it at the top of the chart paper. To save time, prepare these sheets before the workshop. If required use additional sheets for participants’ comments.

**Step 1.** Turn by turn, ask participants to: (i) Explain the meaning of the saying, (ii) Comment on it - do they agree with it? Why? Do they disagree with it? Why?

Allow space for discussion and exchange of ideas. Note their comments on the Flip Chart.

**Step 2.** When everyone has made their comments, ask them to test each saying against ground realities.



This will open up space for discussion enabling a critical examination of received ideas.

**Step 3.** Concluding remarks by participants and Resource Person (if needed)

**Note:** It is strongly recommended that the tips for Resource Persons are NOT used to lead the discussion. This exercise will have greater impact if participants arrive at their own conclusions/solutions.

What do participants personally feel they need to do to close the gap between what they say and what they do and how they use these phrases in their news reports/features, etc.

ii. Once the list is complete, open up the discussion on:

- The contexts and situations in which (i) women and men exercise these qualities, and (ii) the ways in which they exercise them. Note the differences if any.
- The factors that prevent or enable women and men from exercising some and not other of their given capacities and qualities. E.g. both women and men have the capacity to care for others - yet only women are seen as nurturers and caregivers. This prevents men from developing their nurturing/caring capacity including how to handle emotions.
- What are the factors that prevent men from exercising their capacity for nurturing, caring and looking after little children, such as changing pampers?
- How do social perceptions shape our way of looking at women and men?
- How do our perceptions shape the way women and men are represented in the media?
- Individually ask participants: the reason for their choice. (This will ensure that everyone is actively engaged in the activity)
- Ask participants if and how this exercise has effected their views on male/female capacities and the work they can do.

**Exercise 2. Gendering meaning.** This exercise shows how the same words/qualities acquire different meanings for women and men. E.g. when man makes up his mind to do something and abides by his decision despite opposition from others, the word normally used for him is 'Firm' 'Zubaan ka pakka'. When a woman behaves in the same, she may be called 'Firm' but more usually is referred to as stubborn or headstrong.

Similarly, the same words change meaning when used for men and women. For example, if we say 'Ahmad is a 'free man' (azad mard), it is a positive comment as we are speaking about a man who is not a slave (ghulam); when we say, 'Pakistan a free country (azad mulk)' we are speaking about a sovereign state. In both cases the word free is seen as a positive and desirable quality. But when we say, 'Samina is a free woman' (azad aurat), the word 'free' takes on a negative meaning as it indicates that Samina acknowledges no constraints on her behaviour, or has no man to guide and protect her, either because she is a widow or that she is a 'bad' woman who has rejected the protection of the men in her family to claim independence in her own right. We also know that the adjective 'free' or 'azad' is also used for 'prostitutes'.

This exercise is divided into 2 parts: in Activity 1 participants list male/female characteristic on the

given chart; in Activity 2 the discuss the reasons for these differences and the ways in which they (i) impact of women's and men's lives and (ii) on the way in which the media represents women and men.

Material: same as in Exercise 1.

Activity 1.

- i. draw up two Charts - one for women and one for men . Divide it into 2 columns. Write 'Negative Quality/behaviour' on top of one column and 'Positive Quality/Behaviour' on top of the other.
- ii. Distribute the list of qualities and character traits given below to all participants.
- iii. Turn by turn ask participants to (i) name one negative and one positive quality, character trait for women and one for men. Write these down in the appropriate columns. Allow space for additional words by participants.

### SAMPLE CHART

Women		Men	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative

#### Word List:

Characteristics: Firm, gentle, delicate, weak, beautiful, handsome, graceful, stubborn, decisive, brave, courageous, strong, rational, reliable, logical, emotional, irrational, wayward, inconsistent, deceitful, honest, faithful, unfaithful, homebody, friendly, sociable, dutiful, headstrong, timid, bold, spendthrift, open handed, petty, mean, vindictive, honourable, free, quarrelsome, reasonable, unreasonable, true to their word, stubborn, rigid, irrational, silly, weak, delicate, strong, talkative, quiet, argumentative, conniving, clever, intelligent, organised, managing, careful, stingy, cautious, modest, shy, soft-spoken, coy, virtuous, honest, faithful, loyal, etc.

Activities: gossiping, chatting, shopping, giggling, discussing, working, earning a living, spending money, telling lies, cheating, flirting, etc

**Activity 2:** Discussion on why some behaviour/qualities that are positive for women are seen as negative for men and vice versa.

#### Exercise 3. 'My Wife Doesn't Work'/ 'I'm just a housewife.'

This exercise is based on the commonly heard comment by men and women about housewives and other women who don't do paid work.

Time: 1 hour

Material: Chart paper and thick tipped red and green or blue markers

Activity:

- i. If participants comprise both women and men, separate the women and men and divide them into groups of five or more depending on group size. If the group consists of only men or women, then divide them into smaller groups of equal size.
- ii. Ask the group to chart out the day in the life of an average family starting from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed at night.
- iii. Once the chart is made, ask participants to count the working hours of each family member

including unpaid housework.

- iv. Ask participants to reassess the statements 'My wife doesn't work/I am just a house wife' and see if these statements ' have any basis in fact'.

The format for the Assessment and list of family members is given below.

Suggestion: based on the given format prepare these charts before the workshop.

Assess the number of expected participants and make as many copies of the chart as needed with a few extra for safety.

### **Chart Format**

<b>Household Members:</b>	<b>Earning relaxation time</b>	<b>Non-earning workhours</b>	<b>School going financial cost of household chores</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

Wife

Husband

Daughters (age group)

Sons (age group)

Infants below the age of 5;

Other household members: father-in-law; mother-in-law, brother-in-law; sister-in-law, other household members including domestic help.

### **Daily Chores/activities costing a 7 hour working day plus overtime**

Household Budgeting

Household Management

Making and serving breakfast

Washing breakfast dishes/cleaning the kitchen

Reading the newspaper

Watching early morning TV show

Getting the children ready for school

Taking children to school and bringing them back

Looking after non-school going children

Going out to work

Household shopping

Cooking lunch/dinner

Cleaning, sweeping, dusting, washing and ironing clothes

Making the beds

Looking after elderly parents

Looking after younger children

Serving lunch/dinner, washing dishes and cleaning kitchen

Maintaining social relations: visiting neighbours and relations etc.

Watching TV

Entertaining visitors

Going to the park,

Spending time with friends,

Doing homework, helping children with homework

Partying

Any other...

The participants only have to (i) add the names of people responsible for these chores, (ii) count the

work hours of each family member, (iii) assess the financial cost of each household task, i.e., how much money would they pay for it to an employee, to see for themselves whether the above statements are correct viz. Group reassessment of 'My Wife Doesn't Work' and 'I am just a housewife'.

The same format can be used for rural families. In this case women's paid and unpaid agricultural work should be included.

## Module 4

### The Squint in the Eye 2

#### Stereotypes

This section shows:

How pictures and images can be used to promote a particular way of looking at people

How the 'eye' or 'gaze' of the camera is built on culturally defined notions of gender difference and socially allocated roles of women and men

The use of stereotypes and cultural myths by the media to produce a particular kind of meaning that denigrates women in public office.

For Resource Person and facilitators, a critique of each image is provided in italics for each set of the images. This critique will be followed by exercises based on the given images and supporting narratives

#### Women's representation in the Media

##### Clip 1. Fact based information and representation.

The Equality Opportunity for Women Employment Bill, 2005; the Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill, 2005; and the Hudood Laws (Repeal) Bill, 2005, moved by Ms. Sherry Rehman, MNA (PPP)



This set of images is of smart and well dressed women parliamentarians. These images, which are accompanied by information on their contribution to legislation for women's rights, show that women can dress well and work efficiently, intelligently and responsibly.

**Sherry Rehman, MNA (PPP):** Bills moved: The Equal Opportunity for Women Employment Bill, 2005; The Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill, 2005; Hudood Laws (Repeal) Bill, 2005

**Farida Ahmad Siddiqi, MNA (MMA):** Bills moved: The prohibition of Marriage with the Holy Quran Bill, 2005; The Dowry and Bridal Gift Restriction Bill, 2005

The Prohibition of Marriage with the Holy Quran Bill, and the Dowry and Bridal Gifts Restriction Bill, 2005 by Dr. Farida Ahmad Siddiqi, MNA (MNA)



The Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2004, the Offence of Zina Enforcement of Hudood (Amendment) Bill, 2005, and the Offence of Qazf Enforcement of Hudood (Amendment) Bill, 2005 by Ms. Kashmala Tariq, MNA (PMLQ)



**Kashmala Tariq, MNA (PMLQ) Bills moved:**The Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2004; The Offence of Zina Enforcement of Hudood (Amendment) Bill, 2005; The Offence of Qazf Enforcement of Hudood (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

**Marvi Menon, Shahnaz Sheikh and Advocate Anusha Rehman, MNAs (PMLQ) tabled The Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention Bill, 2011. The Bill was re-tabled by Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar**

The Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention Bill, 2011 by Ms. Marvi Memon, Begum Shahnaz Sheikh (PMLQ) and Advocate Ms. Anusha Rehman MNA's (PML-Q). It was re-tabled by Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar.



The Protection of Serving Women Bill, 2005, the Inheritance for Women Bill, 2005, the Economic Stability of Women Bill, 2005, the Hudood Law's Effective Enforcement and Protection Bill, 2005, by Ms. Saima Raheel Qazi, MNA (JI)



**Samia Raheel Qazi, MNA (JI) moved The Protection of Serving Women Bill, 2005; The Inheritance for Women Bill, 2005; the Economic Stability of Women Bill, 2005; The Hudood Laws Effective Enforcement Bill, 2005.**

**Beelum Hasnain and Samina Khalid Ghurki, MNAs (PPP) moved The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2005**

The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2005, the Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2005 by Ms. Beelum Hasnain and Ms. Samina Ghurki, MNAs (PPP)



The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2005, by Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaimkhawani, MPA (PPP)



**Rubina Saadat Qaimkhawani, MPA (PPPP)** moved The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2005

**Sughra Imam, Senator (PPP)** tabled and saw to the successful passage of The Anti Rape Law 2013 and the Anti Honour Killing Bill, 2014

The Anti Rape Law, 2013 and Anti Honor Killing Law 2014 by Sughra Imran, Senator (PPP)



The Child Marriage Prohibition Bill, 2013 by Hina Pervaiz Butt, MPA (PMLQ)



**Hina Pervaiz Butt, MPA (PMLQ)** moved The Child Marriage Prohibition Bill, 2013

**Sharmila Farooqi, MPA (PPP)** moved the Sindh Prohibition of Dowry Bill, 2013; The Mandatory DNA Testing Bill

The Sindh Prohibition of Dowry Bill, 2013; The Mandatory DNA Testing Bill by Sharmila Farooqi, MPA (PPP)



The Pakistan  
Citizenship  
(Amendment) Bill,  
2005, the  
Establishment of the  
Office of Wafaqi  
Women Mohtasib Bill,  
2005, by Ms. Mehnaz  
Rafi MPA (PML-Q)



**Mehnaz Rafi**, MPA (PML-Q) tabled The Pakistan Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2005; The Establishment of the Office of Wafaqi Woman Mohtasib Bill 2005 and The Senior Citizen's Bill 2005

The following examples shows that women's parliamentary activities are not limited to 'women's issues' alone but include subjects such as education etc. They provide evidence of the fact that they work with male members of parliament as well in Women's Parliamentary Caucuses.

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF GUJRAT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2008 (Bill 8 of 2008)**

12th August 2008 | Private Member Bill

Movers:

Ch. MoonisElahi

Ch. Abdullah Yousaf Warraich

**Samia Amjad**

**Amna Ulfat**

**Samina Khawar Hayat**

**Syeda Bushra Nawaz Gardezi**

### **Pursuit of self- interest: When parliamentarians agree across partylines!**

#### **Excerpts from: Perks and privileges of parliamentarians enhanced**

by Sultan Hali (LAST UPDATED JUNE 22, 2018)

*The government and the opposition may have their horns locked in the parliament but whenever a bill is tabled enhancing their perks, however surreptitiously; it is immediately passed without debate or discussion. On 31 May 2018, PML-N government completed its tenure of five years, however, furtively, just a few hours before the departure of government; the national exchequer was mercilessly put under severe burden by announcing undue and unjustified perks and privileges to outgoing parliamentarians and their families. Federal government enhanced perks and privileges of sitting and former parliamentarians and their spouses by amending the two general laws through the Finance Act 2018.*

*The acting president, Sadiq Sanjrani, gave his consent to the Finance Act 2018 that includes amendments in Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) Act 1974 and Chairman and Speaker (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act 1975. Both these laws have been separately passed by the National Assembly and the Senate and do not fall in the Money Bill definition....*

*All these additional perks and allowances were never debated at any stage of budget scrutiny either in the Senate Standing Committee of Finance or in the National Assembly. Salaries and allowances of the members of parliament, Senate chairman and speaker National Assembly are governed by these two laws.*

*Through an amendment in the Members of Parliament Act of 1974, the government has extended the free air travel by the parliamentarians to all the Pakistani airlines. Earlier, the parliamentarians' entitlement was limited to only Pakistan International Airlines.*



.... Each member of the parliament is entitled to avail up to Rs300,000 worth of free air travel within Pakistan. Through another amendment, the government has enhanced the business class travel for attending the assembly sessions from 20 trips to 25 trips from and to Islamabad from anywhere in the country. This is in addition to Rs300,000 air travel.

A member and ex-member shall be entitled to the same medical facilities as are admissible to an officer of BPS-22 of the federal government, according to the new amendment.

There are 342 members of the National Assembly and 104 members of the Senate in addition to hundreds of former parliamentarians and their spouses.

... the government has also allowed the former parliamentarians and their spouses to retain "the gratis official (blue) passport", which will make them entitled to VVIP treatment anywhere in Pakistan and in the world at the expense of the taxpayers ... and doubled the monthly honorarium of the chairmen of the standing committees from Rs12,700 to Rs25,000 per month. This is in addition to their monthly salaries and other perks and privileges.

A member elected as the chairman of a standing committee of a house shall, in addition to the salary, allowances and facilities admissible as a member will now be entitled to Rs 25,000 honorarium, the services of a private secretary in basic pay scale-17, stenographer in basic pay scale 15, driver in basic pay scale-4 and one Naib Qasid in basic pay scale 1, telephone facility in the office to a limit of Rs10,000 per month and office accommodation with necessary furniture and equipment.

The acting president has also approved an amendment in the Chairman and Speaker (Salaries, Allowances and Privileges) Act, 1975, making the deputy speaker eligible for all the perks and privileges that are currently available to the Speaker.

### Sample of typical male parliamentary behaviour:

DEROGATORY REMARKS BREACH DECORUM OF THE HOUSE. On 27th May 2004, Syed IhsanUllah Waqas, MPA (PP-154) used some derogatory remarks about female Members which ignited uproar by the lady Members in the House. The Chairman, Rai Ijaz Ahmad, MPA adjourning the House till 01:00 pm, stated that the decision would be announced after listening to the tape recording.

Derogatory and insulting remarks by male parliamentarians about female colleagues is an ongoing part of male behaviour in parliament. Other than the fact that such remarks are insulting and offensive, they indignify parliament, and deflect attention from serious issues. They also reflect a deep rooted gender bias.

The antagonism women parliamentarians face from male colleagues testifies to their courage and staying power. Given the quality of work they do, it is ample proof not just of their commitment but of their capability as parliamentarians.

**Note:**The material and information provided in this section will be used in Workshop Exercises given in the last section of this Module.

The first set of images provided examples of the work done by women parliamentarians, 'Fashion Ka Jalwa' falls back on stereotypical representation and portrays women parliamentarians as fashion

plates. These images reduces the parliamentarians to the cliché of fashion-mad consumers who have nothing to do with serious matters such as politics, legislation, etc. The overall message of these images, which is negative, emphasises women’s unsuitability for politics through an audio-visual narrative based on the stereotype of women as economically unproductive consumers making dishonest use of public resources because they:

- are interested only in dressing up and displaying the latest fashions,
- waste their money on clothes, make up, etc.,
- are sex objects,
- are not interested in the affairs of the state,
- don’t have the brains to address affairs of the state,
- use parliament only to display their clothes and assert their importance, etc.,
- women in parliament are a waste of public money.
- women parliamentarians are the mouthpieces of their husbands.

**Itemisation as Representational Technique:** Instead of showing the full picture of the subject -in this case images of women parliamentarians - this technique presents their body parts separately as independent ‘items’. This technique (i) dehumanises women (ii) turns them into objects of display (iii) instead of showing women parliamentarians as persons, the camera itemises their bodies by focusing on their feet, toe nails, hands, portions of their dress etc. (iv) sets them up as sex objects (iv) draws upon and reinforces the stereotype of woman as mindless consumers viz women spend all their time and money of fashion etc. (v) women dress up to show off their physical beauty and attract men, vi. trivialises their work and makes fun of them as public figures as it reduces the missing body/ person to the shown body part which stands in for the missing body/human person.

Let us see how it works -



**Image 1** shows a pair of a woman’s disembodied feet in white sandals. This dehumanises the woman as (i) it reduces her to her feet, (ii) the sandalled feet are seen as an ‘item’ that can be evaluated on its own. This turns the woman into an object and devalues her. In this case, the message conveyed by the white sandals and painted toe nails is (i) that here is a woman who has the time and money to buy sandals and manicure and paint her toe nails, (ii) that this is all that there is to the woman.

**Image 2** This time the focus is on the woman’s clothes and accessories- on her embroidered kamiz and trendy handbag. This image removes the distinction between the human person and the clothes she wears and reduces the woman’s value and identity to the objects she owns.



The message is again of someone who has the time and money to spend on expensive and trendy clothes. Seen in the context of women parliamentarians, this is a negative message as it emphasises the stereotype of women as consumers who are unfit for politics.



**Image 3** Shows the upper part of the face viz the eyes. Not only is half the face missing or truncated, with the exception of the eyes, the rest of the face is hidden behind a veil or hijab.

On their own, the eyes with well shaped brows and eyeliner play into the orientalist mystique of the 'harem' woman and project the woman parliamentarian as sex object and fashionplate.

The image delinks her from her role as parliamentarian with specific political affiliations. At the same time it conveys the following conflicting messages:

- i. that a woman is a sex object who should stay hidden. Her place is in the home and behind the hijab. As such, (i) she has no role in the political/public affairs of the country and (ii) women who don't wear the hijab are not properly dressed for public life. This message continues with the images of disembodied heads

**Image 4** Lacking both body and context, this is just a picture of a smiling face. The lipstick, casual hairstyle and relaxed expression present the woman at ease in a non-working mood, not as a working woman/member of parliament at the entrance of the Punjab Provincial Assembly.



**Image 5** The head and torso of a woman in a public space. It could be a street or a bazaar. It tells us nothing about who she is, where she is and what she does

**Image 6** Another disembodied head of a woman parliamentarian with a smiling face. It tells us nothing about her.





**Image 7** Shows 3 quarters of a woman caught in the act of patting her hair in place. The body language is casual - she could be at home or at a party. There is nothing to indicate that she is in the Punjab Assembly building.

As part of a series of itemised images of decontextualised feet, handbags, hairstyles, faces of women parliamentarians, accompanied by a jigging tune, promote stereotypes and cultural myths about women as consumers and fashionplates and negates, trivialises and denigrates their role and work as parliamentarians.

## Advertisements – selling gender biases – reinforcing patriarchy

The stated aim and purpose of advertisements is to sell goods.

In order to do this successfully, an advertisement has to be interesting –

- It has to grab viewer interest and present its wares in a way that will tap viewers' desires and make them want to buy their product.
- To do this, copywriters produce narrative clips that use combinations of 'trendy' catch-words and images in ways that entice viewers/buyers with what is promoted as 'new' and 'desirable'.
- As the aim of commercial advertisements is to sell a product and not to draw attention to social problem issues, they normally rely on stereotypes and mainstream gender roles to relay their message.
- As stereotypes and mainstream gender roles are part of the viewers' familiar world, copywriters use them strategically to add to viewer comfort and engage viewer interest in ways that enable them to promote the advertised product.
- In the process, whether deliberately or unconsciously, advertisements usually end up reinforcing traditional gender roles and class biases.
- In order to facilitate communication and make their message interesting, advertisements are based on mini-stories or narratives. As a result, they sell not just the product but also lifestyles.

Given the above, advertisements carry two kinds of messages:

- ▶ The obvious – or stated message viz 'Buy This Product'
- ▶ The unstated ideological message that contextualises and frames the stated message in ways that create a market for that product.

The unstated message is communicated at a subliminal or unconscious level, i.e., its ideological content is not consciously utilised as a sales technique. As this message seeps into the mind unconsciously, viewers are not even aware of the political implications of what they are being told and sold. For example, if we see a trendy woman or man eating particular brand of icecream or biscuit, we will want to eat the product but also unconsciously accept the couple's lifestyle as desired norm. E.g. the kind of shops, restaurants and designer boutiques they go to. Similarly if we see the same product being eaten at iftari where a little girl is shown serving her brother before sitting down to eat herself - although both of them are fasting - we will accept the little girl's subservient role as normal and natural.

The advertisement of Walls Kulfi - 'Chhotti ki Gol Roti', shows how advertisements use gender-based stereotypes to make meaning and sell their product.

This Ad. will be followed by a news clip that shows the darker side of the same message in real life. Together they will enable us to see the importance of critically engaging with visual and verbal texts in order to understand and assess the impact of stereotypes on our lives.



**Walls Kulfi - the advertised product.**



Two small hands pressing a round object between them. The rest of the picture is deliberately blurred. Viewers don't know to whom these hands belong and what they are doing, This excites their curiosity and captures their interest. (It is a good story telling technique)

The story unfolds as the camera moves from the hands to the face. Viewers see that the hands belong to a little girl, and the story takes another step onwards.

The girl's facial expression shows her (i) involvement in what she is doing (ii) her interest and excitement in the task. The blurred image of a woman watching the girl intently conveys the message that the rest of the story is still to be told. Taken together, they further arouse viewer interest / curiosity





Secondary / subliminal message: the girl is well dressed, well-groomed and well fed. Therefore she is not from a poor family. Combined with the pastel colours and soft lines, the image adds to viewer comfort as it ensures them that they are not about to see a disturbing narrative of poverty and hardship.

It also sets the frame for upwardly mobile aspirations and consumerist desires.

Side view of the little girl's face. She is smiling and turning to look at the woman in the background. Clearly she has something to tell or share...

The camera shifts from the girl to the woman who is now in sharp focus as opposed to the girl whose face is turned away from the camera. The woman's facial expression shows amazement and pleasure...



... that changes to a delighted smile and a hand gesture indicating 'Well done!'



The woman (mother) stands in the doorway of a dining room where the family viz father, brothers and another woman are sitting at a meal. The little girl is standing behind the woman and cannot be seen by the people in the dining room.

The mother announces Chotti's achievement with a celebratory 'tan tarra!'



The people in the dining room have interrupted their meal. Their body language expresses interest and excitement. The little girl is invisible. The focus is on her achievement





The camera continues to focus on the mother and family members. Now viewers catch a glimpse of the little girl, who is still half hidden

The little girl comes centre stage with her achievement - viz 'the perfect gol roti'.

The mystery of the initial image of the two little hands is revealed and we move to the next stage of the story ...



Finally the camera focuses on the little girl and the gol roti. Chhotti looks expectant but unsure of how the family will respond to the gol roti she has made



Still holding the gol roti, she looks at her brother. Her face is solemn ... questioning ... unsure. She is awaiting approbation



Chhotti and her gol roti with the same serious face. She is still not sure of her family's response.

Technically, this adds an element of suspense to the narrative. The time that it takes for the family to praise Chhotti sends the unstated message that (i) girls need to be accepted and appreciated by others before they can recognise their own achievement, and (ii) have to work hard for the approval of others including and or particularly their family.

Finally – delight and appreciation by the father who laughs and claps his hands along with other family members



Chhotti with the gol roti as the mother ushers her into the room to the family's applause



Chhotti with the gol roti as family continues to be appreciative. Finally Chhotti smiles

Now the brother takes the gol roti and holds it up for display. There is a clear demarcation of roles here. No hint of brother or father learning to make a gol roti. Message: it is Chhotti's job to make rotis and the men's job is to appreciate her for making them well.



Chhotti gets her reward for making the gol roti as she sits on her father's lap, the mother puts a spoonful of icecream in her mouth and the brother looks on and smiles delightedly



Narrative message of the advertisement: Wall's King Kulfi and Happy Families where women and men know their place/roles in the family hierarchy, go together.

Link the message of the ad to its title. Note: the generic use of 'Chhotti' who does not have a specific name. This: (i) universalises the message for all 'chhottis' or little girls, (ii) reinforces the perception of women's subordinate status as perennial 'non-adults'.

Impact: Viewer comfort levels maintained through a celebration of the following stereotypes: (i) the happy united family eating together (ii) Chhotti and her mother serving food to the family (iii) assurance of future family happiness with Chhotti as her mother's helper and future wife and mother.

These stills have been taken from the advertisement that can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55YqWp6Mglk>.

If possible first show the film clip and then move to the 'stills' for a detailed examination and analysis. Group discussion on Chhotti ki Gol Roti should be followed up by next news item/images that show us the 'other side' of Chhotti's Gol Roti – of what can happen if she does not or cannot make the 'gol roti. It draws attention to the gap between the desired image of a happy middle class family and the ground realities of a society where the majority are deprived of the basic comforts and chhotti's gol roti can translate into violence.

## The Dark Side of Chhotti's Gol Roti – 12 year old murdered for not making a proper roti

From the imagined world of advertisement to the real world of news:

**Caption: Breaking News – Resident of Shadbagh, Lahore, 12 year old Aisha's murder mystery solved**



**News Heading** 'Failure to make a proper roti leads the father assisted by his son to kill his daughter.

**News Clip 1** Image of the murdered girl.



**Image 2:** handcuffed father and police officer

**Caption 1:** 'Handcuffed father admits the murder of his daughter'

**Caption 2:** Father, assisted by his son, kills his daughter on her failure to make a proper roti

**Image 3:** Murdered girl while still alive



**Image 4:** Aisha's brother

**Caption 3:** Aisha's killer brother with policemen





**Image 5:** Aisha's father and brother

**Caption:** Stone-hearted father and brother turn out to be the murderers of school girl Aisha

**Image 6:** Aisha's killer father acknowledges crime without any remorse.

**His statement:** *'Bus mein ne apko bataa diya hai, yeh sach or jhoot ki jung hai. Agar aap ke ghar mein bhi aisa koi massala hoga na, apko barhay achay tareekay say samajh aye gi, aap ko mujhe samjhana nahin parayga.'*



*Yeh hadsati taur per hua hai, is ka meray zehn o ghuman mein bhi nahin tha ke yeh ho jayega.'*

**Translation:** I have told you – this is a battle between right and wrong; between truth and falsehood. If a similar situation arises in your home – then you will understand very well – then I won't have to explain/justify my actions to you.

It happened in the heat of the moment – I had never imagined such a thing could happen.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7tYbPJnmVA>

The point to be remembered is that actions that happen 'in the heat of the moment' are those which are integral to our ways of thinking and behaving. They are the reflex actions that don't merit thought. Clearly a girl's inability to cook or make a gol roti is seen as a violation of her natural role in life and moral duty for which she deserves punishment – even death.

The news report of a 12 year old's murder for her failure to make a proper roti, reveals the dark side of the cliches and stereotypes on which the Wall's Kulfi ad is based. Its message of 'happy families' who reward their daughters with Kulfi when they make perfect gol rotis is subverted as it shows how precarious this reward is and how quickly it can turn to violence if a girl fails to live up

to her expected role or fails to perform her expected 'duties'.

Resource persons can deepen this discussion with reference to the Aurat March slogans - '*Apna Khana Khud Garam Karo*' - '*Mujhe Kiya Pataa Tumhara Mauza Kahan Hai*' to involve participants in discussion on why these slogans caused so much anger in the general public and the media. (See page 58)

### Questioning gender roles – challenging patriarchy

Advertisements 2 and 3, also have a commercial purpose and sell given objects by using stories that capture viewer interest. The difference between them and Chhotti ki Gol Roti lies in that while the lifestyles they depict are similar to those in the Chhotti advertisement, they raise questions about mainstream norms to promote their goods.

Doing the same thing differently ...

'**Change is Beautiful**' is an Indian advertisement sponsored by an insurance company that promotes itself by showing that it is in sync with changing times and therefore best suited to the insurance needs of a rising middleclass, which is the numerically largest group with buying power.

It communicates its message through the familiar narrative of matchmaking rituals in South Asia where brides are selected on the basis of family status, looks and domestic skills such as cooking and serving meals etc. The context is not too different from that of 'Chhotti ki Gol Roti'. Where the 'Chhotti; Ad. shows a little girl being trained for marriage and a mother who is successfully performing the role of a 'good' mother, 'Change is Beautiful' takes us to the next socially allocated stage of a girl's life where she waits to be 'viewed and chosen' as a bride by prospective in-laws. However, this narrative trajectory is different from that of "Chhotti ki gol roti".

This ad contains 2 stated messages one of which is direct and explicit and the other which is indirect and subliminal.

#### Stated Message

1. The ad explicitly problematises and resolves two issues:
  - i. the matchmaking ritual of 'viewing' the girl by prospective inlaws for marriage, which positions the girl as an 'object' to be seen for selection or rejection.
  - ii. questions and challenges the belief and practice that housework is the woman's sole responsibility with no input expected from the husband or other men in the family.
2. Issued by an insurance company, it promotes the organisation directly and subliminally as modern and forwardlooking.

## Change is Beautiful



**Clips 1-4** show a girl in front of a dressing table. The first 4 images her back is towards the viewers who see her face as reflected in the dressing table mirror.

The girl is dressed in a soft shade of festive red. The embroidery on her kamiz shows that she is dressed formally - perhaps for a wedding

The camera catches her in the process of making up her face, etc.



Viewers do not know what occasion she is dressing up for, but her festive clothes and the snatch from a wedding song in the background, indicate a wedding.

The sound track of a traditional wedding song creates a mood of nostalgia and loss associated with the bride's departure from the home.

In this context the pensive look on the girl's face would not be unexpected except that in this case the look is not just pensive - it is also troubled. Continued camera focus on the girl's face draws attention to her facial expression and the slow almost reluctant process of getting ready.





This i. arouses viewer curiosity, ii. creates a mood of expectation e.g., is the girl getting ready for her own wedding? Or a friend's? Is she unhappy about it? Why?

Subliminal Message: As in 'Chhotti ki Gol roti', the setting is of an affluent middleclass home as expected/desired norm. This appeals to viewer comfort level as it reassures them that they are not about to see some dowry related horror story.



The father enters the scene and stands in the doorway. He (i) expresses surprise and disapproval that the girl is still not ready and (ii) informs her that 'they' or the guests have arrived and she should hurry up and join them.

The girl, who is still seen as a reflection in the mirror, does not look at him and says nothing.



The father repeats his injunction and tells her to hurry up and join the guests.



For the first time the girl speaks and asks if it is possible to make a life's decision on the basis of 'two samosas'?

This is the first time we see her face directly.

This indicates her direct engagement with the situation - as a person and not as a reflection in a mirror.

Her question solves the mystery of the worried look and takes the narrative a step further by raising the next question which leads to her father's possible response.

This clip of the father shows a break with his earlier mood as he pauses for a minute as if struck by his daughter's question

He doesn't respond to her question; just tells her to hurry up and come down.

We have no idea what he thinks of his daughter's question. This sharpens viewer curiosity and takes the story a stage further.



The girl sits silently. Her role is of a passive observer. She is framed by the window and a pair of arms (of the two mothers) as the girl's mother hands a cup of tea to the boy's mother.

The gesture symbolises and anticipates the handing over of the daughter by her family to the boy's family



The tea ceremony over - now to business -

The proposal is made: 'Hummay aap ki Payal bohat pasand aee.'

(We like your Payal very much)

The use of 'Your Payal' affirms the girl's position as the property of her family and reassures viewers that patriarchal family norms are in place.

So far the ritual has been followed - except that the father, instead of accepting the proposal, makes it conditional on his family's visit to the boy's home.



The boy's parents exchange a bemused look....they're not sure what the father's request is leading to ... 'Of course,' says the mother, 'but why?'



'You have seen our daughter and what she can do; we would like to see what your son can do like cooking, etc.'

boy's parents are taken aback but also amused at the idea of their son knowing how to cook ...

'He can barely boil an egg or perhaps heat up a packet of noodles'

Expression and tone reflect their opinion of the absurdity of the father's demand



'Yes, but my daughter can't be expected to live only on boiled eggs and noodles'.

The father's request and subsequent statement have done two things - they have (i) questioned the gendered division of labour and (ii) challenge the assumption that the boy and his family have the unilateral right to check out and select the girl on the basis of a viewing visit and that the boy is beyond criticism 'and there is no need to check him for his personal qualities and skills.



The image of the girl shows relief ...

The change in the girl's expression and posture shows that from being a passive actor in the viewing/selection ritual, she is now an active but still silent participant



The mood of the boy's parents is different - it could be disappointed - disapproving - or both

They look at each other as if to say this is a 'no go' situation.

Normally at this point, the boy and his family would leave and that would be the end of the story. This is where the narrative and the ad. make a point of departure.



Unexpectedly the boy speaks and asks for a two week period of grace before the visit of the girl and her family's to his house

This introduces change in the pattern of traditional match making without upsetting the norm of arranged marriage.

The boy is facing the camera looking straight at the girl's father whose back is to the camera and who is partially visible.

'Why two weeks?' asks the father

'So that I can learn to cook'



This marks a moment of radical change not just in normal behavioural patterns but also in the shift in the division of labour where the wife/woman cooks and keeps house with no help from the man.



The girl says nothing but her look is thoughtful. The boy's response is unexpected and it changes her expectations about her suitor and her marriage.



The smile on the boy's face as he addresses the girl's father and the look of pleased surprise on his mother's face show that the boy's suggestion is not unwelcome.

Full face image of father facing the boy's mother whose back is towards the camera.

The smiling face indicates pleasure and relief at the way things have turned out especially as it bodes well for his daughter's future



*The strength and appeal of the ad lies in that it addresses a felt need among viewers. With changing times and more and more girls accessing education and jobs, the older patterns are becoming unworkable. However, the strength of established norms and practices is such that it is difficult to break with them. This is leading to a dilemma for parents who want to keep up with the times but are reluctant to face social criticism for breaking with an established practice.*

*By offering to learn cooking and inviting the girl's family to come and 'view' him for suitability in the same way that his family have come to 'view' Payal, the boy shows a way out of a problematic situation without oversetting the rituals and norms of matchmaking.*

## **What are the factors that make this a successful ad. despite the fact that it challenges age old norms and rituals of matchmaking and marriage?**

Marriage forms the basis of family life and is an important part of social and cultural life in South Asian societies.

Traditionally marriages are 'arranged' by the parents/family members of the concerned boy and girl. It is their responsibility to check out the girl and boy for 'suitability' in terms of family background and personal qualities. Boys are usually assessed on the basis of earning capacity/income, looks, character, age etc. Girls are assessed on the basis of family background, economic status, looks, age, housekeeping and social skills including inherited wealth and or dowry expectations.

Unless the families are known to each other and interact socially, the boy and girl are usually unknown to each other.

They may:

- i. meet each other for the first time on the day of the wedding
- ii. see each others' photographs to decide whether they like the girl or boy enough to want to spend their lives with her/him
- iii. see each other at a matching making visit, when the boy's family calls on the girl's family to 'see' the girl. On such occasions, the boy and girl may exchange a few words.

This is also the occasion when prospective in-laws are served tea and refreshments (supposed to have been prepared by the girl). This enables them to assess both the girl and her family's life-style and social status.

While these practices and rituals carry strength as accepted norms, things are changing.

Women's increasing access to education and jobs and exposure to ideas are leading boys and girls - especially girls and their families to question the ritual of tea and first meeting/viewing of the girl and boy at the girl's house for the following reasons:

- i. It is not possible to learn much about each other in a formal visit when everyone is on their best behaviour
- ii. Girl's are beginning to feel it is demeaning for them to be 'put on display' as marketable goods for the boy's family to accept or reject, especially when normally no such 'viewing' visit is made by the girl's family to assess the boy and his family.
- iii. As members of the workforce, girls are (a) no longer solely dependent on the husband's earnings, (b) often carry a double work burden of earning their living and doing all the housework.
- iv. As more and more girls enter universities and join the workforce there is less gender-based segregation and there is an increase in marriages of choice.

This does not necessarily mean that girls and boys are making run away marriages, but that the rituals of matchmaking are being modified and changed.

*Advertising and marketing strategies in this Ad.*

**This ad, which is by an insurance company:**

- i. Addresses the gap between traditional norms and practices and changing ground



realities. Although it seems to introduce the idea of change, what it is doing is to appeal to a felt need of middle and upper middleclass families that are the ad's target audience.

- ii. It does not advertise itself directly, but sets itself up as an originator of a 'new' idea and approach.
- iii. Although large numbers of boys and girls are choosing their own marriage partners with the approval of their families, the ad does not question the idea of 'arranged' marriage. This makes it acceptable to viewers even as it highlights the inadequacy and unsuitability of matchmaking visits.

The appeal of the ad lies in that it addresses the gaps in the timehonoured practice of arranged marriage and matchmaking rituals that are out of sync with the times. By affirming and upholding the former and questioning, challenging and offering an alternative to the latter, it adds to viewer's comfort levels and promotes itself as a progressive institution that is in sync with changing times.

### *Aesthetics as strategy*

The success of this ad also lies in the way it conveys its message by engaging viewers through its story-telling technique and the way it uses a narrative that is both familiar and aesthetically pleasing. This adds to viewer comfort levels.

A message posing a direct challenge to ritual norms and practices, would be a bad sales technique as it could cause resentment if presented baldly

Notes for Resource Person/Facilitator:

Strategically, the ad. opens on visually pleasing image of a pretty girl in front of a dressing table.

The girl is seen indirectly through her reflection in the mirror and recalls stories of the hidden girl glimpsed in the mirror by the watching male or outsider and creates a mood of pleasurable conventional 'peeping Tom' expectation. The element of romance is further highlighted by the soundtrack with a snatch of a wedding song and the colour palette of soft reds and cream.

At the same time, the ad caters to viewer comfort through its setting. As the numerically largest group with buying power, the middle and upper middle classes are the favoured target group of advertisers.

The well off middleclass home against which this ad unfolds reflects and echoes the lifestyles and aspirations of this class as viewers. The setting is not so opulent that they can't identify themselves with it, nor so impoverished and meagre that they will not want to relate to it. It may not be exactly like their homes but it is familiar enough to assure them that whatever happens, it will be part of their known world and something they can deal with, approve of and justify to themselves.

The success of the ad lies (i) in its indirect approach. Instead of explicitly criticising matchmaking rituals and practices, it builds the critique into the narrative and 'shows' us (i) the absurdity of basing lifetime decisions on a one-day visit where the boy and girl see each other and exchange a few words for the first time, (ii) the offensiveness of putting a girl on display so that she may be assessed on the basis of looks, deportment and culinary skills, (iii) promotes the idea of shared housework etc. (iv) in the way it uses the above factors to shape its sales pitch.

Incidentally, the condition on which the marriage proposal is accepted by the girl's father is to do with the shared division of labour that was stated more boldly by the Aurat March slogans: 'Apna khana khud garam karo'; 'Mujhe kia patta tumhara mauza kidhar hai'!

## Naya Zamana - Nae Batein (New Times - New Ways)

Like the preceding advertisement, this Uphone ad. promotes its product through a narrative that combines respect for family values while catering to the demands of changing times. Based on the women's cricket team, it highlights the mobile phone as the link between the family and the daughter who is part of the national cricket team and is away from home for an international match..

Dramatic tension is provided by the tussle between the traditionalist father, who does not believe in public sports for women - 'Girls don't play cricket!'; the daughter with her passion for the sport and the mother who supports the daughter.



Clip 1. The mother pleads with the father to accept Sara's decision to play in an international cricket match.

The mother's position as the person asking for understanding is emphasised by her placement behind the father. She is not speaking to him face to face as she knows he is angry. The father's frame of mind and mood are reflected in the fact that he sits with his back towards his wife, the frown on his face and his refusal to look at her

Clip 2. The mood of clip 1 is confirmed by the closeup of the father's angry (and hurt) face and body language that matches his categorical: 'Girls don't play cricket'.

According to his way of thinking, Sara is doing something that is inappropriate for she is a girl.



Clip 3 shows Sara in the process of packing her bag. This shows that she is not put off by her father's anger and disapproval. Though she is upset by his attitude and anger, she is determined to pursue her dream.



Sara's feelings about her father's mood and attitude are reflected in her response to her mother's plea that she should say something to her father before she leaves by (i) her hurt expression and (ii) her statement, 'Abu doesn't know how to listen. He can only lecture.'

Note: This statement shifts the narrative perspective from the dilemma of one family to the larger issues of the generational divide. By momentarily universalising the issue, the ad finds a resonance among younger viewers, who as mager cell phone users are the main targets for this ad This adds to its appeal.

The clips on this page draw attention to the central ideas that shape the narrative and engage viewer interest:  
the lack of fit between old and new ideas in a changing world the generational divide father-daughter rupture and breakdown in communication and hurt feelings on both sides.

The daughter is hurt by her father's refuses to listen to her and share her excitement.  
The father is hurt because his daughter is doing something he does not like.



The expressions of both the girl and the father draw attention to and express their dilemma and their hurt - and on the father's part, anger at (i) being disobeyed by his daughter, (ii) that his wife is supporting her daughter instead of reinforcing his views and position.

Note body language: the girl looks at the father in the hope that he will say something to her before she goes.

The father consciously refuses to look at her as a clear sign of his anger and disapproval.  
The girl's bent head shows hurt and dejection as she leaves home without a parting word of wish from the father.



Cricket camp: stress free/happy environment and mood expressed through facial expressions and relaxed body language. Modern technology meets new needs in expanding spaces for women in national/public sports.

Stated Message: (i) U phone enables people to connect even when far from each other. (ii) Leaving home does not mean the cutting of off connection between the home and the world. The cell phone maintains the link.

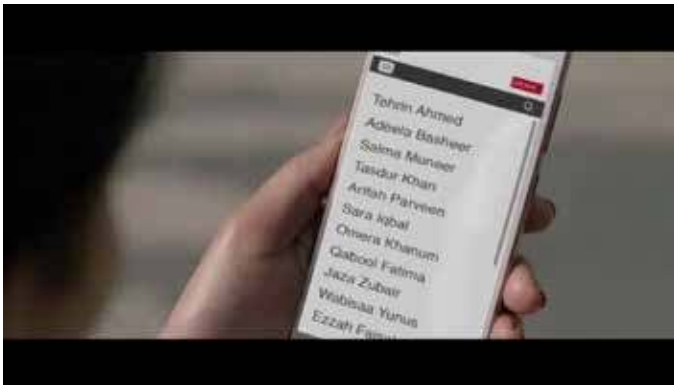
Constant communication between Sara and her mother gives the narrative of Sara's entry into sports a positive direction viz that girls don't sever links with the family or with family values and affections when they leave home and enter the public field independently and in their own right.



Glimpse of selection trials maintains narrative continuity and sustain viewer interest

Fresh, happy, smiling faces reinforce the message





Sara selected – stage one of home leaving process justified

The mother's excitement and joy at receiving news of Sara's selection



Nullified by the father's continuing anger and disapproval

The rupture between the two indicated by (i) the father's refusal to hear what the mother has to say and (ii) by Sara's mother sharing the news of Sara's selection with a neighbour instead of her husband.

Sara's father feels left out and at a bit of a standstill. Having refused to accept Sara's cricket now he doesn't know how to respond to her selection

Narrative curiosity built up by the script and visual images





Sharing the good news with neighbours – their congratulations and appreciation as the father watches and listens.

This starts a process of change in the father who begins to rethink his views on Sara's cricket

Mother tries to mend the breach between father and daughter



The next three clips show Sara's father being stopped on his way home from work by a neighbour who ...

... shakes him by the hand and congratulates him on Sara's selection in the cricket team ,,,





,,, and tells him that Sara has done them all proud

... he sees a group of little girls playing cricket in the street... so girls do play cricket - is it the start of a new trend, or have girls always played games, and continue to do so professionally when given the opportunity? .

The sight of children at play is very normal and natural. Whether they are girls or boys seems to have nothing to do with it.



,,,, he sees their spontaneous pleasure and enjoyment of the game.

it is all so innocent and natural. Their pleasure is infectious





### Celebrating victory

Sara wins the match for the team. The excitement and joy of the winning team recalls the little girls in the street and ...

justifies Sara's decision. By linking the innocence of the little girls playing street cricket and the national team winning the match, the ad. normalises both as healthy and commendable activities



The mother tries again to mend the breach between father and daughter.

A change in his views depicted through softening of facial expression







Emotional Moments. Mother gives the phone to the father to call Sara

The father congratulate Sara



Celebrating victory

Sara's response to the journalist's question - 'What do you plan to do now?'

'Go home - to my father - there is so much I want to say to him'





Healing of family breach and shared joy

## Background

Up until the 1980s when General Zia ul Haq imposed a ban on women's participation in public sports, it was normal for girls to take part in them, and people were used to the idea of women's sports.

Imposed as part of Zia's so called 'Islamisation' policy, this ban:

- i. led to a decline in women's sports,
- ii. reduced their access to training and other facilities,
- iii. got the public used to the idea that somehow women's participation in public sports was against the religion and traditional culture of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Women's Cricket team was established in around 1996, in response to changing times and under pressure from young sportswomen.

Coming after years of invisibility, women's re-entry into the field of public sports opened up the debate on customary norms and practices regarding the things women can or should do or not do.

Some, like Orya Jan Maqbool condemn women's sports on what they see as 'moral' grounds. Others like cricketer Shahid Afridi are not really bothered about the issue, but don't want their daughters to take part in them. As far as the general public is concerned, there are those who either have no views on the the matter and others, especially young women, who have welcomed the change.

## Strategy and target audience

In the 'Change is Beautiful' ad. an insurance company critiques the practice of 'viewing' girls for marriage' and promotes the idea of shared household responsibilities to project itself as a forward looking organisation in sync with the times, the U Fone ad. 'Naya Zamana - Nae Batein' uses the debate on women's re-entry into public sports to promote women's sports as well as its company and product as being in tune with changing times and modernity.

You will notice that unlike the 'Chhotti ki Gol Roti' and 'Change is Beautiful' ads. that target an affluent middle class buying public, the U Phone pitches its product to a less affluent but numerically larger lower middle and working class market.

This is evidenced in the difference between the settings. The first two ads. are set in homes where there is money to spend on kitchen gadgets, expensive clothes and jewellery; the U phone ad. is set in a less well off though comfortable home in a mohalla where housework is done by hand, women's

communication is across rooftops and children play cricket in the streets.

This makes sense, as the market for life insurance and desserts after meals is different and smaller than the market for cell phones. No longer seen as a luxury item cell phone users come from all classes including the economically less privileged.

The subliminal, or unstated message of the mohalla setting is that the U phone is for everyone. This setting adds to the comfort level of the larger viewing public who can identify more with Sara's mohalla than with bungalows in housing colonies.

The credibility of this ad lies in that the Pakistan's women's teams have performed well in the field of public sports. Given the lack of encouragement and training facilities for women's sports, plus issues like family attitudes encapsulated by the fathers: 'Girls don't play cricket', their performance and staying power are commendable

The ad. is built around a break with accepted or perceived traditional practice. It is a sign of changing times and locates the advertisement firmly in the present – as does the constant use of the cell phone in the advertisements narrative.

That this break with tradition is acceptable is implicit in the fact that the Ad begins at a point where the girl's decision to play cricket in the public arena has already been taken with the mother's support and despite the father's disapproval.

The difference of opinion and the positions taken by the father, mother and daughter are expressed through:

- i. body language and positioning, e.g., lack of eye contact, faces turned away from each other, body posture, etc.
- ii. speech and language use, e.g.
  - the mother's arguments and pleas for understanding and acceptance are countered by a single statement by the father: 'Girls don't play cricket!'
  - the rupture between the father and daughter is evident in the dialogue which also highlights the problem. "Abu only knows how to lecture. He does not listen!"

Narrative suspense is built through the portrayal of an argument between a husband and wife on their daughter's participation in an international cricket match and Sara's performance in the cricket match

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAR6kU6Wme8>

## Why is laundry only a mother's job?

Another Indian production, this advertisement for Ariel breaks with the stereotype of housework as the woman's sole responsibility and projects the idea of housework as the shared responsibility of a husband and wife.

Like 'Change is Beautiful' the advertisers have picked a topical issue or debate to sell their project.

The technique used is of the 'outsider's gaze' to draw attention to the woman's double work burden which her husband and children take for granted.

The 'outsider's gaze' in this case belongs to the father who is visiting his daughter. Seeing her dealing with household tasks as well as managing her office work, he realises how overworked she is and how little help she gets from her husband and children in handling household chores..

The different clips in the advertisement show that:

- The daughter takes her workload for granted and handles household chores viz seeing to the children, giving her husband a cup of tea while he relaxes without any expectation of help.
- Her family take her services for granted without thinking that she too may be tired.

This set of routine images is disrupted by the father's gaze as outsider and results in his realisation that what is unfair in his daughter's household is not unusual. That it is the norm that has produced his daughter, son in law and grandchildren.



The father watches as his daughter doing household chores and handles office work at the same time.

It strikes him that his daughter accepts her double work burden without expectation of help from the husband as part of daily normal routine. The husband and children take her services for granted.

A continuation of the same narrative as in Clip 1.





Continuation of Clips 1 and 2

Takes an office phone call while preparing meal  
- the double burden



The father watches and sees - perhaps for the first time, the daily routine of a woman's work. This is evident in the focussed concentration of his body language.

The double burden of home and office work - the daughter talks work on the phone as she puts food on the table.





Multi-tasking (unpaid and taken for granted)

Office work - paid but again taken for granted by the family



clears the table





tidies the house - no help from children who have made the mess and left it for her to sort out.

daily non stop chores and the Father's Gaze



continuity of chores

Household chores contd





Household chores contd

getting the children ready for bed



helping child to change clothes

putting used clothes into washing machine way past bedtime







Getting father ready for home

Saying goodbye



The father in a reflective mood

He cannot interfere in his daughter's household but he can (i) appreciate her work and (ii) lend a helping hand to his wife when he goes home.





Back home - the father unpacks his suitcase

Wife takes the used clothes from him



He helps her with the laundry

Slogan - Why is laundry only a mother's job?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJukf4ifuKs>



### Exercise 1. Deconstructing Stereotypes

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Oral exercise: **Discussion on the importance of women's political participation and the problems they face when they enter public space**

Approach: discussion-based/participatory

Material: Power Point Presentation based on Clips 1 and 2. If possible, use the You Tube ARY clip 'Fashion ka Jalwa' and Power Point Presentation of Clip 2.

*This exercise contains 3 sets of images. The first set consists of images of smartly dressed women parliamentarians along with information about the bills tabled by them etc. The clip 'Fashion ka Jalwa' portrays women parliamentarians as fashion plates; and Unlike the former, the latter, focusses on women's clothes and accessories. The second set of images provides a sample of women's political engagement as parliamentarians and the issues they have raised and/or supported. The third set provides a sample of male parliamentarians' concerns, work approach and attitudes/behaviour towards female colleagues.*

*The first set, raises questions about the motivation behind the message of 'Fashion ka Jalwa. The second set shows that dressing smartly or fashionably does not automatically exclude knowledge of state affairs and the ability to address social problems.*

Step 1. Show images on Clip 1. Ask participants for their comments. With reference to the analysis on pages 86-88, open up the discussion through the following questions:

- i. What did you see?
- ii. What do these images tell us about these women?
- iii. Are you surprised by these images?
- iv. Do these images confirm your views about women parliamentarian? If so,
- v. Why?

Step 2. Show the second clip on women led legislation – compare it with the first set of images. Identify the similarities and differences

Open up discussion with participant responses/comments. Guide the discussion with the following questions:

- i. Are the women in the second clip dressed differently from women in the first clip? Are they less fashionably dressed? Are they wearing no makeup?
- ii. What do we notice about them? Their clothes or the Bills they have tabled?
- iii. Does the way they dress have anything to do with the quality of their work?
- iv. What is the media's aim in the first clip?
- v. Is it to trivialise women and erase their work?

Step 3. Enable participants to analyse the images

- The gender bias in action: what strategy does the media use in clip 1? Point out how the 'itemisation of women's body parts serve (i) to erase their work (ii) set them up as 'sex objects' (iii) emphasise their role solely as economically unproductive consumers, (iv) as fraudulent entities striving for public limelight at the cost of public funds etc. (v) are male parliamentarian's less expensively dressed? (Ref Gilani's Seville Row suits and Nawaz Sharif's shopping sprees in London) So why this particular

focus on women?

Step 4. Show Power Point Presentation of male parliamentarian's contribution to legislation, policies including their behaviour in parliament. As you will see, these are largely to do with blocking legislation that challenges the status quo, increasing parliamentarians' salaries and privileges and use of sexist language.

#### Discussion 4

Evaluate and assess the contribution of women and men in the political sphere.

Basing judgment on the above information:

- ▶ Who is more fitted for the political sphere in terms of responsibility and capability?
- ▶ concern for and involvement in public interest issues?
- ▶ How should the media address its own gender bias?

### **Exercise 2. Advertisements – selling gender biases – reinforcing patriarchy**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Equipment: multi-media, flip chart stand, flip charts, thick tipped coloured markers

Oral exercise

#### *Resource Person Guidelines*

*This exercise is based on the Walls Kulfi ad. Chhotti ki Gol Roti, a news report and a slogan. It highlights the connection between stereotyped representations of women in the media, and violent crimes against women in real life contexts and the counternarrative of a feminist slogan; "Apna Khana Khud Garam Karo"*

Stills of Wall's Kulfi ad. have been taken from the advertisement that can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55YqWp6Mglk>.

If possible, use the film clip for this exercise. The given images have been taken from the video and they may be a little unclear.

*Step 1. Show the Chhotti ad to participants. Ask them their views on it and reasons for liking nor not liking it. What do they think is the message of the story that frames the ad.? Do they agree that"*

- the woman's place is in the home*
- a woman's place is in the kitchen*
- the woman's role in life is to nurture and look after the family*
- the woman's needs are secondary to those of the family*
- the sooner a little girl is trained into this role, the better it is for her and her family's future happiness*
- a woman/little girl who fits into this role and performs it competently and smilingly is rewarded with praise and icecream.*
- This is all that a woman is fit for and this is all that she is capable of – her brain, other talents etc are of no importance. Therefore it is best (i) that she should forget about them and be trained to do well in the role assigned to her, (ii) her other gifts, talents, desires that do not fit in with this role should be ignored, etc.*

*Impact: regardless of whether or not viewers/consumers buy the advertised brand of ice cream, the advertisement's underlying message reaches the public and reinforces male/female gender roles and can (i) discourage girls from developing their full potential, (ii) justifies their low access to education, decision making, resources including their participation in public/political life as economically independent humans.*

*Deconstruction of images in italics is for Resource Person facilitation and to enable her/him to guide the discussion*

*Use the critical comments provided with each clip to facilitate the discussion*

*Link the message of the ad to its title.*

*Note: 1., the generic use of 'Chhotti' who does not have a specific name. This universalises the message for all 'chhottis' or little girls.*

*Note 2. Viewer comfort levels maintained through a celebration of the following stereotypes: (i) the happy united family eating a meal together (ii) Chhotti and her mother serving food to the family (iii) assurance of future family happiness with Chhotti as her mother's helper.*

Use the above questions to initiate the discussion. Do not provide the answers - let the group members talk about what they have noticed. The resource person can use the above information to further the discussion and also draw attention to points missed out by the group.

Group discussion on Chhotti ki Gol Roti to be followed up by next news item/images that show us the 'other side' of Chhotti's Gol Roti – of what can happen if she does not or cannot make the 'gol roti.

It draws attention to the gap between the desired image of a happy middle class family and the ground realities of a society where the majority are deprived of the civilisational comforts of material wellbeing and how chhotti's gol roti translates into violence

The Dark Side of Chhotti's Gol Roti – 12 year old murdered for not making a proper roti

News Clip 1 Image of the murdered girl.

Caption: 'Handcuffed father admits the murder of his daughter'

### **Step 1: Advertisement Clip 1 Chhotti ki Gol Roti**

This advertisement contains 2 messages – the stated message and the hidden message. The stated message is:

- ▶ Buy Wall's King Kulfi!
  - ▶ The hidden message through which this message is projected to the public is built into the story of 'Chhotti's Gol Roti'
- i. Show clip of Chhotti ki Gol Roti. Allow a few minutes for it to register. Show again for more focussed viewing.
  - ii. Turn by turn ask participants to (i) give their opinion on (a) what the ad is about (b) its underlying message viz what it says to them.
  - iii. Critically analyse the clip. As participants normally don't know how to go about it – this task usually falls on the Resource Person. Use the information provided under each clip to deconstruct the images.

## Step 2: News Report - 12 year old girl killed for not making a gol roti

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7tYbPJnmVA>

Crucial question: Regardless of whether or not viewers/consumers buy the advertised product, the advertisement's underlying message reaches the public and reinforces male/female gender roles and can (i) discourage girls from developing their full potential, (ii) justifies their low access to education, decision making, resources including their participation in public/political life as economically independent humans, (iii) feeds into gender based violence including murder for not fulfilling gender roles.

- i. Show clip of the News Report. Allow a few minutes for it to register. Show again for more focussed viewing.
- ii. Turn by turn ask participants to (i) give their opinion on (a) what the ad is about (b) its underlying message viz what it says to them
- iii. Critically analyse the clip. As participants normally don't know how to go about it – this task usually falls on the Resource Person. Use the information provided under each clip to deconstruct the images.
- iv. Ask participants to (a) give their views on the link between the stereotype of the little girl in Chhotti ki Gol Roti and Chanda, the murdered girl, (ii) discuss the danger of relying on and promoting gender-based stereotypes in media representations of women and men.

## Step 3: “Mera Jissam Meri Marzi”

- i. In the light of the News Report, ask participants what they think is the meaning of this slogan?
- ii. Is it about the safety and integrity of the woman's body or is it a demand for sexually promiscuous behaviour?
- iii. If it is about a woman's claim to bodily integrity and safety, why was there such a furore about it?
- iv. Why did the general public read this slogan as a demand for unrestrained sexual freedom?
- v. Why is it all right for men to talk about the woman's body including in the language of abuse, but improper for the woman to speak of it with reference to her safety and autonomy?

Don't restrict participants to the given questions but give them the space to discuss the above issues with reference to women's right to choice, decision making and resources.

**Exercise 3.** (This is especially useful if undertaken after Exercise 1)

Time: 1 hour:

Material: Writing paper and pens.

Ask participants to write and present a feature on the rising incidence of domestic violence and child abuse.

**Exercise 4.** (This exercise is based on 2 video clips viz Chhotti ki Gol Roti and Naya Zamana Nae Baatein).

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Material/equipment: multimedia equipment, screen, chart paper, flip chart stands, thick tipped coloured markers, mics

Part 1. Oral exercise: Allow a few minutes for the stories of the two clips to register. Show again for more focussed viewing.

- ii. Turn by turn ask participants to (i) give their opinion on the two ads. (a) what the ads are about (b) their underlying messages viz what it says to them.
- iii. Critically analyse the clips. As participants normally don't know how to go about it – this task usually falls on the Resource Person. Use the information provided under each clip to deconstruct the images.

Part 2. Group exercise.

Material required:

Divide participants into equal groups Ask participants to identify the differences between the two ads and their messages and (i) give their preference and (ii) reasons for their preference.

Group presentations and critique.

### **Exercise 5. Media as Change Agent**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Equipment: multimedia, screen, mics

This exercise is based on two ads. Change is Beautiful and the washing machine ad.

These ads. are more in tune with the ground realities of women's lives today and open up spaces for them in ways that draw attention to (i) the work they do, which is far in excess of their assigned stereotypes and gender roles (ii) their ability and capacity to take on more than their socially assigned gender roles and (iii) the positive outcomes of a different way of 'looking' at women/girls in the same or similar situations.

Leading Questions: should women and men share housework? If a man helps in the home, will he be less of a man - or just a more caring human being? Will shared household responsibilities improve family relations or harm them? Will helping children with the homework; playing games with them, giving the bottle to the baby bring fathers closer to the children or will it undermine the father's authority? Should men be deprived of the joys of parenting so that they can maintain their manly image?

### **Exercise 6. Unpacking stereotypes and gender biases.**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Equipment: multimedia, writing paper pens

Format: A mix of oral and written work discussion.

- i. Ask participants to do the "My Wife Doesn't Work" exercise p. \_\_\_;
- ii. Follow it up with multimedia presentation of (i) the Ariel ad and (ii) Aurat March slogans: "Apna Khana Khud Garram Karro!" and "Mujhe kia patta tumhara mauza khidar hai!
- iii. Ask participants to identify the factors connection between the findings of the "My Wife Doesn't Work" exercise, the message of the Ariel advertisement and the message/demands of the Aurat March slogans.
- iv. A discussion on the reasons for the mainstream public outrage at the Aurat March slogans. The discussion on the public response to the Aurat March could be paired with "My Wife Doesn't Work."

**Exercise 6. The Media and Public Opinion**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Equipment: multimedia, screen, writing paper pens

Approach: discussion based on power point followed by feature writing exercise

Topic: The media's role in creating public opinion.

Uphone ad. This exercise is based on images in Fashion ka Jalwa and the set of images on the bills tabled by women parliamentarians.



## Module 5

### Situation Analysis and News Reports

The exercises in this Module are designed to facilitate and develop media person's skills in gender sensitive news production

**Exercise 1.** Defining different forms of news reportage (see Pages 20-25)

Time: 30 minutes

If all the participants are working journalists, ask them to define/explain the difference between a news report, an investigative news report, a feature and a newspaper or magazine article.

This will engage their active participation and allow them to take the lead in the discussion. This will refresh their knowledge and/or provide necessary information for participants from other media fields

**Exercise 2.** Writing news reports, features and/or articles. This can be an individual or a group exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to enable participants to: (a) produce bias free news and information and (b) identify gender bias, sensationalism, etc., in the work produced by them. Purpose: to enable participants to:

- i. See the limits of the stereotype and stereotypical representations of women and men.
- ii. Impact of news reports/features etc that rely only on stereotypes when they represent women and men?
- iii. What perceptions does it reinforce?
- iv. What misconceptions does it propagate?
- v. How realistic is this news report/feature?

Time: 2 hours

Material:

- Sheets of paper and pens
- Square slips of blank paper and an approximately 10" by 10" box or cardboard carton.

Preparation:

If undertaken as a group activity, divide the group into equal groups. Keeping the group's size and geographical location and group in mind, select three or four case studies from those given in different Modules in the Guide. Make an equal number of copies of each Case Study, i.e., if the group consists of 15 people, make five copies each of the Case Study. This will ensure variety but also enable participants and Resource Person to see how the same Case Study can mean different things to different readers/writers.

In neat handwriting write 'Investigative News Report', 'Feature', 'Newspaper Article' (one on each slip

of paper). Fold the slips of paper and pin one each to one of the selected Case Studies and place them in the box.

### **Activity**

- i. Invite participants to pick a folded slip of paper from the cardboard box. The paper slip will tell them whether they have to write an investigative News Report, a Feature or an Article based on one of the Case Studies.
- ii. Mix up the Case Studies and distribute them among the group.
- iii. Discussion session on each Case Study including quick definition of the different forms of writing viz News Report, Feature and Article: 45 minutes.
- iv. Group-based or individual written assignment: 30 minutes.
- v. Presentations and group critique including identification and assessment in terms of gender bias, prejudice evidenced in reliance on cliches and stereotypes, sensationalism, etc.

## Module 6

### Level Playing Field

The purpose of exercises 1 and 2 is to (i) demonstrate the importance of women's participation in public/political life for balanced and inclusive policy making and planning.

These exercises are designed to:

- i. debunk the perception or stereotype of women as incapable of handling public work
- ii. show that policy/planning decisions are more realistic and reflective of community needs when both women and men, and not just bureaucrats and subject specialists, are part of the process.

#### Exercise 1. Plan and design your town/village

Time: 1 hour (30 minutes for group exercise and 30 minutes for presentations and group criticism of planning modules).

**Material:** Chart paper, Flip Chart and 2 Flip Chart Stands, thick tipped coloured markers.

Group exercise: In case of a mixed group of women and men, divide participants into three groups of (i) only men, (ii) only women and (iii) women and men.

This exercise has two components:

- i. An area plan showing location of (i) residential areas, (ii) shops, (iii) public services etc., that meet the community's needs
- ii. A written text that provides details of the public services provided.

Ask participants to assess, compare and point out and discuss the differences between plans made by women and men only groups and the mixed group to decide which is the best approach viz. planning by men or women only or by both

Assess group presentations on the basis of the following public services:

- Water, gas, electricity
- Drainage, sanitation and waste management
- Health care facilities viz hospitals, dispensaries, Basic Health Units
- Schools/colleges
- Shops
- Masjid, temple, church
- Green spaces
- Entertainment
- Roads
- Transport

- Sewerage, drainage
- Waste management

## **Exercise 2. Planning and Budget Making**

Group Exercise

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes (1 hour for group work; 30 minutes for group presentations and discussion).

**Material:** Chart paper, Flip Chart Stand, thick tipped coloured board markers

As Local Government members, you have been allocated funds to meet the needs of your Union or Village Council and improve people's access to public services.

Ask participants to identify and prioritise community needs and design the budget for maximum benefit to all regardless of gender, religion and other differences including the needs of the elderly and people with disability.

Explain the activity in broad outline but leave space for participants to develop their own plans

**Exercise 3.** Ask participants to write a newspaper article based the given case study on underage marriage.

**Time:** 2 hours:

**Day 1** 5 minutes: individual story reading time. 50 minutes for discussion based board exercise.

**Day 2** individual presentations/critical assessment/discussion by the group.

**Material:** Chart paper, writing paper, pens, etc.

**Approach:** Participatory.

The resource person should (i) encourage participants to identify the different causes that contribute to Saima's dilemma and (ii) draw their attention to factors that they may miss out.

A resource person's guide is provided to facilitate the exercise.

### **Case Study 1. Saima's Story**

*Saima is 17 years old. She was 8 years old when she completed her primary school education. Her education was discontinued as the government secondary school was in the next Village. The only other school in their vicinity was a private fee paying institution. Given the distance and lack of affordable and safe public transport, her parents did not even think of sending her to the government school.*

*The private fee paying school that was closer to her home was equally out of question. In any case money was needed for her older brother's education as he was the future bread winner and his parents' insurance in their old age. Saima was only a 'guest' in her parent's house to be passed on to her husband and his family.*

*Saima was 15 when she was given in marriage to her uncle's son. Two years into her marriage she is the mother of a 1 year old daughter. Denied postnatal medical care, Saima has not fully recovered from the after effects of an early pregnancy and child birth. Burdened with household chores; reviled for not bearing a son, scolded for every little slip up, she is usually the last to eat after the men and the rest of family have been served. As a result, she has lost her looks and is*

often ailing.

*Tired of coming home to an ailing wife and sickly child, her husband wants to marry another woman. If Saima gives him the permission required by law for a second marriage, he says he will not divorce her but let her stay in the house. If she doesn't agree, he will divorce her and she can take her child and return to her parents' home.*

*Saima knows that if she stays on in her husband's house, her position will be that of the discarded wife and household drudge, Her other choice is to return to her parents' home with her child. But she also knows that her position there will not be a happy one. Her brother is a family man now. He has a child of his own and his wife is in charge of household affairs. Carrying the stigma of divorce, without skills to earn her own living and no stake in the family property, Saima knows that her status will be that of an economically dependent poor relation and unwelcome guest in the house who must pay for her keep as an unpaid household drudge.*

*What should she or can she do? How can situations such as Saima's be prevented? Where do changes need to be made and action taken by (i) by state institutions, (ii) by society, (iii) family?*

Activity 1. Reading of Saima's story either by one of the participants or the Resource Person. Identification of and Discussion on the factors that contribute to Saima's dilemma.

Activity 2. Ask participants to write an article for a magazine based on Saima's Story; the factors responsible for her dilemma and what can be done to prevent such situations in the future.

### Guide for Resource Person

As exemplified by 'Saima's Story', there is no single cause answer or solution to her problem and dilemma.

- The fact that Saima is left with two impossible choices: (i) to stay on in her husband's house as an abandoned wife and household drudge or (ii) to return to her parents' house, where she has no property rights, and spend her life as household drudge and resented poor relation for her brother and sister-in-law is due to the following factors:
- her underage marriage
- lack of schooling that prevents her from earning her living
- denial of her right to inheritance evidenced in that her brother is the sole inheritor of his father's house and other property.

Causes of the above:

- customary practice of early marriage especially for girls despite the minimum legal age of marriage.
- customary practice of denying girls their inheritance rights has no power to either prevent financially dependent on her denied her right to inherited property is due (i) to the state's failure to fulfil its responsibilities to its citizens including implementation of the minimum legal age of marriage (ii) to customary norms and practices that see marriage as a way of passing on the girl's economic burden and fulfilling the parents (esp. the father's) social/religious duty.

i. The state's responsibilities:

- Setting systems in place to prevent underage marriage:
- Compulsory registration of birth, marriage, divorce.
- Raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 nationally.

- Free school education for children up till Matriculation regardless of difference of gender, religion, race, class, economic status, etc.
- Increase number of secondary schools for girls for easy access
- Safe and affordable transport to school/college.
- To ensure implementation of laws related to inheritance; age of marriage; second marriage, etc.

#### The State's Failure:

- Girls' low access to public sector education as exemplified by dearth of girls' schools especially beyond the primary level (this is what prevents Saima from continuing with her education. It is also the cause of her future economic dependency)
- Lack of safe school transport. Saima's parents do not think it is feasible for Saima to walk or take public transport to the next village for further education, (a) because it is not safe, (b) because they fear the gossip of neighbours and possible loss of her reputation.
- Lack of education reinforces women's economic dependency as they lack the skills and training required for paid work. This factor reinforces the perception of girls as an economic burden and renders the vulnerable to different forms of overt and covert violence within and outside the family.

#### Customary norms/societal attitudes:

- Son preference and the neglect of the girl child.
- denial of inheritance/property rights to girls. Other than the fact that this customary practice is in contravention of the law, this factor contributes to the girls' economic dependency and low economic and social status.
- low priority to girls' education as compared to sons.
- perception that the girl's only role in life is that of a wife and mother.
- that there is something wrong with the girl who doesn't get married, e.g., she is ugly, immoral, poor, etc.
- perception of girls as an economic burden and as 'guests' in the father's house who must be passed on to the conjugal family

#### Early marriage as

- a way of protecting the girl's pre-marital virginity/reputation,
- a way of passing on responsibility of the girl to the husband and conjugal family,
- the misconception (propagated by the religious lobby) that it is the father's religious duty to marry daughters at the onset of puberty.

#### Problems related to early/underage marriage

- a girl below the age of 18 is not developed either physically or emotionally to handle pregnancy, child birth including the pressures and demands of married life.
- under age pregnancy and childbirth can have long lasting effects on the girl's/woman's general and reproductive health, e.g., fistula, etc.
- social norms especially those regarding the woman's body combined with ignorance and the woman's low status in society prevent her access to necessary medical care. An underage girl is less able to demand medical care than an older, better informed woman

- children of underage girls are more likely to be weak and prone to health problems.
- the rate of maternal and infant mortality is higher in underage marriage.
- there is usually a greater age difference between the husband and an underage wife. Therefore chances of compatibility/companionship between the two are low and often leads to divorce or a second marriage by the husband.
- Greater vulnerability to domestic violence and exploitation of underage wives.

#### **Exercise 4. Case Study 4**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

- i. Group Exercise: Ask participants to draw a chart that identifies and track the different factor that are responsible for Saima's story. Follow up with group presentations/discussion.
- ii. Home assignment: Ask participants to write news articles based on a critical analysis of the causes that shape Saima's story.

#### **Case Study 2. "Kiran Kahani"**

Kiran was 11 years old when her father died. Lacking financial means to support herself and her daughter, her mother married again. Unfortunately, the new father was not willing to accept Kiran and she was left in her grandmother's care. Herself burdened by poverty, the grandmother lacked the means to support herself and Kiran and at the suggestion of her chachi, Kiran was married off to a man much older than herself.

- Kiran was 12 years old at the time of her marriage.
- One year later, at the age of 13 she gave birth to a son.
- If malnourishment and fear are anything to go by, Kiran's married life was a round of starvation, overwork and sexual and other forms of physical violence.
- Sometime after the birth of her child, her husband divorced her for another woman and Kiran returned to her grandmother along with her child.
- Now there were two mouths to feed instead of one.
- Once again, marriage was seen as the only way out of this situation, and Kiran was married off again – this time to a drug addict – and the cycle of violence and starvation continued.
- It was around this time that we met Kiran. She had been brought by an aunt to a free medical camp organised by Simorgh as part of its work on general and reproductive health.
- Both mother and child were malnourished and unkempt. Kiran clung to the child but did not speak. The child, who was stated to be over a year old, could be mistaken for a 5 month old infant. Kiran herself looked about 12 years old – she also looked mentally challenged.

We saw her next in 2018. She was pregnant again – but the child was missing. We were told, the drug addict father had sold him to a gang of beggars for Rs 1500 – and so Kiran's story goes on ...

Kiran's story is not an unusual one. It is one among many of its kind and represents the state's failure to ensure the basic right to life, health, education and dignity of its most vulnerable citizens.

It also draws attention to (i) societal attitudes that see marriage as the only option for girls and not only set a low priority on their education (ii) condone domestic violence including marital rape and (iii) disregard laws regarding the minimum age for marriage.



## Sample – Workshop Module

### Resource Material

#### Day one

1. Time: 5 minutes

Welcome to participants and introduction of the theme and purpose of the workshop.

2. Time: 15 minutes

3. Quick round of introductions by participants and workshop team members. Ask them to briefly mention the work they do and the organisation they represent.

Time the planned exercises including tea and lunch breaks and divide the workshop day accordingly. Opening exercise: This exercise will set the mood and tone of the workshop, therefore plan it carefully.

When selecting this exercise, keep the following in mind,

- a. Geographical location – the province in which it is set and whether it is rural or urban. If urban is it set in a major city like Islamabad or Lahore or a small town like Mardan or Toba Tek Singh,
- b. Does the group consist of women and men or is it made up only of women or men
- d. Professionally does it comprise only journalists or does it represent a mix of journalists and community members.

**Exercise 1.** Jirga in performance based on the Case Study 1. Sakina’s Story. See (p.69) detailed information, instructions and guidelines.

Time: 1 hour

The benefits of this as opening exercise are that it plunges the group into a performative activity. This is a good ice breaker and has the advantage of directly engaging participants in discussion on a situation, This raises the issue, not as an abstraction but a reality based event and familiar lived experience.

Tea Break: 15 minutes

- i. News Reports and Feature writing based on the opening exercise on ‘Jirga Justice’
- ii. Overview of definitions and requirements of News Reports and Features. Time allocated for this component depends on the nature and expertise of the group. Consult the group and involve participants in this decision
- iii. b. News Report/Feature writing as group exercise
- iv. c. Presentations including group critique.

Lunch Break: 30 minutes + 15 minutes for namaz if requested

**Exercise 2.1.** Show Clip1 “**Fashion Ka Jalwa**” of Women in Parliament that consists of fragmented

Images first of women as non-serious fashion plates and consumers. Follow this with a 15-20 minute discussion based on the following questions:

- What information do these pictures give us about women parliamentarians?
- Identify the cliches and stereotypes that convey the message of the images.
- Is this an effective way of providing us with information on the role and activities of women parliamentarians?
- Do these images add to our knowledge or do they reinforce mainstream social perceptions about (i) women, (ii) about working women?
- Does this information match your views of women parliamentarians? Why?
- What is the impact of these images on your views of women parliamentarians?

**Exercise 2.2.** Show Clip 2. that is based on images of women's parliamentarians plus information on their legislative contribution, etc. Follow this with a discussion based on a comparison of the 2 clips to highlight:

- The Politics of Representation - Re-presentation.
- What insights does the second set of images provide on the first set?

Use the information given in the relevant Module to guide the discussion and deepen analysis with special reference to gender bias, both general and in the media vis a vis women's political participation. As a post-lunch activity this exercise has the advantage of keeping participants awake and interested

Participant Feedback/discussion - 20 minutes

**Note:** The order in which they above clips are presented can be changed if the Resource Person considers it feasible. Our experience of one workshop with journalists showed they wasted time and giggling and sniggering about the images in **Fashion ka Jalwa** that (i) serious discussion was not possible and (ii) they could not concentrate on the the information in Clip 2.

## Day 2

1. Time: 15 minutes

Overview of Day 1 with comments, etc., by participants

**Exercise 1.** Stereotypes and language use.

Time: 1 hour - 20 minutes for definitions; 40 minutes for selected exercise. Distribute printed sheets carrying definitions of stereotypes among participants. Explanation-cum-discussion on what is meant by stereotypes and the way they are used (i) to define gender roles and (ii) their impact on how society perceives female and male roles and functions.

**Exercise 2.** Selected exercise from the Module 3. page 78 "My Wife Doesn't Work" to be undertaken as group exercise.

## Tea Break

**Exercise 3.** Chotti ki Gol Roti and other advertisements followed by discussion. (See pages 89-132 for guidelines)

Discussion Focus: Chotti ki Gol Roti and the News Report on the murder of the 12 year old girl for not making a proper roti followed by critique/analysis of Aurat March slogan 'Apna Khana Khud Garam Karin 'Discussion Aim: to enable participants to see/understand the deeper implications of this mes-

sage and its impact on the viewing public

#### Discussion Points -

The discussion points will keep group conversation on track. Guide the discussion with reference to the points given under each discussion point but as far as possible allow participants to lead the conversation and express their own views.

- Is Chotti ki Gol Roti a successful ad. If so, where does its appeal lie?  
*(it is familiar; it reinforces existing norms; feeds into the desired ideal of the 'happy family'; maintains viewer comfort level; does not raise uncomfortable issues etc)*
- The overt message of the ad is to sell a particular brand of icecream. What is its unspoken or hidden message?  
*(i. a good mother trains her daughter to fulfil her gender based role as nurturer and carer. ii. it is never too early to start this training, etc.)*
- How does the ad produce this message?  
*(by presenting Chotti's family as the accepted/desired norm, i.e., this is what a happy family is/should be like. Family happiness depends on the maintenance of accepted gender roles and division of labour).*
- Identify the stereotypes it uses to produce this message?  
*(refer to the information given in the section on stereotypes for this)*
- The deeper implications of this message.  
*(as the woman's role in life is limited to the home, this message i. tells the woman that her needs less importance than those of the family i.e. she must eat only after they have been fed, ii. undermines Chotti's right to education and a career of her choice, ii. promotes early marriage - if Chotti's sole aim in life is to be a good wife and mother, education, etc, are of secondary importance.*
- What are the ways in which this ad reinforces the gendered division of labour?
- Its impact on the viewing public  
*(reinforces and routinises gender roles; facilitates the internalisation of these norms by female/male viewers so that neither questions them, by inference shows women - or men who break these norms as deviant and/or immoral; justifies potentially violent disapproval towards women who break or challenge these norms).*

3b. The dark side of Chotti ki Gol Roti: Show the clip of the News Report on the murder of the 12 year girl for not making a proper roti.

Ask participants to comment on the father's/brother's action generally and with reference to the Chotti ki Gol Roti ad. Ask them to identify and comment on:

- the cliches that link the message of the Chotti ad to the murder of a girl child for her failure to make a proper roti.
- the similarities and differences between the context/setting of the ad and the one in which the murder takes place.
- the father's attitude towards his crime including his facial expression and body language.
- keeping class differences in mind what would it take to transform Chotti's loving family into the violent one of the news report?
- how does this impact their perceptions and work as media workers?

4b. The real meaning of Mera Jissam Meri Marzi,

Lunch Break,

Two exercises on 1 hour each on stereotypes, e.g., the Ideal Man and Woman and on language use

from Module.

### **Day 3**

1. Recap of Day 2.
  2. Tea Break.
  3. The exercises for Day 3 should be designed on the basis of who the participants are.
    - If the group comprises journalists, this day should be given over to individual written exercises viz News Reports and Features by participants to be followed by presentations and group analysis based on the lessons learned on the preceding days.
    - If the group comprises women and men from the community, use exercises that enable them to identify and address gender-based community needs such as budget-making, etc. This work should be undertaken as group exercises followed by presentations and critical analysis based on the lessons learned on the preceding days.
3. Feedback and wrap up.

## **Resource Material**

### **The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan**

#### **Chapter 1: Fundamental Rights 8**

##### **Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights to be void.**

- (1) Any law, or any custom or usage having the force of law, in so far as it is inconsistent with the rights conferred by this Chapter, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.
- (2) The State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights so conferred and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of such contravention, be void.

##### **9. Security of person.**

No person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law.

##### **10. Safeguards as to arrest and detention**

- (1) No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such arrest, nor shall he be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice.
- (2) Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before a magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest, excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court of the nearest magistrate, and no such person shall be detained in custody beyond the said period without the authority of a magistrate.

##### **11. Slavery, forced labour, etc. prohibited**

- (1) Slavery is non-existent and forbidden and no law shall permit or facilitate its introduction into Pakistan in any form.
- (2) All forms of forced labour and traffic in human beings are prohibited.
- (3) No child below the age of fourteen years shall be engaged in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment.

##### **13. Protection against double punishment and self-incrimination.**

No person:-

shall be prosecuted or punished for the same offence more than

- (a) once; or
- (b) shall, when accused of an offence, be compelled to be a witness against himself.

##### **14. Inviolability of dignity of man, etc.**

- (1) The dignity of man and, subject to law, the privacy of home, shall be inviolable.
- (2) No person shall be subjected to torture for the purpose of extracting evidence.

**15. Freedom of movement, etc.**

Every citizen shall have the right to remain in, and, subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, enter and move freely throughout Pakistan and to reside and settle in any part thereof.

**16. Freedom of assembly.**

Every citizen shall have the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order.

**17. Freedom of association:**

- (1) Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, public order or morality.
- (2) Every citizen, not being in the service of Pakistan, shall have the right to form or be a member of a political party, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan and such law shall provide that where the Federal Government declares that any political party has been formed or is operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, the Federal Government shall, within fifteen days of such declaration, refer the matter to the Supreme Court whose decision on such reference shall be final.
- (3) Every political party shall account for the source of its funds in accordance with law.

**19A. Right to information:**

Every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

**20. Freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions.**

Subject to law, public order and morality:-

- (a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and
- (b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.

**21. Safeguard against taxation for purposes of any particular religion.**

No person shall be compelled to pay any special tax the proceeds of which are to be spent on the propagation or maintenance of any religion other than his own.

**22. Safeguards as to educational institutions in respect of religion, etc.**

- (1) No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own.
- (2) In respect of any religious institution, there shall be no discrimination against any community in the granting of exemption or concession in relation to taxation.
- (3) Subject to law:
  - (a) no religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any educational institution maintained wholly by that community or denomination; and
  - (c) no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution receiving aid from public revenues on the ground only of race, religion, caste or place of birth.
- (3) Nothing in this Article shall prevent any public authority from making provision for the advancement of any socially or educationally backward class of citizens.

### **23. Provision as to property.**

Every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property in any part of Pakistan, subject to the Constitution and any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the public interest.

### **24. Protection of property rights.**

- (1) No person shall be compulsorily deprived of his property save in accordance with law.
- (2) No property shall be compulsorily acquired or taken possession of save for a public purpose, and save by the authority of law which provides for compensation therefore and either fixes the amount of compensation or specifies the principles on and the manner in which compensation is to be determined and given.

### **25. Equality of citizens.**

- (1) All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.
- (3) There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex<sup>35</sup> [ ].
- (4) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children.

### **25A. Right to education:**

The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.

### **26. Non-discrimination in respect of access to public places.**

- (1) In respect of access to places of public entertainment or resort not intended for religious purposes only, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth.
- (2) Nothing in clause (1) shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

### **27. Safeguard against discrimination in services.**

- (1) No citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth: Provided that, for a period not exceeding 37 [forty] years from the commencing day, posts may be reserved for persons belonging to any class or area to secure their adequate representation in the service of Pakistan: Provided further that, in the interest of the said service, specified posts or services may be reserved for members of either sex if such posts or services entail the performance of duties and functions which cannot be adequately performed by members of the other sex 39[:] 39 40[Provided also that under-representation of any class or area in the service of Pakistan may be redressed in such manner as may be determined by an Act of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament).] 40

- (3) Nothing in clause (1) shall prevent any Provincial Government, or any local or other authority in a Province, from prescribing, in relation to any post or class of service under that Government or authority, conditions as to residence in the Province. for a period not exceeding three years, prior to appointment under that Government or authority.

### **28. Preservation of language, script and culture.**

Subject to Article 251 any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to preserve and promote the same and subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose

**Laws****Excerpts from****The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961****(VIII of 1961)****[2nd March 1961]**

An Ordinance to give effect to certain recommendations of the Commission on Marriage and Family Laws

**WHEREAS** it is expedient to give effect to certain recommendations of the Commission on Marriage and Family Laws;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in pursuance of the Proclamation of the seventh day of October, 1958, and in exercise of all powers enabling him in that behalf, the President is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:

**1. Short title, extent, application and commencement.** – (1) This Ordinance may be called the **Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961.**

(2) **It extends to the whole of [the Punjab], and applies to all Muslim citizens of Pakistan, wherever they may be.**

(3) It shall come into force at once.]

**2. Definitions.** - In this Ordinance:

(a) "Arbitration Council" means a body consisting of the Chairman and representative of each of the parties to a matter under the Ordinance; and, in case any party fails to nominate a representative within the prescribed time, the body formed without such representative shall be the Arbitration Council;

(b) "Chairman" means the Chairman of a Union Council, Union Administration or Municipal Committee or any officer authorized by the Government to discharge the functions of the Chairman under the Ordinance and where the Chairman is a non-Muslim or he himself wishes to make an application to the Arbitration Council, or is, owing to illness or any other reason, unable to discharge the functions of the Chairman, the Arbitration Council shall select one of its Muslim members as Chairman;

(c) "Government" means Government of the Punjab;

(d) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Ordinance; and

(e) "Union Council" means a Union Council, Municipal Committee, Cantonment Board, a Union Administration or, in case of absence of any of these local governments in a local area, any other comparable body constituted under any law relating to the local governments or local authorities.]

**3. Ordinance to override other laws, etc.– (1) The provisions of this Ordinance shall have effect notwithstanding any law, custom or usage, and the registration of Muslim marriages shall take place only in accordance with those provisions.**

**4. Succession.** – In the event of the death of any son or daughter of the propositus before the



opening of succession, the children of such son or daughter, if any, living at the time the succession opens, shall per stirpes receive a share equivalent to the share which such son or daughter, as the case may be, would have received if alive.

- 5. Registration of marriages.** – (1) Every marriage solemnized under Muslim Law shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.
- (2) For the purpose of registration of marriages under this Ordinance, the Union Council shall grant licenses to one or more persons, to be called Nikah Registrars.]
  - (3) Every marriage not solemnized by the Nikah Registrar shall, for the purpose of registration under this Ordinance, be reported to him by the person who has solemnized such marriage.
  - (4) Whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (3) shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.
  - (5) The form of nikahnama, the registers to be maintained by Nikah Registrars, the records to be preserved by Union Councils, the manner in which marriages shall be registered and copies of nikahnamashall be supplied to the parties, and the fees to be charged therefor, shall be such as may be prescribed.
  - (6) Any person may, on payment of the prescribed fee, if any, inspect at the office of the Union Council the record preserved under sub-section (5), or obtain a copy of any entry therein.
- 6. Polygamy.** – (1) No man, during the subsistence of an existing marriage, shall, except with the previous permission in writing of the Arbitration Council, contract another marriage, nor shall any such marriage contracted without such permission be registered under this Ordinance.
- (2) An application for permission under sub-section (1) shall be submitted to the Chairman in the prescribed manner, together with the prescribed fee, and shall state reasons for the proposed marriage, and whether the consent of existing wife or wives has been obtained there to.
  - (2A) The Nikah Registrar or the person who solemnizes a Nikah shall accurately fill all the columns of the nikahnama form with specific answers of the bride or the bridegroom.
  - (3) On receipt of the application under sub-section (2), the Chairman shall ask the applicant and his existing wife or wives each to nominate a representative, and the Arbitration Council so constituted may, if satisfied that the proposed marriage is necessary and just, grant, subject to such conditions, if any, as may be deemed fit, the permission applied for.
  - (4) If a person contravenes the provision of:
    - (i) subsection (2A), he shall be punished to simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month and fine of twenty five thousand rupees; and
    - (ii) subsection (3), he shall be punished to simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months and fine of one hundred thousand rupees.
  - (5) Any man who contracts another marriage without the permission of the Arbitration Council shall, (a) pay immediately the entire amount of the dower, whether prompt or deferred, due to the existing wife or wives, which amount, if not so paid, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue; and (b) on conviction upon complaint be punishable with the simple imprisonment which may extend to one year and with fine of five hundred thousand rupees.
- 7. Talaq.**– (1) Any man who wishes to divorce his wife shall, as soon as may be after the pronouncement of talaq in any form whatsoever, give the Chairman notice in writing of his having done so, and shall supply a copy thereof to the wife.
- (2) Whoever, contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees, or with both.

- (3) Save as provided in sub-section (5), a talaq, unless revoked earlier, expressly or otherwise, shall not be effective until the expiration of ninety days from the day on which notice under sub-section (1) is delivered to the Chairman.
  - (4) Within thirty days of the receipt of notice under sub-section (1), the Chairman shall constitute an Arbitration Council for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between the parties, and the Arbitration Council shall take all steps necessary to bring about such reconciliation.
  - (5) If the wife be pregnant at the time talaq is pronounced, talaq shall not be effect until the period mentioned in sub-section [11] [(3)] or the pregnancy, whichever be later, ends.
  - (6) Nothing shall debar a wife whose marriage has been terminated by talaq effective under this section from remarrying the same husband, without an intervening marriage with a third person, unless such termination is for the third time so effective.
- 8. Dissolution of marriage otherwise than by talaq.**– Where the right to divorce has been duly delegated to the wife and she wishes to exercise that right, or where any of the parties to a marriage wishes to dissolve the marriage otherwise than by talaq, the provisions of section 7 shall, mutatis mutandis and so far as applicable, apply.
- 9. Maintenance.** – (1) If any husband fails to maintain his wife adequately, or where there are more wives than one, fails to maintain them equitably, the wife, or all or any of the wives, may, in addition to seeking any other legal remedy available, apply to the Chairman who shall constitute an Arbitration Council to determine the matter, and the Arbitration Council may issue a certificate specifying the amount which shall be paid as maintenance by the husband.
- (1A) If a father fails to maintain his child, the mother or grandmother of the child may, in addition to seeking any other legal remedy, apply to the Chairman who shall constitute an Arbitration Council and the Arbitration Council may issue a certificate specifying the amount which shall be paid by the father as maintenance of the child.
  - (2) A husband or wife may, in the prescribed manner, within the prescribed period, and on payment of the prescribed fee, prefer an application for revision of the certificate, to the Collector] concerned and his decision shall be final and shall not be called in question in any Court.
  - (3) Any amount payable under sub-section (1) or (2), if not paid in due time, shall be recoverable as arrears of land revenue Provided that the Commissioner of a Division may, on an application made in this behalf and for reasons to be recorded, transfer an application for revision of the certificate from a Collector to any other Collector, or to a Director, Local Government, or to an Additional Commissioner in his Division.
- 10. Dower.** – Where no details about the mode of payment of dower are specified in the nikahnama or the marriage contract, the entire amount of the dower shall be presumed to be payable on demand.
- 11. Power to make rules.** - (1) The Federal Government] in respect of the Cantonment areas and the Provincial Government in respect of other areas] may make rules to carry into effect the purposes of this Ordinance.

## **The Status of Non-Muslim Citizens of Pakistan**

### Symbolism of Pakistan's National Flag

- A national flag represents and symbolizes a country and is designed with a specific meanings for its colours and symbols.
- The Pakistani national flag consists of a dark green field with a vertical with a white

- band on the right side and a crescent and a five pointed star, against the green background.
- The green field represents the Muslim majority population and the white band the non-Muslim minority population. The white crescent represents progress and the five pointed star stands for light and knowledge.
  - Pakistan's national flag was designed by Syed Ameeruddin Kidwai and the was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, a few days before independence.
  - The flag shows that though the majority population is Muslim, Pakistan is not a singular Muslim nation.
  - Pakistan belongs to all the people who live there and acknowledge their identity as Pakistanis. As citizens of the state they have the same rights and privileges regardless of differences of "colour, caste and creed."

### **Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's 11th August 1947 Speech to the Constituent Assembly.**

"Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation ... you are bound to succeed. If you ... work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, ... no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.

I cannot emphasize it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community, because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on, and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris, also Bengalis, Madrasis and so on, will vanish. ... *You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.*"

## Translation of Verses from the Quran

Excerpted from: “Information Kit, Women in the Quran” ShirkatGah 1998

### Those Lawful in Marriage

Surah Al Ma’ida (5): verse 5

#### Yusuf Ali:

(5) This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time – When ye give their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues. If anyone rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).

#### Pickthall:

(5) This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines. Who denieth the faith, his work is vain and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.

#### Maududi:

All the good and pure things have today been made by lawful for you; the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you, and your food for them. Likewise you are permitted to marry chaste believing women or chaste women from among the people who were given the Scripture before you, provided that you give them their dowries and become their protectors in wedlock: this permission is not for sensual license or secret illicit relations; whoever rejects the way of Faith, all the deeds of his life shall become vain and he shall be bankrupt in the Hereafter.

#### Divorce

Marital Disputes

Surah Al-Nissa (4): Verse 35

#### Yusuf Ali:

(35) If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: for Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.

#### Pickthall:

(35) And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo!

Allah is ever Knowing, Aware.

**Maududi:**

(35) And if you fear a breach between spouses, appoint one arbiter from the relatives of the husband and one from the relatives of the wife. If the two sides sincerely desire to set things right, Allah will create a way of reconciliation between them, for surely Allah knows everything and is aware of everything.

Reconciliation

Sural Al-Nissa (4): Verses 128, 130

**Yusuf Ali:**

(128) If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

(130) But if they disagree (and must part), Allah will provide abundance for all from His All Reaching bounty: for Allah is He that careth for all and is Wise.

**Pickthall:**

(128) If a woman feareth ill-treatment from her husband, or desertion, it is no sin for them twain if they make terms of peace between themselves, Peace is better. But greed hath been made present in the minds (of men). If ye do good and keep from evil, lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do.

(130) but if they separate, Allah will compensate each out of His abundance. Allah is ever All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

**Maududi:**

(128) When a woman fears ill-treatment or aversion from her husband, there is no harm if the two make peace between themselves (by means of compromise); after all peace is the best thing. Human souls are prone to narrow-mindedness, but if you show generosity and fear Allah in your dealings, you may rest assured that Allah will be fully aware of all that you do.

(130) But if the spouses do separate, Allah will make each one of them independent of the other by His vast powers, for His resources are limitless and He is All-Wise and All Knowing.

Compensation on Separation before Consummation

Surah Al-Ahzab (33): Verse 49

**Yusuf Ali:**

(49) O ye who believe! When ye, marry believing women, and then divorce them before ye have touched them, no period of 'Iddah' have ye to count in respect of them: So give them a present, and set them free in a handsome manner.

**Pickthall:**

(49) O ye who believe! If ye wed believing women and divorce them before ye have touched them, then there is no period that ye should reckon. But content them and release them handsomely.

**Maududi:**

(49) O you who have believed, when you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, they do not have to fulfil a waiting term, whose completion you may

demand of them; so provide them with something and send them off gracefully.

#### Creation

Surah Al-Nisa (4): Verse 1

#### **Yusuf Ali:**

- (1) O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women fear Allah, though Whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.

#### **Pickthall:**

- (1) O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and to ward the wombs (that bear you). Lo! Allah hath been a Watcher over you.

#### **Maududi:**

- (1) O mankind, fear your Lord, Who created you of a single soul, and of the same created his mate, and from that pair spread countless men and women over the earth; fear that Allah in Whose name you demanded your rights from one another, and abstain from violating relations between kinsfolk; note it well that Allah is watching you very closely.

#### Creation Equality

Surah Al-Rum (30): Verses 20-21

#### **Yusuf Ali:**

- (20) Among His Signs is this, that He created you from dust; and then – behold, ye are men scattered (far and wide)!
- (21) And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.

#### **Pickthall:**

- (20) And of His signs in this: He created you of dust, and behold you human beings, ranging widely!
- (21) And of His signs is this: He created for your helpmates from yourselves that ye might find rest in them; and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo, herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.

#### **Maududi:**

- (20) Of His signs is this that He created you from dust; then behold, you are men who are multiplying (in the earth).
- (21) And of His signs is this that He created for you wives from your own species that you may find peace with them, and created love and mercy between you. Surely there are many Signs for those who reflect.

Surah Al-Zumar (39): Verse 6

#### **Yusuf Ali:**

- (6) He created you (all) from a single Person; then created, of like nature, his mate; and He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another; in three veils of darkness. Such is Allah, your Lord and Cherisher: to

Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Centre)?

**Pickthall:**

(6) He created you from one being, then from that (being) He made its mate; and He hath provided for you of cattle eight kinds. He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a three-fold gloom. Such is Allah, your Lord. He is the Sovereign. There is no God save Him. How then are ye turned away?

**Maududi:**

(6) He Who created you from a single being, then from that being He created its mate, and it is HE Who created for you eight heads of cattle, male and female. He shapes you in your mothers' wombs, giving you one from after the other, under three darkveils. This same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord: sovereignty is His: there is no god but He. Whenever are you, then, being turned away?

Gender Parity

Surah Al-Nissa (4): Verses 32, 124

**Yusuf Ali:**

(32) And in no wise covet those things in which Allah hath bestowed His gifts more freely on some of you than on others: to men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn: but ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things.

(124) If any do deeds of righteousness – be they male or female – and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.

**Pickhall:**

(32) And covet not the thing in which Allah hath made some of you excel others. Unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned. (Envy not one another) but ask Allah of His bounty. Lo! Allah is ever Knower of all things.

(124) And whoso doth good works, whether of male or female, and he (or she) is a believer, such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone.

**Maududi:**

(32) And do not covet what Allah has given some of you more than others: the men shall have their due share according to what they have earned. So pray to Allah for His bounty; most surely Allah has perfect knowledge of everything.

(123-124) The final result shall not be in accordance with your wishes nor in accordance with the wishes of the people of the Book. He who does evil shall be recompensed for it and he shall find no protector and no helper for himself against Allah. And the one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that the one is believer, will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the least of their rightful award.

Surah Al-Tauba (9): verses 71-72

**Yusuf Ali:**

(71) The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy; for Allah Is Exalted in power, Wise.

(72) God hath promised to Believers – men and women – Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah: hath is the supreme felicity.

**Pickthall:**

(71) And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong; and they establish worship and they pay the poor-due, and they obey Allah and His messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise.

(72) Allah promised to the believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide – blessed dwellings in Gardens of Eden. And – greater (far)! – acceptance from Allah. That is the Supreme triumph.

**Maududi:**

(71-72) As regards the true believers, men and women, they are all comrades to one another: they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; they established the Salat, pay the Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they upon whom Allah will most surely send His blessings. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. Allah has promised to the Believers, both men and women. The Gardens underneath which canals flow and where in they will abide for ever: there will be neat and clean dwelling places for them in those Gardens of perpetual bliss; and, above all, they will enjoy Allah's pleasure; this is the supreme success.

Surah Al-Nahl (16): verse 97

**Yusuf Ali:**

(97) Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, and life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

**Pickthall:**

(97) Whosoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.

**Maududi:**

(97) Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided that he is a Believer, We will surely make him live a pure life in this world, and in the Hereafter We will reward such people according to their best deeds.

Surah Al-I Imran (3) Verse 195

**Yusuf Ali:**

(195) And their Lord hath accepted of them, and answered them: "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: Ye are members, one of another; those who have left their homes, and were driven out there from and suffered harm in My Cause, and fought and were slain – verily, I will blot out from them their inequalities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath – a reward from the Presence of Allah, and from His Presence is the best of rewards."

**Pickthall:**

(195) And their Lord hath heard than (and He saith): Lo! Suffer not the work of any worker, male or



female, to be lost. Ye proceed one from another. So those who fell and were driven forth from their homes and suffered damage for My cause, and fought and were slain, verily I shall remit their evil deeds from them and verily I shall bring them into Gardens underneath which rivers flow – A reward from Allah. And with Allah is the fairest of rewards.

**Maududi:**

(195) Their Lord answered their prayers, saying, "I do not let go to waste the labour of any worker from among you, whether male or female, for all of you (human beings) are the offspring of one another. I will, therefore, forgive all the shortcoming of those who left their homes or were expelled from them for My sake or were persecuted, and of those who fought for my cause and were slain, and admit them to the Gardens underneath which canals flow." This is their reward from Allah and with Allah alone is the richest reward.

Surah Al-A'raf (7) verses 26-31

**Yusuf Ali:**

(26) O children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness - that is the best. Such are the signs of Allah that they may receive admonition!

(31) O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at everytime and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not wasters.

Pickthall

(26) O children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best. This is of the revelations of Allah, that they may remember.

(31) O children of Adam! Look to your adornment at everyplace of worship, and eat and drink, but be not prodigal! Lo! He loveth not prodigals.

**Maududi**

(26) O children of Adam! We have sent down to you clothing in order to cover the shameful parts of your body, and to serve it as protection and decoration; and the best garment is the garment of piety. This is one of the signs of Allah; it may be that the people learn a lesson from this. O children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you in the same way that he caused your first parents to be driven out of the Garden and stripped them of their garments in order to expose their shameful parts before each other. He and his party see you from where you cannot see them. We have made these satans the guardians of those who do not believe.

(31) O children of Adam! Adorn yourself fully, at the time of every worship; eat and drink, but do not transgress, for Allah does not like transgressions.

Gender Obligations

Surah Al-Nisa (4): Verse 127

**Yusuf Ali:**

(127) They ask thy instruction concerning the Women. Say: Allah hath instructed you about them: and (remember) what hath been rehearsed unto you in the Book, concerning the orphans of women whom ye desire to marry, as also concerning the children who are weak and oppressed: that ye stand firm for justice to orphans. There is not a good deed which ye do, but Allah is well-acquainted therewith.

**Pickthall:**

(127) They consult thee concerning women. Say: Allah giveth you decree concerning them, and the

Scripture which hath been recited unto you (giveth decree), concerning female orphans unto whom ye give not that which is ordained for them though ye desire to marry them, and (concerning) the weak among children, and that ye should deal justly with orphans. Whatever good ye do, lo! Allah is ever Aware of it.

**Maududi:**

(127) They ask your verdict concerning women. Say, Allah gives His verdict concerning them, and along with it reminds you of those Commandments which have already been told you in this Book, that is, the Commandments concerning those orphan girls to whom you do not give their lawful rights and whom you do not wish to marry (or, whom you yourselves desire to marry for greed). He also reminds you of the Commandments concerning those children who are weak and helpless. Allah enjoins you to deal justly with orphans; Allah has full knowledge of whatever good you do.

Dress and Modesty

Surah Al Nur (24): Verses 30-31

**Yusuf Ali:**

- (30) Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with what they do.
- (31) And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty...

**Pickthall:**

- (30) Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. This is purer for them. Lo! Allah is aware of what they do.
- (31) And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms and not reveal their adornments ...

**Maududi:**

- (30) O Prophet, enjoin the Believing men to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts. This is more the righteous way for them: Allah has knowledge of whatever they do.
- (31) And O Prophet, enjoin Believing women to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts and not to display their adornment except that which is displayed of itself, and to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to display their adornment ...

Men's Modesty

Surah Al-Ma'arij (70): verses 29-31

**Yusuf Ali:**

- (29) And those who guard their chastity,
- (30) Except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hand possess – for (they) are not to be blamed.
- (31) but those who trespass beyond this are transgressors

**Pickthall:**

- (29) And those who guard their chastity,
- (30) Except with their wives and those whom their right hand possess, for thus they are not blameworthy;
- (31) But whoso seeketh more than that, those are they who are transgressors

### **Maududi:**

(29-31) ... who guard their private parts – except with regard to their wives and women who are legally in their possession, for in their case they are not blameworthy, but those who go beyond this are indeed transgressors.

### **Purdah and Privacy**

Surah Al-Nur (24): verses 58-59

### **Yusuf Ali:**

(58) O ye who believe! Let those whom your right hand possess and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence) on three occasions : before morning prayer; the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and after the late-night prayer: these are your three times of undress: outside these times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

(59) But when the children among you come of age, let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age): thus does Allah make clear his Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

### **Pickthall:**

(58) O ye who believe! Let your slaves, and those of you who have not come to puberty, ask leave of you at three times (before they come into your presence): Before the prayer of dawn, and when ye lay aside your raiment for the heat of noon, and after the prayer of night. Three times of privacy for you. It is no sin for them or for you at other times, when some of you go round attendant upon others (if they come into your presence without leave). Thus Allah maketh clear the revelations for you. Allah is Knower, Wise.

(59) And when the children among you come to puberty then let them ask leave even as those before them used to ask it. Thus Allah maketh clear His revelations for you. Allah is Knower, Wise.

### **Maududi:**

(58-59) O Believers, your slaves and those of your children, who have not yet become sex-conscious, must ask your permission before coming in to see you on three occasions: before the Fajir Prayer and at noon when you put off your clothes and after the Isha Prayer. These are your three times of privacy. There is no sin for you nor for them if they come without permission at other times than these, for you have to visit one another over and over again. In this way Allah makes His Commandments clear to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And when your children have grown sex-conscious, they should get your permission for this just as their elders got permission. Thus, Allah makes His Revelations plain to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

